Progress in Responsible Tourism

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Introduction

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The purpose of this journal is to track the process and outcomes of organisations taking responsibility for a more sustainable future. This is a complex task that takes many shapes, but ultimately focuses on analysing the motivations for acting, the barriers reporting for not doing so, the processes of learning to implement further practices, the effectiveness of such practices, and the impact that they have on both the users and providers of tourism services, but more importantly on the residents of the places we choose to visit and the health of our planet more generally. The examples of the award winners of the 2015 Responsible Tourism Awards show us that it is posible for companies of all sizes and sectors to make a significant difference, and each year the standard improves. The account that Harold Goodwin provides of how decisions are taken as well as the inspirational explanations of what these companies are able to achieve are invaluable.

And yet it's not all good news. In this issue we review further evidence of the unfeasibility of community based tourism projects. The examples shown by Frédéric Thomas and Christine Jacquemin on why donor funded projects fail speak lack of basic business planning on the part of the donors, and management capacity on the supposed beneficiaries of the funding. The article speaks of how common both business failure and communities disengagement are in donor funded projects, and suggests a clear methodology to assess potential of a site or feasibility of any tourism project. Donor funded project proposals however often require detailed evidence about these points, but clearly somewhere in the project allocation to implementation process there is a communication failure that allows well-meaning project funders and implementers fail to see the commercial imperatives of such projects. What continues to be surprising is how little we hear the voices of the so-called beneficiaries of these projects, in whose name the funding was raised, as mentioned already in this journal[1].

The results of the Paris COP21 reminds us once again of the complexitites behind governments, industry and Society to come to terms with the impact of climate change on our daily lives, and our future. Risk management is important across the tourism industry, and the article by Sarah Balet provides a holistic account of the risks that the hospitality sector faces as a consequence of ignoring the impacts resulting from its sourcing practices. Sustainable supply chain management is already well established in other sectors, yet Balet shows how the practice is rather incipient in hospitality. Based on a content analysis of industry reports and academic literature, she breaks down the risks faced by our sector according to corporate reputation, cohesion, eficiency, legal risk, security and transparency. Collectively these should send warning signs to most businesses, and the larger industry players have developed CSR approaches based on a risk management business

1 Font, Goodwin and Walton, 2014

case, including issues such as human trafficking and industrial relations, but also sourcing food from endangered species.

Yet we know more about what the larger businesses are doing in terms of climate change preparedness, and less about the ability of small firms to prepare for risks resulting from the lack of preparedness for the impacts of climate change on the hospitality industry. Christopher Warren and Caroline Bollrich look at bushfire risk management in Australia, focusing on prevention and preparedness, instead of the more common response and recovery literature. Proactive risk management means better understanding who, when, how and how much should take responsibility for the investment and change of behaviour necessary. Their reflections are based on a detailed and candid comparison between the neighbouring Australian states of News South Wales and Victoria, which apply very different approaches. The issue of taking responsibility for a more sustainable future is palpable in this study, and the points made by the interviewees and the reflections from the two authors are applicable to a whole range of issues across the world. Their article shows the complexities of risk preparedness, and ultimately why there is less work done on alleviating the threat than mitigating it once the disaster has occurred.

Many of the challenges faced by these small firms are not specific to risk management though, and are also visible in how they manage other aspects of Sustainability, as well as the effort they put towards communicating such efforts to their consumers. The study by Pablo Pereira shows that the small tourism firms he studied communicate sustainability poorly, and that there is a relation between such communications and their reasons for being in business. Businesses motivated by lifestyle altruism communicate more and better than those motivated by competitiveness or legitimisation. However all businesses could improve vastly their communication to make it more meaningful to consumer needs. Pereira illustrates with examples the many possibilities for this small sample of businesses to engage a broader group of consumers in enjoying sustainable products, by making them more appealing, experiential and active amongst others. He shows how messages based on social norms for example could substantially improve uptake, but how businesses feel uncomfortable using emotive language and prefer to communicate factual environmental achievements than to consider what they mean to consumers. The consequence is communication that is not persuasive.

The challenges in communicating sustainability contextualised in the motivations for acting sustainably are also visible in our last article from Johanna Koehler. Her case is one to many people's hearts: why is it that hotel staff keep changing our towels, when customers have hanged them correctly so they can be reused following the hotel signage's instructions? Her study outlines different possible interventions to increase housekeeping's participation in towel reusage, and tests these with interviews, observation and interventions in the form of modified signs. Her detailed account of the standard operating procedures of housekeeping in relation to towels, the checks of towels reused she conducted, and the limited impact of the interventions all provide rich data to understand the limitations in engaging staff to behave in a more sustainable way, even when the customers are clearly asking for it. Differences in the organisational set up as in independent and group hotel seem to partially influence working practices. While management showed positive environmental attitudes in both hotels, influencing housekeeping staff with a clear demonstration from line managers that towel reuse is important would significantly increase the results, despite the language barriers and staff turnover of housekeeping employees, particularly for agency staff.

References

Font, X., Goodwin, H. & Walton, R. (2014) Donor funded tourism projects: factors for success, *Progress in Responsible Tourism*, **3**(1) 7-30.

The 2015 World Responsible Tourism Awards

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Each year we publish an explanation of why the judges made the decisions they did in the World Responsible Tourism Awards. Judging the Awards is an exacting task; the decisions which the judges take get tougher every year. The volume, quality and diversity of nominations grow each year and there is often considerable debate amongst the judges. The quality before the judges in 2015 was higher than ever – evidenced by the fact that there were joint Gold winners in four of the twelve categories.

This year also saw the launch of sister Awards in Ireland[1], announced in March, and for Africa awarded at WTM Africa in April.[2] The African and Irish Awards are part of the World Responsible Tourism Award family, they follow the same criteria and processes but have some flexibility over the categories of Awards each year. All of the Gold Award winners in Africa and Ireland are automatically included in the long list for the World Awards. They are allowed to review and update their entry so that they are able to compete for the World Awards on an equal footing with the others, since where there are categories in the Irish and African Awards not included in the World Awards it is difficult for those winners to compete. The extension of the Awards into Africa and Ireland has raised awareness of Responsible Tourism and of the opportunity to be recognised, and has increased the representation of businesses from these parts of the world in the World Awards.

In 2015 we evolved the World Responsible Tourism Awards process to increase its rigour and to make it more manageable, the sheer scale of interest in 2014 had made it clear that we needed to make some changes in order to ensure that the Awards could continue to grow.

The submissions stage ran from 2nd March to 20th April and required three questions to be answered in some detail:

- Why do you think your organisation deserves to win this award?
- What makes your tourism initiative stand out?
- Provide a brief overview of how it works, where it operates, who is involved, aims and objectives etc.

When submissions closed there were 413 unique submissions for the twelve categories. With much more detail about the reasons why those submitting felt that they should be considered for an Award, it was possible for our longlisters, recruited by the chair of judges from the International Centre for Responsible Tourism network, to undertake a much more thorough review of the applications, do some basic research on each submission and identify a longlist of those who would be invited to prepare a much more detailed submission of the judges to consider.

1 http://www.responsibletravel.com/awards/ireland/

2 http://www.responsibletravel.com/awards/africa/

The longlist was published on 9th May with 206 entrants across 12 categories and from 69 countries. They were sent a much more detailed questionnaire to complete, requiring evidence and references. 198 completed applications for the Awards were received by 11th June.

The completed questionnaires along with the initial submissions, references and any additional evidence were then sent to the judges who working in pairs reviewed the entries and prepared recommendations for the judging panel. The judging took place on 8th July and we then undertook a process of due diligence and were able to announce the finalists – all of whom were to be Gold or Silver winners – in the Awards which were presented at World Travel Market on World Responsible Tourism Day, November 4th 2015.

It is important to note that submissions closed on 20th April, that the judging took place on 8th July and that the list of finalists was not announced until 4th August. It takes time to judge the entries properly and to complete due diligence, where there are any concerns, afterwards. There are a number of awards with a very short period of time between nominations and the awards ceremony and some where the composition of the judging panel is not revealed.

The judges for the World Responsible Tourism Awards include senior industry people, academics and NGOs.

Box 1: World Responsible Tourism Awards , Judges 2015

- Dr Harold Goodwin, Chair of Judges, Founder Director of the International Centre for Responsible Tourism
- Justin Francis, Founder and director of the Responsible Tourism Awards, CEO of responsibletravel.com
- Jane Ashton, Director of Sustainable Development, TUI Group
- Jenefer Bobbin, Founding Director, JUSTreport
- Dr Rebecca Hawkins, Director of the Responsible Hospitality Partnership
- Debbie Hindle, Managing Director Four bgb
- Fiona Jeffery, Chair Just a Drop & Tourism for Tomorrow WTTC
- Catherine Mack, Write at Responsible Travel
- Simon Press, Senior Exhibition Director, World Travel Market (WTM)
- John de Vial, Director of the ICRT and Head of Financial Protection at ABTA The Travel Association
- Dr Matt Walpole, Director of Partnerships and Development at the World Conservation Monitoring Centre for the UN Environment Programme
- Mark Watson, CEO Tourism Concern
- Nikki White, Head of Destinations and Sustainability at ABTA, The Travel Association

More information on each of the judges is available on the Awards website[3]

3 http://www.responsibletravel.com/awards/about/judges.htm

The Awards are not an accreditation scheme, the same businesses do not win year after year. It is very difficult to win again, so do not assume that because a business or organisation won some years ago they are not still world leaders. Large and small, mainstream and niche win Awards. The judges say of the Awards:

> "We have a vision of an industry where all kinds of tourism, from niche to mainstream, are organised in a way that preserves, respects and benefits destinations and local people. Our Awards are a step towards this; celebrating tourism experiences that inspire and surprise travellers and the industry with what it is possible to achieve through responsible tourism. Responsible tourism is about using tourism to make better places for people to live in and better places for people to visit, because great places to live in, with their natural and cultural heritage, are great places to visit." [4]

Box 2: The Judges' Criteria[5]

… how does our judging panel ensure consistency and identify the most enduring and shining examples of responsible tourism in practice each year?

1. Evidence-based: The panel are looking for evidence of real change, businesses which can convincingly demonstrate positive impacts, or reduced negative impacts, quantified wherever possible.

2. Replicability: The Awards aim to inspire change, we seek to identify examples of best practice which can be replicated across the sector and around the world.

3. Innovation: The judges are looking for innovative practices that make a real difference, the Awards highlight new good practices, which the judges believe, can, and should, become common practice.

4. Influence: We look for businesses and organisations that are not only doing good work themselves, but are using their influence to ensure their peers and suppliers to do the same.

5. Sustainability & longevity: The judges seek to award those businesses that understand that taking responsibly for tourism is a long journey, that it encompasses the economic, social and environmental impacts of their activities and who have a clear vision for the long-term success of the work, with future targets and plans in place.

The judges can only consider those businesses that are nominated and pass the longlisting process and success will depend upon the strength of the competition in any particular year. It is a considerable achievement to make the longlist. It takes considerable amount of effort and time to present the business's achievements and to provide the evidence and referees - the judges carefully read all the material presented, take up references and make their own enquires, These are tough awards to win.

4 http://www.responsibletravel.com/awards/about/judging-criteria.htm

5 http://www.responsibletravel.com/awards/about/judging-criteria.htm

In 2013 the People's Choice category was introduced, its purpose being to engage a wider audience and to spread awareness of Responsible Tourism initiatives. In 2015 the People's Choice was won by World Animal Protection – they were joint winners in the Best Animal Welfare Initiative category they received 26% of the 5,883 votes cast. World Animal Protection has a long history of campaigning for the protection of animals stretching back to 1950. Their current compassionate travel campaign, running in Australia and the Netherlands, is focused on ending the exploitation of wild animals used for tourism and entertainment by bringing together key players in the tourism industry with governments, local stakeholders, tourists and their own supporters.[6]

1. Best Animal Welfare Initiative

Animal welfare organisations have been increasingly active in pressing the tourism industry to take a more principled and responsible stance on animal welfare. The have been major campaigns against SeaWorld, on the taming of elephants, volunteering and the welfare of captive lions and on hunting, occasioned in part by the media storm over the killing of Cecil. There was a very strong field of applications this year.

The judges awarded two Golds in this category, one for a campaigning organisation and one for a tourism product with ambitions to change practice across the industry. The **Campaign Against Canned Hunting** (www.cannedlion.org) has been engaging with the tourism industry to raise awareness of the ways in which lions are commercially exploited through being petted by volunteers as cubs, then used for lion walking and photo-opportunities by tourists, before being shot just out of their cage by 'hunters', and then the trophies and bones are sold. The Campaign Against Canned Hunting has had considerable success in raising awareness of the issue - tour operators and travel agents take note**.** As the Campaign Against Canned Hunting says "Once travel agents, tour operators and volunteering agencies know the truth, in our experience they quickly discourage clients from visiting such facilities." **Hetta Huskies** (www.hettahuskies.com) based in Finland carry some 4,000 clients per year at their husky sled dog farm. The judges recognised both the high standards of sled dog welfare practised in the operation and that, having established a viable business with higher standards, they are now able to campaign for change from within the industry. Details of the campaign and proposed codes can be found on their website.

The Campaign Against Canned Hunting (CACH) has focused attention on the many lion farmers in South Africa who deceive naive tourists and volunteers into patronising their facilities in the belief that their tourist/volunteer money is somehow 'supporting conservation'. In 2014, CACH worked with the CBS News 60 Minutes team to expose the links between cub-petting and canned hunting, resulting in the documentary *The Lion Whisperer*[7] which was apparently seen by 18.4 million people. They have been active in lobbying ABTA and AITO on the issue of cub-petting and lion encounters and are campaigning for an EU wide ban on lion trophy imports.

6 Goodwin H (2014) *The 2014 World Responsible Tourism Awards* in Progress in Responsible Tourism 3(2):23 available on-line http://www.goodfellowpublishers.com/free_files/filePIRT32final.pdf

7 http://www.cbsnews.com/news/the-lion-whisperer/

Hetta Huskies have been leading by example and compiling information about best practices around the world, disseminating this information through the community and advocating legislative change to guarantee minimum standards for the welfare of sled-dogs. A Finnish MP reported that:

> "Hetta Huskies have also taken significant steps towards developing new standards and a mind-set within the industry to accept these. They were a key factor in establishment of the Finnish sleddog entrepreneur's association, which has increased the level of communication and cooperation between the businesses... They also regularly organize free safaris for the village old, young and disabled and offer them a possibility for dog interaction. Their farm is also open for local agility practice and they also offer shelter for stray dogs of the area."[8]

Lotus Travel (www.lotustravel.se) and The Donkey Sanctuary (www.thedonkeysanctuary.org.uk) both won Silver Awards. Lotus Travel, a leading tour operator in Sweden, has for many years not included zoos in their itineraries and has worked closely with World Animal Protection (a Gold Award Winner last year and People's Choice Winner this year) to become the first Swedish operator to implement their own animal welfare policy which is published on their website along with traveller guidelines on how to be an animal friendly tourist. The Donkey Sanctuary explicitly includes people in its mission statement which states its purpose as to "transform the quality of life for donkeys, mules and people worldwide through greater understanding, collaboration and support, and by promoting lasting, mutually life-enhancing relationships."[9] The judges were particularly impressed by its work and accomplishments but it stood out for the number of other entries in the Awards in which the inspirational and intellectual influence of The Donkey Sanctuary was acknowledged. They are clearly leaders in donkey welfare.

2. Best for Beach Tourism

The judges awarded two Golds to two very different enterprises. **Soneva Fushi** (www.soneva.com) is a luxury resort in the Maldives. The judges were impressed by the extent to which they have been able to reduce their carbon footprint (12% since 2008-9) and the 2% environmental levy on room revenue which has raised 5.7mUS$ spent on projects mitigating 1m tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions over the last seven years. They banned plastic water bottles in 2008 selling high quality filtered water instead, the revenues from which have been used to fund water projects benefiting 600,000 people and has avoided 900,000 plastic bottles going to landfill. Soneva have demonstrated what can be achieved, at scale, in improving environmental performance and benefitting local people. **LooLa** (http://loola.net) is by contrast a small eco-resort in Bintan, Indonesia providing for schools and family groups. They operate a very successful business (TripAdvisor top 1% and the most popular overseas destination for Singapore-based schools), the staff are all local and have had the benefit of limited education. Staff turnover is zero. Rainwater collection systems, green aircon and waste water gardens are all highly replicable.

8 Confidential reference

9 http://www.thedonkeysanctuary.org.uk/about-us

There were two Silver Awards for **Turtle Bay Beach Club** in Watamu, Kenya (www.turtlebay.co.ke) and **&Beyond Mnemba Island,** Zanzibar **(**www.andbeyond.com/mnemba-island) again providing for very different market segments. Mnemba Island provides accommodation for just twenty guests in a private hideaway. The judges were impressed by its conservation work in the formation of the Mnemba Island Marine Conservation Area, the species protection work it does with green turtles, coconut crabs, suni antelope and Ader's duiker and by the daily recreational fee used to fund local community projects and benefit local fishermen. Turtle Bay Beach Club is a large scale resort established in 1972. It can accommodation as many as 58,000 guest a year, it established a Conservation & Community Office twenty years ago and has run a sea turtle conservation programme since 2005. The judges recognised the leading role they have played in establishing the Watamu Marine Association bringing together 30 marine stakeholder organisations and groups from the tourism, community and environment sectors, the Beach Cleaning and Community Waste Management and Recycling Project and in helping other local hotels to set up their own Environmental Management Teams.

3. Best Cultural Heritage Attraction

The Gold Award went **Loop Head, Ireland (**www.loophead.ie), who won Gold in the Best Destination category in the Irish Responsible Tourism Awards. Loop Head Peninsula, on the Wild Atlantic Way on the west coast of Ireland has developed its cultural heritage through a 'Learning from the Landscape' adult education course which generated 16 local heritage experiences, only half of which were provided by tourism providers. All sixteen are now available to locals and tourists alike. The trail has been mapped and integrated with a database of local stories and 80% of the site interpretation is based on interviews with local people. A heritage audit conducted by local residents added 332 previously unrecorded monuments to the known heritage sites on the peninsula and generated community pride - it is local people's heritage which is being shared with tourists. The judges were impressed by the bottom up approach using a tourism initiative to encourage a community to discover, own and protect its heritage.

Loop Head Tourism was only established in 2009. They had a clear vision of the kind of tourism that they wanted and the determination to ensure that it would not be achieved at the cost of their environment, In their application they wrote of their initiative:

> "When we began nobody had ever heard of the Loop Head Peninsula, in fact as an area it didn't exist, now after 5 years of hard work, mostly on a voluntary basis, we have redefined how we think of ourselves, we have instilled a pride in our community that was lacking, we have a community who have largely swept away parochial issues to concentrate on the common goal of using tourism to sustain our community into the future and along the way we have made the Loop Head Peninsula a nationally recognised brand and a poster child of how coastal communities can cooperate and take control of their own destiny."

The group of people who have developed Loop Head as a destination have demonstrated how much can be achieved with a small budget, with no paid employees but with passion, flair and a strong sense of community endeavour to make Loop Head a better place to live in and to visit. As one of their referees wrote:

> "With a strong focus on local foods, local geography and maximising local natural amenities, the Loop Head personnel have swiftly created a valuable identity, and the beginnings of a successful tourism brand. Their branding is very distinctive and strong, and there is also a strong sense of collective cohesion and unity with a design to promoting the region for the benefit of the local population, and doing so in a planned, sustainable way."

Silver Awards went to **Cnoc Suain**, Ireland (www.cnocsuain.com) and **Bushmans Kloof Wilderness Resort and Wellness Retreat**, South Africa (www.bushmanskloof.co.za). Cnoc Suain is a restored 17th century hill-village set in 200 acres of Connemara's ancient bogland. It won Gold in the Irish Responsible Tourism Awards. They describe Responsible Tourism eloquently in their application: "Responsible travellers and locals share experiences – discovering each other's culture, getting to understand their cultural differences and common humanity. Visitors also gain an appreciation of the natural environment in which local people live." The judges were impressed by the authenticity of the cultural encounters created for visitors and the way in which the natural heritage is integrated. Bushmans Kloof impressed the judges as custodian of over 100 rock art sites in the Cedarberg Mountains and its commitment to researching and preserving the cultural heritage of the San Bushmen.[10] There is a strict protocol governing visits to the rock art sites and the most sensitive sites are not visited but rather interpreted through PowerPoint presentations. Bushmans Kloof is the major sponsor of the Riel Dance, a traditional dance of the San Bushmen and the Khoi. It trains and encourages the Riel Dance troupes to compete in regional and national competitions.

4. Best Destination

Gansbaai, South Africa **(**www.gansbaaiinfo.com) won the Gold Award in the African Awards in this category and were also named the overall winner[11]. Gansbaai, two hours from Cape Town in the Overberg has a cluster of Responsible Tourism businesses - Grootbos Private Nature Reserve, Marine Dynamics Tours, White Shark Projects, Dyer Island Cruises and Whale Song Lodge - all certified by Fair Trade Tourism South Africa. Grootbos[12] and Marine Dynamics[13] have also won African Responsible Tourism Awards. The judges have recognised them this year for their co-operation with each other and with the local authority to make Gansbaai a better place for local people to live in. Grootbos has been particularly active in social development through the Dibanisa Football Foundation and the Growing the Futures programme creating employment in horticulture and supporting local families to grow their own vegetables. Marine Dynamics invests in research, conservation and education, is involved in animal rescues and has recently built the African Penguin and Seabird Sanctuary in Gansbaai. The judges were impressed by how much more the businesses have been able to achieve by working together and with local government. The judges were particularly appreciative of the efforts being made by Gansbaai Tourism to promote and encourage other businesses in the destination to follow

10 www.bushmanskloof.co.za/activities/rock-art-and-heritage

11 www.responsibletravel.com/awards/africa/winners-2015.htm

12 Gold Award winners in the Africa Responsible Tourism Awards in 2015 in the Poverty Reduction category

13 Gold Award winners in the Africa Responsible Tourism Awards in 2015 in the Wildlife Conservation category

the examples set by the international award winners in their midst and not to be daunted by that challenge.

The Silver winners were **Aruba** (www.aruba.com) and **Cyprus (**www.visitcyprus.com & www.visitcyprus.biz). Two very different approaches to destination management: one focused on hotels, the other on action at an island level. The judges wanted to recognise the extensive programme of work which has been undertaken in Cyprus since 2010 with support from The Travel Foundation, "… enhancing the value and quality of the Cyprus tourism product" is a part of the national strategy and part of that is "building a framework of mandatory minimum standards for sustainability." The Cyprus Tourism Organisation has incorporated minimum standards for sustainability into quality standards and has published guidance to assist hoteliers with compliance to those minimum standards and to guide inspectors in assessment process.[14] Aruba's ambition is to be the first country to be 100% non-reliant on fossil fuels, and to reach this milestone by 2020. With support from Branson's Carbon War Room and others, Aruba has committed to an ambitious programme extending into tourism.

> "Aruba's overall goal is an ambitious one: to increase the social, environmental and economic resilience of Aruba through an efficient use of natural resources and an implementation of projects that will create and sustain high-quality local jobs for current and future generations. Ultimately, the government is pursuing more than 5-star hotels – Aruba has the vision for 5-star schools, 5-star neighbourhoods, 5-star infrastructure and 5-star homes for the elderly."[15]

5. Best Accommodation for People with Disabilities

There were two Gold Awards in this category. A number of nominations from businesses doing excellent work to address equality of access were passed over for an award because they were not communicating the accessibility of their product to their potential clients. For whatever reason they had not crossed this taboo, they have not said "you are welcome" to people with disabilities.

The judges recognised two outstanding, but very different, approaches to providing accommodation for people with disabilities. Since 2003 **Scandic** (www.scandichotels.com) has been working to integrate accessibility into all parts of their mainstream hotel business with board commitment to ensure that all their hotels are accessible for people with different kinds of disabilities. Whether the person is in a wheel chair, has a hearing impairment or an allergy, they address the full range of disabilities. They have demonstrated leadership through their actions and by making the e-learning course they have developed available to everyone. **Endeavour Safaris** (www.endeavour-safaris.com) has led in demonstrating that it is possible to enable people with a wide variety of disabilities, ranging from wheelchair users to people requiring oxygen and kidney dialysis, to experience a safari in South Africa with specially adapted vehicles and mobile camps. Those with disabilities can enjoy the same safari experience with their families and friends.

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14 http://media.visitcyprus.com/media/b2b_en/Tourism_Services/Guidelines_Sustainablity_hotels_EN.pdf

15 Awards application

The Silver Award went to Rural Suite Hotel Apartamentos, Spain (http://ruralsuite.com) for the care with which the suites have been designed to be accessible to both those people with a wide range of disabilities and those without. Pablo Ramon of NATIVE Charming Hotels and Accessible Tourism[16] describes it as their most accessible hotel in Spain. Only 10% of their guests have a disability, indicative of the extent to which their approach is one of inclusivity, an approach also evidenced by the effort which has been made to develop inclusive activities for guests beyond the hotel boundary.

6. Best for Engaging People & Cultures

The Gold Award went to **Urban Adventures (**www.urbanadventures.com), part of Intrepid Travel. Established in 2009 they provided urban experiences for 70,000 travellers and locals in 2014. The judges were pleased to see that the experiences were sold to both travellers and locals alike and recognised their highly scalable business model where, within the framework of a Responsible Travel Code of Conduct, local Urban Adventures Partners (UAPs) are able to own and manage their own business. In return for a commission on tours sold, Urban Adventures provide local UAPs with the technology, marketing, and sales support to promote and sell their tours. They offer an alternative to the standard city tour offering the opportunity to visit local neighbourhoods with a passionate, knowledgeable, enthusiastic local guide or friend, supporting local businesses like hole-in-the-wall bars, street food stalls, and traditional markets; a different and arguably better experience for tourists and locals alike.

There were two Silver Awards: **Connemara Wild Escapes**, Ireland (www.connemarawildescapes.ie) and **Felin Talgarth Mill**, Wales (www.talgarthmill.com). Connemara Wild Escapes won Gold in the Tour Operator category in the Irish Responsible Tourism Awards, and the judges of the World Awards recognised their commitment and delivery of experiences which inspire their clients and contribute to the conservation of Connemara's species and habits[17]. They are also recognised for the opportunities they provide for engagement with the people of Connemara and their environment from turf cutting, through storytelling, foraging, knitting and cooking, to a seaweed bath. Felin Talgarth Mill was completely rebuilt as part of the BBC's Village SOS television series with Lottery funding in 2011[18], it is a community project run by 30 very committed volunteers, the cultural activities of milling and baking have brought economic vitality back to the village and enabled the co-located craft and cottage interior businesses to launch. They have used tourism to restore their mill and bring economic development to their market town.

7. Best Hotel for Local Sourcing

The Gold Award was awarded to **Atlas Kasbah Ecolodge,** Morocco **(**atlaskasbah.com). The judges were impressed by the quality of the information the Atlas Kasbah Ecolodge was able to provide about its economic impact. 81% of its expenditure on labour, goods and services is spent within 50km of the lodge, and the management have plans to increase this

16 http://www.nativehotels.eu They won Silver in 2014

17 http://www.connemarawildescapes.ie/conservation/

18 http://www.communitychannel.org/video/HL3LD3eC-No/brilliant_britain_brilliant_wales_episode_2/

by 5% by the end of 2016. All of the administrative, restaurant, cleaning, and ground staff are employed from the local Berber community from the villages nearest the lodge. They have added value for the local community by offering cooking classes, guided mountain biking and hiking in the Argan forest, argan oil massages, hammam scrubbing, rung making, native languages classes and henna tattoos and started an organic food basket scheme with deliveries in Agadir and neighbouring villages. The lodge has successfully developed a wide range of economic activities with the local Berber communities to their mutual advantage.

The Silver Awards went to **Matava Eco-Adventure Resort & Spa** in Fiji (www.matava.com) and **Shangri-La's Villingili Resort & Spa**, Maldives (www.shangri-la.com/maldives). Winning 'Best in a Marine Environment' in 2010 Matava are inspiring and in 2015 the Resort's entire expenditure was directed to Fijian companies and local Fijian villages.[19] They buy locally from local growers (often providing the seed and purchasing the produce), tradespeople, crafts and services. All Staff are recruited from local villages and are provided with training to create the opportunity for advancement, and all resort senior supervisors are local Fijians. Shangri-La's Villingili Resort & Spa in initiated a partnership with local farmers from neighbouring Meedhoo Island in 2010, and helped establish the Addu–Meedhoo Cooperative Society (AMCS) now comprising 140 farmers, of which 30 are women, who produce locally grown vegetables and fruits that are sold to the resort; They bought 10,200 kg in 2010 and 67,000 kg in 2014. The resort has created a great deal of local employment, enabling some to return to live in their communities and they have hired six "differently abled" colleagues, enabling them to lead financially independent lives.[20]

8. Best Innovation for Carbon Reduction

The Gold Award went to **TUI UK & Ireland.** Last year Thomson Airways, part of TUI, won the carbon reduction category for taking responsibility, setting targets for carbon reduction and then delivering. Often tour operators are rightly criticised for pushing responsibility for achieving sustainability down their supply chain. TUI UK & Ireland have taken an holistic approach addressing their greenhouse gas emissions throughout the customer journey, whether in their source markets, airlines or destinations. By working with their staff to change behaviour in 600 business units and with some investment in new technology (95% of their shops now have smart meters) TUI UK and Ireland have reduced the carbon intensity of their operations achieving a 40% reduction in carbon emissions between 2010 and 2014.[21] The judges regard this as a highly replicable approach and a good example of taking responsibility to reduce carbon emissions rather than leaving it to others.

The Silver Awards went to two very different initiatives in scale and form: **Hong Kong Airport Authority (**www.hongkongairport.com) and North Sailing, Iceland (www.

19 "The only main commodity which has to be imported into Fiji is fuel. Petrol for our environmentally efficient 4 stroke boat engines. We buy our fuel from a domestic supplier on the main island. We do however use bio-diesel made locally from coconuts to run our dive compressor." Quote from the submission.

20 Award submission

21 A full case study is available here www.haroldgoodwin.info/uploads/C-RoI/TUI%20UK_Premises%20Case%20Study.pdf

NorthSailing.is). The judges were impressed by the scale of what has been achieved at Hong Kong Airport by engaging its business partners - airlines, airline caterers, government departments, cargo handlers, ground services providers and others - and focusing on its direct and wider supply chain. Creating a common platform for reporting archived an airport wide 17.9% reduction in its carbon intensity between 2008 and 2013. The target for 2015 is a 25% reduction per work load unit - a unit is one passenger or 100kg of cargo.[22] North Sailing's ambition is to become the world's first whale watching company to offer zero carbon emission ocean sailing. With knowledge form the automobile industry the Regenerative Plugin Hybrid Propulsion system has been developed which is good for the environment as well as for the guest experience. When the boat is sailing the propeller is used as a generator to charge the battery. The electricity driven propeller eliminates engine noise and allows passengers to more peacefully experience whales in their natural habitat while causing them minimal disturbance, their whole fleet will by carbon-free by 2020.[23]

9. Best for Poverty Reduction

Each year the entries in this category get stronger and this year there were four winners. The Gold Award went to **Agri Tourism Development Corporation, India** (www.agritourism.in). Recognising that farm incomes in India have been stagnant in recent years, agritourism was identified as a viable way to diversify farm income as more urban Indian families seek to enjoy the countryside. ATDC has worked with 750 farmers in 218 locations offering packages which include coach transfers from urban areas to enjoy a wide range of activities from animal feeding and farm walks to festivals, folk dancing and music. The judges were impressed by the scale of the programme and the number of small farmers being offered a supplementary income to contribute to taking them out of poverty - an initiative ripe for replication.

The Silver Awards went to **Grootbos**[24], South Africa (www.grootbos.com) ; **OneSeed Expeditions**, USA (www.oneseedexpeditions.com), and **Uakari Lodge**, Brazil, (www.uakarilodge.com.br). Grootbos won a Gold Award in the poverty reduction category in African Awards in 2015. It conserves a large area of fynbos and recognises that it cannot be successful unless the community around it thrives too. It is a major contributor to the success and increasing prosperity of Gansbaai[25] creating local employment in the lodges but through its training programmes and micro-financing it has developed opportunities for local people beyond tourism.[26] OneSeed Expeditions have what they describe as a 'simple' business model[27], simple maybe, but certainly not common. They hire local guides, protect local environments and respect local customs - but what makes them stand out is their commitment to invest 10% of total revenue in loans to entrepreneurs in need of capital, this is done by partnering with microfinances institutions in each of the countries in which they operate. As they put it: "Microcredit is not a solution to

22 http://www.hongkongairport.com/eng/csr/carbon-reduction/index.html

23 http://www.northsailing.is/carbon-free-2015/

24 Grootbos won Highly Commended in the Conservation of Endangered Species category in 2004 & 2007

25 Winners of the Gold Award in the destination category see above,

26 http://www.grootbos.com/en/things-to-do/responsible-tourism & http://www.grootbosfoundation.org/

27 http://www.oneseedexpeditions.com/about/

poverty, but rather a tool to empower individuals looking to create opportunities through entrepreneurship." The judges were impressed by the model, the transparent reporting and the scale of what has already been achieved.[28] Uakari Lodge is a rare success story in community-based tourism. Started in 1998, Uakari is managed by the Mamirauá Institute and ten communities from Mamirauá Reserve, "the management, local guides, maids, cooks, auxiliaries and janitors" come from the riverine communities.[29] The lodge is moving from co-management to full community management by 2022. Average family earnings from tourism in the reserve has increased 26 fold between 1998 and 2013.[30]

10. Best Responsible Tourism Blog

The Gold Award went to **Uncornered Market (**uncorneredmarket.com/blog). Guided by their motto 'driven by curiosity, guided by respect' this blog is written by Daniel Noll and Audrey Scott, full-time travellers and storytellers. Their goal is to create a movement of respectful travellers with a story-filled life. They have inspired other bloggers and reach over 1.2 million people monthly through their travel and life adventure blog and social media platforms. The judges were impressed by the way they also deal with some of the more gritty issues around tourism, for example, volunteering, fear and awareness and giving gifts to local kids, and their ambition to create a community they describe as "a movement of respectful travellers… A movement of travelers whose decisions are at the same time for their own benefit and for the good of others. A movement that is not zero-sum." [31] Respect is a concept at the heart of Responsible Tourism. The Silver Award went to **Travel4Wildlife (**travel4wildlife.com) with 8,000 unique visitors per month and written by Hal and Cristina who declare that they are 'crazy about wildlife'.[32] They promote conservation through responsible wildlife travel. Each of their blogs is intended to communicate to readers how to see wildlife in an ethical manner, without disturbing them or their habitat, and in a way that benefits local communities.

11. Best Sea or River Cruise

There was one very worthy Gold winner in this category, but there was no Silver Award. The Gold Award went to **Ullswater Steamers,** UK **(**www.ullswater-steamers.co.uk). Ullswater Steamers carry over 320,000 passengers each year providing an attractive and environmentally sensitive form of transport for the local community and tourists. They were highly commended in the Responsible Tourism Awards in 2008 and 2011 and this year judges recognise that they have been improving their sustainability performance year on year. Since 2011 they have begun to monitor their performance in reducing water and carbon emissions, and working with other local public transport providers, and the national park, to encourage people out of cars. They have demonstrated how much progress it is possible to make by adopting a strategy of continuous improvement in sustainability and keeping at it. Others need to follow their example.

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28 http://www.oneseedexpeditions.com/invest/

29 http://uakarilodge.com.br/about-us/

30 Submission for the Awards

31 http://uncorneredmarket.com/art-of-traveling-world-for-good/

32 http://travel4wildlife.com/about-us/

12. Best for Wildlife Conservation

The Gold Award went to **Honko Mangrove Conservation and Education (**www.honko.org). Honko is working with the coastal communities of southwest Madagascar to improve the quality of life by working with the mangroves on which they are dependent. By empowering local people to take charge of their mangrove resources and use them sustainably, Honko works to enable them to secure sustainable and resilient livelihoods. Bee keeping, tilapia farming, alternative fuel wood, crafts and ecotourism are all part of an integrated strategy to enable the local people to improve their lives in harmony with their mangrove environment. The ecotourism initiative is small and only part of the strategy, but visitor numbers grew 60% between 2013 and 2014. The judges wanted to recognise that Honko has achieved sustainability and demonstrated what a small scale initiative can achieve for impoverished local communities and their environment.

There were three Silver Awards: **North Island, Seychelles** (www.north-island.com), **Tiger Trails Jungle Lodge**, India (www.tigertrailstadoba.com) and **Coral Cay Conservation** (www.coralcay.org). North Island is a very exclusive private resort recognised for using tourism to recreate an ecosystem of considerable conservation value by eradicating feral rats and re-introducing critically endangered bird species which are growing in number.[33] At Tiger Trails Jungle Lodge tourism has been used to raise the water table and re-wild barren land to create a good habitat for tigers and other species – and subsequently for tourists.[34] The judges recognised Coral Cay Conservation for their role in establishing a Marine Protected Area in Sogod Bay in Nueva Estrella Norte by conducting research and presenting the data collected by staff and volunteers, for their work in providing free training to local people who are taught to dive and survey so that they can protect the reefs and environment in their home areas, and for their work with local schools in raising awareness of the importance of environmental protection.[35]

Overall Winner

The 2015 Overall Winner was **LooLa Adventure Resort (**www.loola.net). The judges look for examples which are surprising and inspiring. LooLa is based on the principle that a good business can and should benefit all stakeholders too: local community, staff, and clients.[36] The judges singled them out because of their innovative approach, based on the Dutch "polder principle" - that all stakeholders should benefit - and because they have proven that it works. For example, LooLa sells a package in Singapore that includes accommodation, activities and food, but the staff operate their own shop and sell drinks, extra menus, massage, wake-boarding etc. Each department runs its own budgets, and the staff keep surpluses as long as guests are satisfied. These initiatives result in a 20 - 50% increase in local staff incomes and guests are encouraged to pay a bit extra to participate in community projects such as building reed beds, roads, and waste water processing systems. The judges applaud LooLa's innovative approaches to creating shared value

33 http://www.north-island.com/noahs-ark/

34 http://www.tigertrailstadoba.com/the-tigertrails-story.html

35 Submission documents.

36 http://www.loola.net/#Community

with the local community and creating better guest experiences. It makes good businesses sense and the judges hope that others will follow their lead.

If you are reading this and thinking that you know of other, or better, potential winners of the Awards please encourage them to submit an entry next year[37], only those which submit and do the paper work, can be winners. There will also be Awards again in Africa and Ireland in 2016.

Box 3: The World Responsible Tourism Awards Categories 2016

1 Best Activity for People with Disabilities
2 Best for Beach Tourism
3 Best Contribution to Cultural Heritage Conservation
4 Best Destination
5 Best for Engaging People & Culture
6 Best Hotel for responsible employment
7 Best Innovation by a tour operator
8 Best for Poverty Reduction
9 Best Responsible Tourism Marketing Campaign
10 Best for Wildlife Conservation
11 People's Choice in Responsible Tourism

37 www.responsibletravel.com/awards/ Awards normally open in April each year

Why do so-called "sustainable tourism or tourism-related projects" fail or succeed?

A proposal of Meta-analysis using an analytical grid

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Abstract:

There are many reasons for sustainable tourism or tourism-related projects' to fail or succeed - in some ways it is a "chicken and egg" type of question. Does the responsibility of projects' failure or success lies primarily with development agencies or with local communities? While it is obvious that sustainable tourism or tourism-related projects should be more business oriented – in a sense that development agencies, and particularly NGOs, often lack business capacities – there is no doubt that they need to simply be better accompanied. After reviewing the difficulties met by two projects aiming at both reducing poverty and improving environmental management practices in Burkina Faso and in Cambodia, this article proposes therefore an analytical grid to accompany developers and communities in the first phase of a project's implementation.

Keywords:

Sustainable Tourism, Projects, Meta-analysis, NGOs, local communities.

Introduction

In the early seventies, tourism started to interest both governments for its economic and financial values, and international organisations for its "*vital contribution made to the economic, social, cultural and educational progress of mankind and in safeguarding world peace*" (UN General Assembly, 1969)[2]. With the growing debate on the negative impact of tourism[3], especially the questions on whether the economic returns of tourism sufficiently offset its social and cultural costs, focusing on the economic welfare of the local people and the value and attitude changes that result, the first international congress of national

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2 In Frangialli, 2003

3 Forster, 1964; Cohen, 1979; De Kadt, 1979

tourism bodies took place in Manila (1980) where all aspects of tourism were recognized equally. After more than 20 years, criticisms became worse after the introduction of the so-called "oxymoron: sustainable development"[4] or "the Myth of sustainable tourism"[5], that reflects the conflict between commercial views on the one hand and environmental, social and cultural views on the other hand for the former author and that has reached something of an impasse for academic study according to the latter. Of course, the overall balance of positive and negative livelihood impacts varies enormously depending on the situation, the people and over time, and also depending on the extent to which local priorities are able to influence the planning process[6]. Today, many of the disadvantages associated with tourism are actually characteristics of growth and globalization. Nevertheless, Thomas[7] raises the issue of the capacity of some development organizations to make tourism an effective tool for reducing poverty, quoting Goodwin and Santilli[8] who highlighted that there is evidence that the large majority of community-based tourism initiatives, usually expected to be pro-poor, achieve very little success. Among others, the author underlines four main reasons to explain the failures of tourism projects. First, the expected requirements from international organizations to rapidly transform low-skilled or unskilled workers into entrepreneurs may be short-term based or too optimistic. Second, many sustainable tourism development projects thus tend to underestimate the complexity of the entrepreneurship creation process when involving vulnerable or low-educated populations and often do not attain the expected results and impacts. Third, the introduction of new 'forward-thinking' concepts, such as sustainability or carrying capacity, in remote and suddenly attractive areas, is definitely at odds with the traditional ways of thinking of most vulnerable populations. Fourth, the novelty that tourism represents, coupled with a different exploitation of the natural and cultural environment, makes the appropriation of projects more complex, costly and time consuming. The sustainability of an activity, a destination or a project can only be assessed over a long period, requiring a follow up and monitoring in the long term by specialists together with local people, who can hardly foresee or interpret negative impacts. Finally, there is also no doubt that development agencies, and particularly NGOs, often lack business capacities, and thus, they can hardly transmit the right tools and skills to the communities, so that their tourism venture becomes a profitable enterprise.

The first part of this paper will therefore present two interesting projects visited in the context of a "TrainForTrade" Training Program (UNCTAD) on sustainable tourism for development in Burkina Faso for the WAEMU and Cambodia. A second section will propose the main conclusions made for both cases by a group of approximately 20 participants following a 3-day training period. Finally, we will introduce an analytical framework developed in partnership with the Germany development agency GIZ, applied in Cambodia to accompany developers and communities in the first phase of project's implementation.

4 Aga Khan, 2002
5 Sharpley, 2010
6 Ashley et al., 2000
7 Thomas, 2014
8 Goodwin and Santilli, 2009

Bazoule and Chambok ecotourism sites: A brief description

1 **Bazoule**: Located about 30km of Ouagadougou (one hour), Bazoule is a village of about 5,000 people known for its crocodiles' ponds where local communities have come for centuries to ask crocodiles for good health, fertility, success, fortune and protection against enemy. More recently, tourists started to come and sit on the back of the crocodiles. In early 2000, three entities (Association du Développement Touristique de Bazoulé (ADTB), Comité de coopération de Belfort, Ministère de la Culture, des Arts et du Tourisme) started working together in order to address local socio-economic issues by the implementation of a tourism project. A few years later (2006), they've requested and obtained financial assistance from the "Sustainable Tourism for Eliminating Poverty (ST-EP) program to fund additional bungalows for the project.

In 2014, the project included a restaurant, a small museum funded recently by the Japanese cooperation and 13 bungalows[9] of various sizes able to welcome up to 28 persons. The site receives about 2500 visitors per year including 50% of international tourists.

2 **Chambok**: the site of Chambok is a community made of 9 rural villages located 2 hours from Phnom Penh (the capital) towards Sihanoukville (the coastal area). In 2002, an NGO "Mlup Baitong" and the community of Chambok decided to jointly set up an ecotourism project (home-stay + visits), taking into consideration an important deforestation problem in the surroundings of the community (around 94% of the Chambok households were engaged in a wide range of illegal forest extraction activities in this area (timber cutting, charcoal and fuel wood production, non-timber forest product, collection and wildlife hunting) and the will to preserve natural resources, such as the well-known Chambok waterfall (40m high). Additionally, with low agricultural yields and limited farmland, the poverty levels were considered as dramatic. Mlup Baitong had accompanied the community until 2010, when the project was handed over to the local population. In overall, the project consisted of:

- The construction, renovation and maintenance of infrastructure and facilities.
- The building the capacity of the CBET MC members and service providers.
- The establishment and marketing of income generation services and tourism products.

9 3 bungalows with 3 beds including bathrooms and showers, 3 bungalows with 2 beds including bathrooms and showers, 6 bungalows with 2 beds only, 1 bungalow with on bed only.

- The maintenance of the eco-tourism site environmentally friendly
- The formation of a Women Association and the development of micro-businesses.

Projects evaluation

1 **Bazoule**: Started in 1999, the project was built without any business plan and tourism specialist on board. Following a first visit during a UNWTO conference in 2010 in which the question of the existence of a business plan was raised by one of the authors of this article, an audit was finally made in 2010. The absence of such extensive commercial evaluation constitutes the basis of the current difficulties met by the project's lodging dimension. What is indeed more surprising is that donors did not require the project to provide evidence of the economic feasibility of the project. The issue is that the proximity to Ouagadougou and the low standard of rooms makes the project's lodging dimension unattractive to international visitors. In 2009/2010, the bungalows' occupancy rate was about 4% only corresponding to 177 overnight stays within a year for a turn over of €1,320. But, the maintenance (running cost) of the bungalows was about €1,450 for the same period. With regards to the current number of visitors and the camp's capacity (10,220 room nights), the occupancy rate cannot exceed 25% (if all visitors to the site would stay at least a night). With an initial investment for the project's lodging dimension of €38,000, the project is today unlikely to allow a positive return on investment. Moreover, future needs, such as the depreciation costs and the maintenance of the bungalows and of their equipment, represent a serious challenge for the project. Therefore, is the project's lodging dimension going to become a burden for the other dimensions of the project (Museum, catering, etc.) or to be dependent on foreign aid and assistance?

2 **Chambok**: In July 2006, the Chambok CBET project received a bronze medal from the prime minister through the Ministry of Environment for best practice in natural resource protection and community livelihood improvement. Since the organization has left in 2010, the revenues were however rapidly decreasing (issues of access to market, networking, growing competition with other sites, etc.) and therefore the share of benefits for involved stakeholders was getting smaller. The evaluation made in 2011 by Cambodian officials from the Ministry of Tourism within a "TrainForTrade" Training Program on sustainable tourism has raised several issues. Since a small percentage only of the population was involved in the project and only one out of 9 villages was visited by international tourists, it was observed that tensions (jealousy) existed within the social fabric in terms of involved vs. left out categories of populations. Furthermore, in terms of environ-

mental issues, the gains were bigger for the population with the previous charcoal activity. Even though most of the population has now understood that the tourism activity is more sustainable and revenue generating on the long term, many of them still cut trees as soon as the project leader is absent (from whom the project is heavily dependent). The distribution mechanisms and the use of tourism benefits (community fund) for activities other than those expected highlight the need for the development of consistent and reliable monitoring systems which must be transparent to all parties.

Proposal of meta-analysis using an analytical grid

This paper doesn't aim at reducing the value of efforts and of the engagement of the people involved in the two above described projects. Other examples of projects, which suffer either business failure or community disengagement, are unfortunately numerous. The lack of technical expertise of those managing the funds, the absence of communities' sense of entrepreneurship and the inability to look forward, leading to strong levels of dependency upon donors or visitors' generosity are all important issues to be taken into account when studying the feasibility and relevance of potential tourism related initiatives for pro-poor local economic development.

An assessment primary data checklist appears for the authors as a prerequisite to the implementation of any business project targeting local communities. It consists in a methodology being usable for non-tourism expert, to undertake a first basic evaluation of a tourism initiative potential. It is nevertheless recommended to secure further advice from a tourism expert before starting any implementation.

Figure 1: The five dimensions of the Meta-analysis

Source: Authors

It is often assumed that tourism is easily developed and systematically profitable, especially when located near a major tourism site where so many tourists are passing by, it seems to be easy to take advantage of these flows, not fully grasping the complexity of tourism development and the potential negative impacts it may bring along.

The methodology to evaluate the feasibility and relevance of developing tourism follows the same general process as for any other product but as well covers other dimensions due to the three unique specificities of tourism:

- It is consumed in the place of 'production', tourists come to the destination, this giving better chances for locals to access this market directly
- Customer's satisfaction is often based on the quality of the experience, on intangible elements and perceptions (the quality of the product, hygiene and safety being the prerequisites for choosing a destination)

- It involves as a goal or a necessity, close and direct human, socio-cultural and socio economic interactions

Evaluating the tourism potential of a site or feasibility of any tourism project requires five main steps:

1. A description of the tourism site or tourism (or tourism-related) initiative

We use the term 'tourism initiative' including in it all products, goods, services or activity, because a large share of the tourism offer is actually intangible/immaterial (service, activity, landscape, etc.), and therefore the term 'product' is too restrictive. In order to make a proper analysis of any tourism initiative it is important to understand what precisely it is planning to offer and how it relates to the overall existing offer in the destinations, how it complements, and enriches the tourism value chain.

- Provide a brief description of the destination or tourism initiative; what are the main assets, the cultural and natural features which could be of interest for tourists or visitors?
- What is the tourism or tourism-related initiative, if any yet? What products, goods, services or activity or combination of those are already operated, or foreseen?
- What are the complementary services available to support the project? (For example if someone wants to develop a bike tour is there any bike shop in the vicinity to provide bike repairs?)

2. A description of the enabling environment

As tourism is part of a system, any tourism service, product or activity must find its place within a value chain that will enable it to be accessible to the tourists. Thus it requires gathering a few conditions that will optimise its viability and sustainability, and these have been divided into the following:

- *Access, signage & infrastructures*: How is the overall accessibility to the site, what are the facilities available within the site and around? Is the site easily accessible in every season? Is it easy to find? Are the main infrastructures in place to welcome tourists? Ticketing booth, on site signage, toilets, cleaning spot… What infrastructures are needed to welcome tourists?
- *Local institutional and organizational context*: What is the institutional framework at the destination? Is there any structure to support the project and its operations? How is tourism organised or would it be organised on site? Are there any external constraints from regulations and institutions?
- *Human resources and community participation*: This looks at the availability of human resources and at the capacities of local project initiators or local communities to be part of the project.
- *Social & environmental context*: This part looks at the various socio-cultural and environmental aspects which could benefit or, on the contrary, hinder the project's sustainability or even the destination's future. What are the foreseen consequences or impacts on the social structure, the power structures, on the cultural values or on the environment at large?

Depending on the type of site or tourism initiative proposed, some of these factors are internal, such as the organisational scheme within the site, a framework for stakeholder collaboration, or linkages with tourism industry. And some are external factors such as road access or the overall socio economic situation. A more in depth analysis of the enabling environment will be required before pursuing any project.

3. A market analysis

In order to be successful, a product, activity or tourism service needs to meet significant demand. "Is there a market?" is the main question any project developer should answer first. We recommend that a precise qualitative analysis per market type is done prior to any tourism project implementation. This helps the destination to decide which markets they are willing to target as some may be more beneficial than others, not only financially but also to maintain the destination environmental and social balance.

- *Size & growth*: overall numbers of tourists from each source markets: market type, overall market source size, market trends and interests
- *Travel patterns*: how do each market type/source travel: in groups, individually (family, friends), self-organised or through a tour operator or travel agent, length of stay, accommodation & transportation used, activities
- *Spending patterns:* how much each market is likely to spend, what do they like to buy
- *Motivations*: why are tourists coming in the area? What is their decisive draw, relaxation, fun, adventure, cultural experience, team building, natural landscapes, food, shopping, etc.? Tourists most often combine several motivations within one travel so priority and secondary motivations need to be identified.
- *Expectations*: are the target markets identified satisfied? Is there any gap in the offer which could be fulfilled? What is the quality level of expectations, services, facilities, etc.?

4. A competitiveness analysis, matching demand and supply

The logical next step is to confront the offer over demand and evaluate the match between demand and the tourism initiative. The task is then here to identify and evaluate what is the existing offer in that destination (all types of tourism related offer and value chains associated, access, infrastructures), as well as from a competitive point of view, what is the competition from similar product, activity or tourism service in this country and/or, elsewhere (depending on what you are planning to develop), how is it performing?

Does a similar tourism initiative already exist in the destination or nearby, is it a new one (existing offer but not in the destination) or an innovative one? This inventory and assessment of tourism offer, its background, its positive and negative impacts, will help to define better the potential new initiatives and as well identify new ones.

5. An estimation of impacts

A sustainable approach is a guarantee for long-term success and satisfaction of all stakeholders. It involves including in the impact estimation the three major pillars of sustainability; financial, socio-cultural and environmental.

- **Direct and indirect economic impacts:** An estimation of financial benefits including pro-poor benefits is a milestone of the study. Assessing potential impacts of a future activity is an exercise that requires estimates based on hypothesis of visitors' flows and pricing schemes.

  External private initiators often conduct tourism projects in rural areas of developing countries, as local communities don't have the knowledge, capacities and market access. For similar reasons most staff will not be recruited locally, resulting in a situation where the local communities are left aside and do not directly benefits from tourism. But such projects can also be pro-poor by generating indirect economic impacts through local provision of food and crafts and various services. However, adequate time and follow-up will have to be allotted to setting up service groups and payment mechanisms in destinations where tourism initiatives are expected to be implemented, thus avoiding inequalities in the sharing of benefits amongst locals.
- **Socio-cultural impacts:** Socio-cultural impacts encompass a number of aspects, including contribution to the human development, empowerment and the well-being of local communities and society at large; preservation of cultural identity; respect for local communities' human rights and indigenous peoples' rights, revival and evolution of traditions. As always there can be negative and positive socio cultural impacts attached to one project; the objective is to find the right balance between both and being able to make conscious decisions based on adequate information. Needless to say that projects that are likely to disturb the existing structures of power within a destination (e.g. favouring the enrichment of a group of people – especially when these are not traditional leaders) are prone to fail.
- **Environmental impacts:** Environmental impacts can be of different nature, they can be evaluated at global level: global warming or, at local level; water resource shortage due to hotel consumption, impact on forest degradation and biodiversity such as the increased use of firewood to fulfil tourism demand for home-stay in remote areas. The environmental balance will be positive if it includes measures for a sustainable transport development and sustainable use of resources; reducing, minimising and preventing pollution and waste (e.g. solid and liquid waste, emissions to air); for conserving plants, animals, ecosystems and protected areas (biodiversity); and conserving landscapes and overall natural heritage.

Conclusion

The positioning of tourist sites as responsible destinations and inclusion at early stage of socio-cultural and environmental measures was shown to contribute to increased economic benefits[10], as it allows higher pricing as long as revenues are proven to be rightly allocated to local people and environmental conservation programmes, demonstrating once more if necessary that these three pillars are intrinsically linked. However, evidence from this paper and other surveys have shown that many responsible tourism initiatives are indeed not sustainable. Thus, we recommend that any tourism initiatives must be economically and technically sound to take shape, their main characteristics must be

10 Bauld, 2011

described precisely, and value chain linkages, which are usually the most efficient poverty reduction activities, have to be precisely identified.

This paper has provided the reader with a qualitative methodology to assess both the feasibility and the relevance of any tourism initiative for pro-poor local economic development: how visitors' expenditures would flow into the local economy, how projects would benefit to the local economy and where opportunities exist to increase these benefits exponentially. But it also highlights the complexity of involving either vulnerable or low-educated population still living for many in a sort of subsistence environment. There are therefore many issues to cover, and it is essential to study them all, following a holistic approach as the meta-analysis grid does.

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Risk management and responsible supply chain management in the hospitality industry

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Abstract

This article reviews the classical supply chain management approaches taken by the hospitality sector and their impacts on the firm and its stakeholders. Based on a comprehensive of academic and grey literature, we conducted a risk management analysis based on Benseddik's (2005) six types of risk because of their instrumental approach for stakeholders (reputation, cohesion, efficiency, legal, security and transparency). The assessment suggests that environmental issues in general, working conditions and product quality/security have the highest risks for hotels' supply chains. We exemplify our analysis with grey literature to develop a matrix outlining the exernalities caused by traditional supply chain management and the opportunities available to improve the overall impact. By reviewing mitigation strategies available to tackle the issues identified, we outline the opportunities hotels have to integrate sustainability decision-making in their supply chain and create change. The article has practical implications for the hospitality industry by presenting, in the form of a list of indicators, the key issues hotels should be aware of when reviewing their supply chain's sutainability.

Keywords

impacts, supply chain, sustainability, hospitality, externalities, risk

I. Introduction

The client is king. This is a well-known sentence in the hospitality sector whose major purpose is to satisfy the clients' desires. This is clearly influenced by how efficiently the supply chain activities are managed because supply chain management (SCM) enables the businesses to deliver the right goods and services at the right time and price. SCM represents an important part of the hotel's activities and has a great impact on profitability[1]. Despite the fact that responsible supply chain management is becoming an important issue of the Corporate Social Responsibility agenda[2], few studies have raised the questions of the impacts of supply chain activities on external stakeholders. The impact is significant in the hospitality and tourism sector as it represents 6% of the worldwide exports, making its supply chain an important a global issue[3]. This is why the paper will focus on the topic of responsible supply chain management for the tourism sector, highlighting its impacts

1 Ashley et al., 2005

2 Zadek, 2004; ITP, 2006; BITC, 2008; Deloitte, 2010

3 ILO, 2011

and the risks to be managed.

While there is a great amount of research on supply chain management for the manufacturing industry, little attention has been paid on the hospitality and tourism industry. Sinclair & Stabler[4] noted the lack of consideration by the practitioners and academics for the supply side of the tourism industry in comparison with other research areas, such as tourism marketing. Almost twenty years later, the situation has not changed much[5] and the topic remains underexplored[6]. Responding to the authors' call for developing more instrumental tools, this paper will discuss the risk represented by the supply chain activities for the hospitality industry and open the discussion on how to rethink supply chain management more responsibly.

The purpose of this paper is to provide an heuristic device of issues to think about when managing the supply chain, gathered in the form of a checklist. The review focuses on the impacts of the supply chain for other stakeholers according to the principles of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The paper first determines the characteristics of the supply chain in the hospitality industry before demonstrating its importance. It then outlines the principal classical supply chain strategies and their impacts on other stakeholders. Then, the research methodolgly is explained, before the findings show how the impacts of the supply chain strategies transcribe into risks. Using a risk management analysis approach, the study determines the most relevant risks for the hospitality sector and discusses some mitigations currently available. The paper concludes by presenting a practical tool made of a list of indicators reflecting the key areas to consider when managing the supply chain.

II. Literature Review

A. Supply chain in the tourism sector

A.1 Definition of the tourism supply chain

Globalisation has made supply chains more complex, and managing them efficiently has become a key strategic tool which can helps corporations to create competitive advantage[7]. SCM is "*a set of approaches utilized to efficiently integrate suppliers, manufacturers, warehouses, and stores, so that merchandise is produced and distributed at the right quantities, to the right locations, and at the right time, in order to minimize system-wide costs while satisfying service level requirements*" [8]. SCM is not restricted to purchasing and logistic activities, but includes tangible and intangible flows, i.e. "*all activities and processes starting from extraction of raw materials through the usage and consumption to the penultimate stage of disposal*[9]". However, there is not one but many definitions of what a supply chain is and it varies according to each industry[10]. Definition and management of the supply chain in tourism and hospitality is particularly complex because it is a global economy which

4 Sinclaire & Stabler, 1997

5 in Zhang et al., 2009

6 Zhang et al., 2009

7 Duffy et al., 2001; Kodali and Soni, 2008; PWC, 2008

8 Simchi-Levi et al., 2003, p. 7

9 Chakraborty, 2010, p. 10

10 Maloni and Brown, 2006

involves many different partners in the delivery of the tourism service (see Figure 1). No consensus has been reached on a clear definition of the tourism supply chain (TSC) but it "*comprises the suppliers of all the goods and services that go into the delivery of tourism products to consumers*" [11]. Key players are tour operators, travel agents, tourism providers such as the lodging, food or entertainment businesses as well as tourists[12].

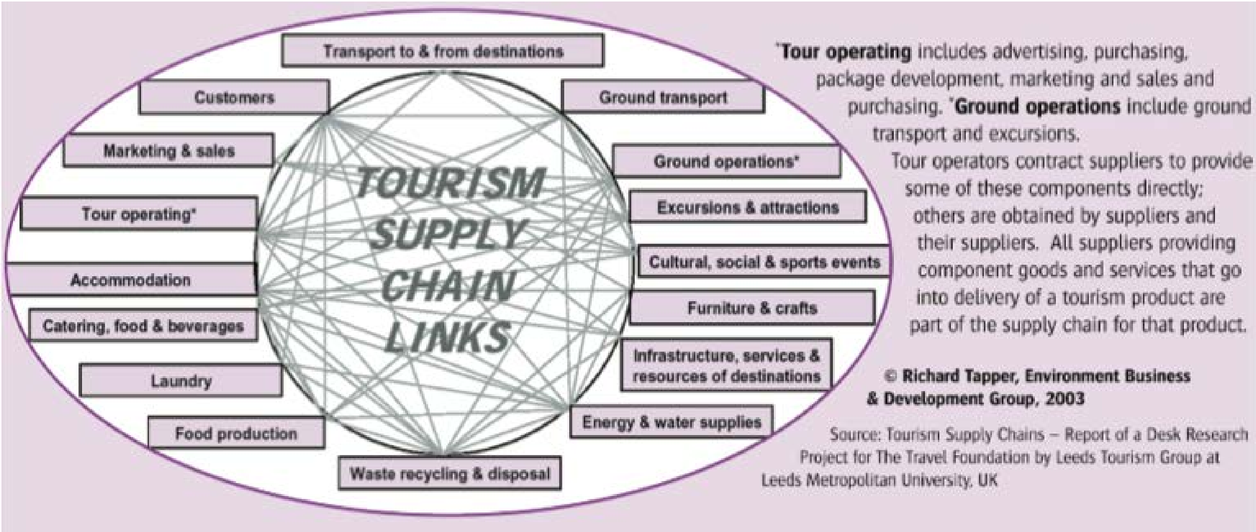

Figure 1: The components of the tourism supply chain[13]

The involvement of various players makes it difficult to define what the tourism supply chain is and, consequently, how best to manage it. Coordination between different players with heterogenous objectives is a key point in the TSC. Several supply studies in the manufacturing area have proved that coordination enhances the performance and profitability of the entire supply chain and its participants[14]. Tourism is above all an experience made of different service components provided by various partners. For instance, hotels cannot provide a fine dining experience if the quality of the food provided by its suppliers is insufficient and information provided by the travel agencies influences tourists' perception of the hotel's services. TSC involves two-party relationships, which signifies that every tourism entity depends on others for responding to customer needs[15]. However, the heterogenity of the tourism players, their objectives, the local legislations in place and the available resources makes it extremely complicated to coordinate and implement uniform supply chain guidelines[16].

A.2 Power distribution

SCM is about dynamics and interactions between its various actors. Research within the manufacturing sector has shown that power repartition is uneven and supply chain players can be divided in two broad categories: the ones influencing the overall supply chain an the ones dictated by it. Power lies at the end of the supply chain, close to the

11 Taper and Font, 2004
12 Kaukal et al., 2000; Zhang et al., 2009
13 ITP, 2006
14 Chen et al., 2001; Simchi-Levi et al., 2003; Theuvsen, 2004; Mitra and Bhardwaj, 2010
15 Zhang et al., 2009, p. 13
16 ILO, 2008

end-consumers[17]- i.e. tour operators. For example, supplier codes of conduct developed by tour operators such as Kuoni, TUI or Thomas Cook have begun to influence the entire tourism supply chain. For instance, Travelife is a system designed to increase the number of certified accomodation suppliers for tour operators[18].

This is one perspective. Looking more closely into the supply chain's agents, we can establish a second layer of agents taking part in the overall tourism product. Those are the hotels' suppliers, such as for instance food or transport providers or cleaning companies. A hotel's SCM includes among others the purchase of food, equipment and other goods, services delivered by external partners, such as transport or activities organised for the clients, as well as energy's acquisition[19]. In this perspective, hotels are seen as end-consumers, having the power to enforce their approach on their own suppliers. Indeed, while interactions between tourism players reflect the supply chain dynamics of the entire tourism sector, it should not be forgotten that each actors has its own supply chain. SCM strategies impact on the firm's performance and profitability as well as on its stakeholders. Hence we shall will look more closely into the strategies in place in the hospitality sector.

B. Impacts of the supply chain

B.1 Increased risk for the business

SCM has acquired a more global and strategic dimension, enabling organisations to increase their efficiency and, consequently, their profits[20]. However, the globalisation of the supply chain has some negative consequences, as a global and complex supply chain is more vulnerable to exchange rate volatility, geopolitical relations, economic crises or natural disasters, increasing the risk of disruptions[21]. Disruptive supply chain events affecting the everyday business operations and the quality of the end product result in the diminution of overall sales and market shares while increasing operational costs[22]. This diminishes the firm's credibility towards its shareholders and stakeholders, creating a long term negative impact that increases the cost of capital, sinks share value and reinforces volatility[23]. Risk linked with supply chain issues are the most significant among all operational risks[24], and 75% of managers report that risk linked with the supply chain has increased[25]. Therefore, there is a direct link between a supply chain's vulnerability and the organisation's global performance.

B.2. Strategies in place

SCM focuses on time, size and quantity[26], aiming at minimising operational costs while

17 Standing, 2009; Shinohara, 2010

18 Travelife, 2015

19 Ashely et al., 2005

20 Duffy et al., 2001; Kodali and Soni, 2008; Bhardwaj and Mitra, 2010

21 Boosman, 2006; PWC, 2008; BITC, 2008; Welborn, 2010; KPMG, 2012

22 PWC, 2008

23 Boosman, 2006; PWC, 2008

24 Tony et al., 2009, cited in Bhardwaj and Mitra 2010, p. 49

25 Welborn, 2010

26 Ritzer, 2011

raising the firm's productivity[27]. The modern supply chain is customer and productivity oriented[28]. The first well-known supply chain strategy is importing goods from developing and emerging countries, resulting from the globalisation of the world economic system and a stronger international currencies[29]. Importing food and beverage goods reflects the overall trend: worldwide importations have grown from 62 milliards US dollars in 1948 to more than 12 billions in 2006[30] and this trend is expected to continue[31]. Sub-contracting, outsourcing and economies of scale are used to reduce costs[32]. Hotels outsource or sub-contract low value activities such as laundry to local suppliers[33], and join international companies to reach a critical mass that enables them to remain globally competitive[34]. Furthermore, vertical integration improves the control of the hetereogeneous tourism supply chain[35], as seen in corporations such as TUI, that own the entire supply chain, from the lodging to the transport and marketing activities.

All those strategies enhance the supply chain's efficiency, but only from the firm's point of view. In TSC, the main performance indicator is the supply chain's monetary value for the different players[36]. Nevertheless, this measure only takes into account the tourism businesses directly involved in the delivery of tourism, without considering other stake-holders, such as their suppliers, the environment or the local communities. Strategies are based on an unilateral short term optimisation approach with externalities accrued by other stakeholders[37]. They rely upon the false paradigm of unlimited and cheap natural resources at the companies' disposal[38]. This encourages excessive use and waste which leads to a rapid decline in available resources[39]. As the tourism industry relies heavily on natural and cultural resources, their degradation impacts the product's sustainability. The importance of the supply chain reinforces the necessity to manage it carefully, taking into account its long-term impacts.

B.3. Responsible approaches in the hospitality industry

Responsible resource management is becoming an important topic in the hospitality industry[40]. The negative consequences of our economic system have influenced public attitudes towards multinational corporations and CSR is seen as a way to rebuild people's trust[41]. 66% of the companies reported an increase in inquiries over the past 12 months from shareholders and investors about sustainability issues and this trend will continue

27 Duffy et al., 2001; Zsolt, 2001; Shinohara, 2010

28 Kodali and Soni, 2008

29 Sustain, 1999; Donval et Moatti, 2007

30 OMC, 2007

31 Donval, Y. and Moatti, 2007

32 Boosman, 2006 ; Kodali & Soni, 2008 ; PWC, 2008

33 ILO, 2010

34 Cline, 2002; Wang and Wang, 2009

35 Duffy et al., 2001; Theuvsen, 2004; Simchi-Level, 2003; Zhang et al., 2009

36 Zhang et al., 2009

37 Shinohara, 2010

38 Jackson, 2010; Shinohara, 2010; Lambin, 2011

39 Jackson, 2010; WBCSD, 2012

40 Halcomb et al., 2007; Wang and Wang, 2009

41 Lantos, 2001, BITC, 2009

to grow[42]. Nevertheless, responsible supply chain activites remain an area overlooked by the companies. Hotel groups only report on the Sustainability of their supply chains indirectly[43]. They report that some specific supply chain programmes have been developed but they mainly focus on water, energy saving and waste management. Even if social and ethical topics have also started to gain in importance, they target mainly employees and not suppliers.

Among initiatives specifically targeted at supply chain management, we could cite the Sustainable Procurement project and the Hospitality Sustainable Purchasing Index, which offer clear guidelines to hotels to reinforce the sustainability aspect of their purchasing strategies[44]. The *Icarus Project* from the GBTA Foundation targets the business travel and meetings industry, providing travel buyers and their suppliers with information, education, support and recognition programmes to enhance their sustainability[45]. The *Travelife programme* is a training, management and certification initiative which helps travel agencies, tour operators and accommodations to be more sustainable, with a tailored programme and a certification system to encourage and reward sustainable suppliers[46]. Nevertheless, initiatives like remain an exception and lack a holistic perspective. In order to implement a comprehensive sustainable SCM approach, it is necessary to determine which externalities arise from the current supply chain strategies.

C. Negative externalities of the supply chain management

The previous section has shown the specific nature of the tourism supply chain and demonstrated its great importance for corporations while highlighting the main strategies currently in place. Nevertheless, those strategies are short term and unilateral. Importing, outsourcing, sub-contracting, vertical integration and strategic alliances create externalities paid by society. Reinforcing sustainability of the hospitality supply chain requires to rethink SCM strategies to embrace direct and indirect stakeholders. We can regroup the principal negative consequences (Tables 1,2 and 3)

Traditional SCM does not optimise the supply chain to create shared value. The strategies in place create negative impacts for the environment, the local communities and the local economy. By creating externalities on the rest of society, those strategies also jeopardise the operational and reputational supply chain's integrity[47], creating an important risk for the businesses. In order to better manage this risk, it is necessary first to recognise the presence of those negative impacts and develop new responsible supply chain practices.

42 Ernst&Young, 2012
43 Holcomb et al ., 2007
44 Hotel Management, 2011
45 GBTA.com, 2015
46 Travelife, 2015
47 KPMG, 2008

Table 1: Economic impacts

Negative consequences	Reasons	
Supplier vulnerability	Dependence : subcontracting was perceived by the organisations as the opportunity for transferring risks and responsibilities to suppliers[1]	Inequitable contractual practices: Thanks to their size and influence, big companies can impose one-sided conditions on their suppliers[2]
Hinder local communities' economic and social development	Inequality in the distribution of wealth: lack of financial support and hotel's high standards are hindrances to small producers and suppliers from developing countries[3]	Knowledge control: Developed countries, by delocalising only unskilled or low-skilled activities, keep control of knowledge and, consequently, their economic superiority[51]
	Economic leakage: Importation of good leads to economic leakage and diminution of investments. In the developing countries, economic leakage represents a loss between 30 to 50% of the gross tourism income[4]	
Increased risk in product quality and security	Loss of control resulting from the numerous levels of sub-contracting. Risk is even greater that the majority of the production is outsourced in emerging countries where health and security standards are lower than in industrialised countries[5]	

1 Standing, 2009
2 Shinohara, 2010
3 BITC, 2009; BSR&UN Global Compact, 2010
4 ILO, 2011
5 SCRLC, 2011

Table 2: Social impacts

Negative consequences	Reasons	
Negative impact on local communities	**Loss of traditions:** Since traditional and artisanal products don't meet the new exigencies of the modern society, they are gradually replaced by standardized and industrialized ones, which are not anymore representative of a place[6]	**Inequitable land distribution:** importation of farmland goods from developing countries usually jeopardizes food security of the exporting countries[7]
	Impact on the local population's health arising from dangerous manufacturing waste and intensive production activities[8]	
Working conditions of the suppliers' employees	Outsourcing of activities generally occurs in emerging countries where **working legislation is used as a competitive advantage** on the international scene and where working conditions are more difficult[9]	
	Abuse in the Labour rights, namely maximum working hours per day, minimum wage or health and safety standards[10]	**No respect for Human Rights,** namely child labour, forced labour, discrimination and freedom of association [11]
	Interference in employees' private life, as it is still often the case in the manufacturing cities of developing countries[12]	

6 Ritzer, 2011
7 Cited in Wade, 2001
8 Badruddin, 2008
9 Standing, 2009
10 BITC, 2009; BSR&UN Global Compact, 2010
11 Wade, 2011
12 Sustain, 1999

Table 3: Environmental impacts

<table>
<tr><th>Negative consequences</th><th colspan="2">Reasons</th></tr>
<tr><td>Global warming</td><td colspan="2">Rise of the greenhouse emissions arising from an increase of the trade between the countries, industrialised production and actual economic strategies implemented for increasing firms' productivity and efficiency[12]</td></tr>
<tr><td>Decrease in natural resources</td><td colspan="2">Irrational use of the current resources, resulting from an overall increase in the world production. The decrease in freshwater and fossil fuels resources are the two main issues for the economic sector. Indeed, it is expected that freshwater demand in 2030 overtake by 40% the supply. In twenty years, more than half of the world population would be living in a water distress area[13]</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Ecosystem destruction and loss of the world biodiversity</td><td>Increase of waste resulting from logistical activities, such as production, transport and stocking[14]</td><td>Result of the past economic activities: about 60% of the world ecosystem has been deteriorated during the past fifty years[15]</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Pollution arising from industrial activities that reject toxic waste and create an enrichment of water, known as the eutrophication phenomenon[16]</td></tr>
</table>

13 Marx, 2011
14 Wade, 2001
15 Vidal, 2009
16 Badruddin, 2008

III. Methodology

The literature review has put into light the importance of SCM for the hospitality and tourism sector as well as its current externalities on other stakeholders. In order to help the hospitality sector to better manage the risk linked with those externalities, a mixed methods study was undertaken with the goal of developing a practical instrument to be used by academics and practitioners.

The study begins with a review of the different impacts linked with the supply chain strategies commonly used in the hospitality sector. We consider the impacts of supply chain for the suppliers, their employees, the environment and the local communities. Freeman[48] demonstrates that an organisation holds responsibility towards the people directly and indirectly linked with its activities. The study classifies the different impacts using Elkington's triple bottom line approach[49]. An analysis of the impacts of the supply chain strategies is established through a comprehensive review of both industry and academic literature, to raise awareness on the externalities induced by the current SCM strategies and not to enumerate all possible impacts.

In the second phase, the study undertakes a risk management analysis of the different impacts established to determine priorities, using the method developed by Benseddik[50]. This approach does not limit risk to its financial aspect but encompasses six different types of risks that take into consideration all stakeholders. The risk analysis is based on secondary academic and grey sources. Several obvious limitations should be noted. First, the weighting between the different risks was strongly influenced by the quantity and

48 Freeman, 1984

49 Elkington, 1999

50 Benseddik, 2005

quality of the resources found. While this might reflect the overall importance of the topic, it does not exclude that some crucial impacts or practices might have not been taken into account or weighted properly. Second, weighting between important, moderate and low remains basic and does not reflect all the complexity of the subject. Third, the risk analysis results have not been scientifically validated.

Selecting the three most important risks for the hospitality sector, a comprehensive review of the various mitigations strategies developed by experts from both academic and grey literature was undertaken. This approach allows the author to rely on exisiting research and expert knowledge. However, as previously, this creates a bias as it cannot be certified that all mitigation strategies have been reviewed and presented. Lastly, the recommendations were transformed into indicators gathered in the form of a checklist. The purpose of the paper was to establish a practical tool, not to create another CSR supplier database or to develop more recommendations per se. This tool aims to offer an overview of the different aspects to consider when analysing the impacts of the hospitality supply chain.

IV. Result and discussion

A. Risk management analysis

A.1 Method

Previous sections have shown a wide range of impacts induced by the SCM, classified into different categories (see Tables 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3), which are now prioritised in order to manage them more effiencently, to focus on the ones representing the greatest risk for the business. The author has chosen the risk management analysis method developed by Benseddik in its instrumental approach for stakeholders[51]. This approach does not limit risk to its financial aspect but encompasses six different types of risks that take into consideration all stakeholders:

1 **Reputation** risk corresponds to the brand image of a company and can jeopardize its licence to operate.

2 **Cohesion** risk refers to a company's internal stability, which is the result of relationships kept between the company's actors.

3 **Efficiency** risk indicates an organization's global efficiency, which arises from the strategies and internal processes set up.

4 **Legal** risk are linked with the consequences of the firm's activities on other stakeholders, including the eventual compensation costs.

5 **Security** risk on economic markets refers to the supply chain's security in terms of quality and continuity.

6 **Transparency** risk corresponds to the public perception of the company's commitment through the quantity and the quality of the information communicated to the rest of the community.

51 Benseddik, 2005

Matching the six types of risk with the different categories of impacts identified in the Tables 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3, the author was able to create a matrix revealing the most important risks for the hospitality sector. Establishing which of these were urgent, moderate and low depended on the importance of the impact for each category and its urgency. The risk analysis is based on secondary academic and grey source due to limited resources.

A.2 Environmental issues

The risk management analysis reveals that the main risks are in the environmental categories, namely issues linked with global warming, decrease in natural resources, ecosystem destruction and loss of biodiversity. Hotels leave a significant footprint linked with their energy consumption, water consumption, waste production and eutrophisation of water[52] as the tourism industry produces 5% of the total worlwide dioxide emissions, 20% of which originate from hotels[53]; and 66% of the greenhouse gases produced from hotels come directly from their consumption of fossil fuels[54]. While 75% of energy consumption comes directly from hotel activities, water consumption and pollution are principally induced by the agricultural supply chain[71]. The latter is responsible for 86% of the hotels' water consumption and 94% of the eutrophisation of water[71] which accelerates changes in ecosystems and loss of biodiversity[55].

Through its various activities, such as the production of goods, packaging or transport, the supply chain also participates in the rise of greenhouse gas emissions which are directly implied in the current global warming issue[56]. It is now widely accepted that global warming represents a threat to the natural resources and, consequently, to the future of tourism which directly relies upon them[57]. As greenhouse gases continue to grow, the situation has become alarming and has forced managers to act[58]. First, it is expected that prices of the natural resources will continue to increase[59]. As energy consumption represents the second highest cost in a hotel, this will directly impact on hotel profitability[60]. Second, legislation is becoming stricter and stakeholder expectations are raising: 70% of stakeholders expect companies to better control their C02 emissions[61] and "*if companies had to pay for the full environmental costs of their production, they would lose 41 cents for every US$1 in earning on average*"[62]. Consumers want to minimise their footprint and expect companies to make efforts for greening their supply chain in terms of energy and water consumption and waste production[63].

52 Accor, 2011
53 ITP, 2006
54 Accor, 2011
55 Badruddin, 2008
56 The Economist, 2011
57 Hickmann, 2006
58 Vidal, 2009
59 KPMG 2008; Jackson, 2010
60 CELB and TOI, 2006
61 Ernest&Young, 2012
62 KPMG, 2008
63 Deloitte, 2011

A.3 Safety issues

Apart from the environmental risk, product quality and safety resulting from the supply chain are further important risks for hotels. Health scandals have raised public attention towards the supply chain as consumers need reassurance and want more information on the origin of products. Technology allows access to this information more quickly and easily, increasing the risk of scandals for the companies[64]. Stronger pressure is put on international corporations who are seen by the general public to be the ones responsible for the entire supply chain safety[65]. Risk is excacerbated by the current outsourcing and sub-contracting strategies that make it more difficult to keep control over the final products[66], especially when taking into account the fact that safety and hygiene standards are lower in emerging countries[67]. The consequence of this increased concern on safety and quality is reflected in the growing importance of CSR reporting and stricter legislation, such as the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act of 2008[68].

A.4 Social issues

Finally, the working conditions of the suppliers' employees should not be forgotten and remain a prominent issue in the food supply chain management[69]. Respect of the human rights and international standards, such as minimum wage, working hours, safety conditions or union rights continues to be not fully respected in developing countries where most goods are produced[70]. Control is difficult and few companies have put in place internal systems for managing this issue[71]. This is the third risk identified by the risk management analysis. Even if the hospitality sector has not yet suffered big scandals linked to this topic, the consequences of sweatshops scandals in the textile industry were important enough to be taken seriously[72]. Following those events, consumers expect more ethical behaviour from corporations and legislation is becoming stricter. Human rights are reported to remain a major priority in the tourism industry[73] and serve the basis of several international norms and guidelines such as OECD guidelines, ISO26000 or the UN Global Compact.

To conclude this part, the risk management analysis shows that the supply chain's impacts identified previously represent tangible risks for the hospitality companies. The risks related to the environment, quality and safety issue as well as working conditions were identified as prioritary in terms of urgency and impact on the business. It is time for the industry to aknowledge that the situation is evolving and hotels need to be ready to rethink their supply chain management strategy for taking into account every direct and indirect impacts linked with their supply chain. This can be achieved by putting into

64 New, 2010
65 PWC, 2008
66 SCRLC, 2011
67 BSR& UN Global Compact, 2010
68 PWC, 2008
69 CHR, 2007
70 CHR, 2007; Chhabara, 2010; Ethical Corporation, 2011; Entine, 2012
71 Ethical Corporation, 2010
72 Zadek, 2004
73 ITP, 2006

place a responsible supply chain management strategy. The following paragraph will define responsible supply chain management, and present recommendations that can help mitigate the identified risks.

B. Experts recommendations of responsible supply chain practices

Sustainable SCM can be defined as "*the management of environmental, social and economic impacts, and the encouragement of good governance practices, throughout the lifecycle of goods and services*"[74]. It should be part of the global strategy of a company and implies a real commitment from the management team[75]. It is a broad topic and we can find various mitigation strategies and recommendations on how to enhance a supply chain's sustainability. The goal of this paper is not to present them all but to present recommendations that can directly help mitigate the three risks identified previously, which help diminish negative impacts on the environment, increase quality and safety of the products and improve the working conditions of their suppliers' employees:

A. Developing a **guide of good practices for sustainable and responsible purchasing** to help the purchasing department in its daily decisions. This guide should establish the total lifecycle of a product because environmental cost can sometimes be higher for the production of a good that for its utilisation[76]. It should cover at least the following topics:

- **Nature of the product**: ordering second-hand products; made of natural material; that can be repaired or recycled; having consumed little grey energy for its production; not produced from decreasing natural resources; buying clean energy.
- **Order quantity:** estimating the real need; favouring alternative solutions; reusing products; recycling; ordering bulk or refillable products.
- **Transport and packaging**: ordering local, fresh or gross products that require less packaging; favouring modes of transport with little CO_2 emissions; avoiding express order.
- **Certifications and partners:** favouring sustainable or equitable labels, transparent communication with partners on their environmental and HR policies.

B. Developing a **CSR policy for the hotel's suppliers**, based on the following steps:

1. **Developing guidelines** based on universal standards, such as the *Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria*. All criteria and objectives should be written in a code of conduct, enclosed in the contract between the hotel and its suppliers and in case of non-respect, sanctions should be undertaken. To increase the chances of success, it is recommended to involve suppliers from the start, when elaborating the standards.
2. **Communicating the guidelines** to the suppliers, customers and employees in order to get the collaboration of all stakeholders and work jointly towards a common goal.
3. **Measuring progress** through internal and then external audits. Measuring the

74 BSR & UN Global Compact, 2010, p. 7

75 PWC, 2006

76 Canton de GE, 2010

performance should not be an end in itself but the foundations of an action plan. So as to limit costs and avoid audits' duplication, hotels should collaborate for the development of common hospitality standards[77].

4 **Bridging the gap** between suppliers' measured performance and targets by offering resources and vocational courses. The hotels should take into account each supplier's difficulties and resources and increase gradually the standards.

C. Strengthening local clusters

- **Supporting small local producers** by facilitating them access to credit or by offering them vocational training on more efficient and environmental friendly procedures. This approach requires, however, a large amount of time and money, as hotels must adapt their contracts and standards to the resources of the suppliers[78].
- **Local purchasing** for the hotel's goods and services. This helps the hotels to reduce logistical costs while preserving the cultural heritage and reinforcing the authenticity of the products and services delivered to the customers. It also works towards reducing economic leakages. Moreover, it is in line with the principles of *locavorism*, which is gaining more and more popularity in the industrialised countries[79]. This movement advocates the consumption of local products for decreasing global CO2 emissions.

D. Collaborative approach

- Involving the **tourists**, the last link of the supply chain, who can influence through their behaviour the result and success of SCM[80] .
- Involving the **employees** by training them on sustainable practices, especially the ones in the Housekeeping and Food and Beverage departments. Communicating the importance of a sustainable SCM would reinforce the chances of successfully carrying out changes[81].
- **Collaborative approach** with the rest of the industry: coordination of actions is key for SCM and isolated actions have limited reach. Thus, hotels could develop alliances or Public Private Partnerships with other tourism stakeholders.
- **Participation in sustainable programs and certifications** will reinforce the commitment from the management and communicate a strong message of the hotels' commitment and sensibilise others. As the hospitality supply chain belongs to a more global and complex supply chain, participation in multi-stakeholder programs is necessary for creating a lasting change throughout the entire tourism supply chain.

To summarise, by taking those different approaches, hotels can increase the sustainability of their supply chain, diminishing its vulnerability and related risks.

77 Chhabara, 2010
78 Ashley et al., 2005
79 Ressources et Environnement, 2011
80 CHRC, 2010
81 Bhattacharya et al., 2011

D. Presentation of the tool

Based on the recommendations above, a business can create a list of indicators to be used a first step towards a more detailed and accurate supply chain analysis. It enables hotels to conduct a first assessment and set the priority areas. The goal is not to build precise benchmarks but to list areas that should be taken into account by the hotels in order to diminish the negative impacts of their supply chain and, therefore, potential risks. By favouring a more generic approach, the tool remains flexible enough for being adapted by each end user according to their size, objectives, budget or geographical location.

It is composed of a list of indicators, directly or indirectly linked with a hotel's supply chain management. Those indicators are distributed among five categories, which have been established on the basis of the most critical issues arising from the classical strategies used in supply chain management. Product quality and security, working conditions of the suppliers' employees and all issues related to the environment represent the highest risk for the industry and are, consequently, the topics retained. Indicators result from experts' recommendations about sustainable management practices. Although more indicators could have been used, only the ones linked with the priority topics have been kept.

Table 4: Hotel supply chain assessment tool: list of selected indicators

ECONOMIC PILLAR	
Product quality and security	
	Indicators
	Supplier certification for quality and security (i.e. ISO 9001) or suppliers having established a strict quality control process
	Fresh and healthy food offering
	Purchasing ecological and/or natural products
SOCIAL PILLAR	
Working conditions of suppliers' employees	
	Indicators
	Choice of suppliers respecting the Human Rights Principles
	Purchasing products ethically certified
ENVIRONMENTAL PILLAR	
General environmental impact	
	Indicators
	Choice of suppliers respecting environmental principles
	Purchasing products environmentally certified
Global warming	
	Indicators
	Purchasing local products
	Establishing an eco-bilan analyse when selecting the products
	Percentage of renewable energy in total energy use
	Percentage of maritime or rail transport in comparison with air transport
	Using energy efficiency equipment
	Reducing green house emissions
	Decreasing total energy consumption

Ecosystem destruction	
	Indicators
	Recycling
	Selecting products from sustainable sources
	Minimizing the use of packaging waste
	Using a waste collection and disposal system
	Actions for increasing a product's lifecycle
	Actions for preserving and restoring damaged ecosystems
Decrease in freshwater resources	
	Indicators
	Reusing grey water or alternative sources of water
	Using water efficiency equipment
	Decreasing total water consumption
Other areas	
	Indicators
	Getting suppliers and suppliers' partners involved in CSR programs
	Assuring management's commitment in sustainable supply chain management
	Promoting interdepartmental collaboration
	Collaborating with the industry on the development of global solutions
	Communicating CSR standards to other stakeholders and running awareness campaigns

The above tool is not meant to replace reviewer judgment in any way, but to provide a memory aid to remind of users of some potentially important criteria to consider. It is hoped that such a list of indicators will be a useful tool for hospitality practitioners in their daily businesses as well as for academics in their future research.

V. Conclusion

To sum up, this study uses available resources and knowledge present in the academic and grey literature to offer an innovative view on under-researched issues in SCM. Supply chain activities represent an important part of hotels' activities and represent a growing risk. It is necessary to develop responsible practices that take into account the negative impacts on society, the environment and the economy. Among the various risks, environmental, quality, safety, and suppliers' employees conditions have been identified as the most important ones for hotels. The author suggests a checklist of indicators that would guide managers when assessing their supply chain. The main contribution of this study is a new perspective on issues and recommendations present in the literature, creating previously missing links and highlighting issues that require further attention from academics and practitioners. Hotels can rely on many different resources to help them achieve a more responsible supply chain management. The issue is to acknowledge the negative externalities of the current strategies and to focus resources on the most important ones. The suggested list of indicators should help achieve this goal.

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Extreme weather events and their consequences: Why is the tourism industry not prepared?

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Abstract

Bushfires have been a natural occurrence for millions of years. However, climate change is increasing the threat of bushfires with devastating results in North America and Australia. This study focuses on the complexities found within the tourism sector, which may either help or hinder improving preparedness for extreme weather events, particularly bushfires. The research conducted demonstrates a void between MSBs and government interventions to guide and train operators. However, even with information available on bushfire preparedness, there is no guarantee that operators will continuously apply the rigours of risk management. The findings clearly demonstrated that, while the vision of a shared responsibility has been recommended, the message is far from understood. The recommendations address policy makers, destination mangers and tourism professionals.

Keywords:

fire, risk, preparedness, mitigation, alleviation, climate change, hospitality.

Introduction

Weather is a core tourism dynamic that affects visitor numbers and business performance[1], yet comparatively little action is taken to prepare businesses, visitors and destinations for extreme weather events and their consequences[2]. It is acknowledged that weather is often a main feature used to promote a place[3], and so it is an essential factor in tourists' choices of holiday destinations[4]. However, the decision of tour operators and potential tourists to visit a particular place is also shaped by "perceptions regarding personal safety, suitability of access, availability of accommodation and the likelihood of disruption to travel plans"[5]. Therefore, in the event of extreme weather events, visitors may adapt and choose to travel to safer places, leaving the original destination with subsequent economic impacts.

1 Lise & Tol (2002); Hamilton, Ritchie & Crouch (2003); Becken (2012)
2 Ruhanen & Shakeela (2012)
3 Scott & Lemieux (2010)
4 Lise & Tol (2002); Hamilton, Ritchie & Crouch (2003); Becken (2012)
5 Tourism Victoria (n.d.), p.4

The threat of extreme weather events is increasing because of climate change[6]. From an Australian perspective, as climate change progresses, extreme weather events are likely to escalate with warmer nights, hotter days, longer warm periods and longer dry spells[7]. The consquence of such hot and dry conditions is an increased threat of bushfires[8]. Climate change itself has not been found to strongly influence tourism demand, while on the other hand, the increased severity and frequency of extreme weather events is, indeed, negatively affecting tourism[9]. So, while climate change may alter the attractiveness of destinations in the long term[10], the rapid impact of bushfires caused by extended dry conditions does regularly and severely affect the economy of popular destinations[11]. In the last decade alone, there have been three large and destructive bushfires (2003 Canberra fires; 2009 Victoria fires; 2012/2013 Angry Summer bushfires). Therefore, increased extreme weather and its consequences represent a growing economic threat to tourism.

Bushfires, by their nature, occur outside main metropolitan areas, in regions where tourism contributes significantly to rural economies[12]. Bushfires are unpredictable and can cause considerable infrastructure damage, loss of native wildlife and human life[13]. However, despite Australia being described as a climate change hotspot with an increasing threat of bushfires in the southeast[14], the tourism industry is not taking sufficient action to reduce this risk by being prepared[15]. With changing conditions and increased economic risks, it would appear to be a common sense requirement for the tourism industry to take sufficient precautionary actions to protect income and for hosts to be vigilant for their guests. Contrarily, research findings demonstrate that this is not the case[16]. This lack of preparation puts not only tourism businesses and their customers at risk, but also the local rural economies in which they operate.

Tourism in destinations is frequently measured in economic terms through changes in visitor numbers, their expenditure, investment opportunities and overall contribution to GDP. It is less frequently measured in terms of actions to prevent risks and rarely with regard to actions to prevent economic losses through extreme weather events and their consequences. It is argued here that this is a situation which must be changed because tourism contributes to climate change[17] and is, at the same time, negatively impacted by resulting extreme weather events[18]. If tourism is to become more sustainable, the increasing threat of extreme weather events must be managed at the grassroots level to protect its economic contribution to communities.

6 Perkins (2013)

7 Perkins, (2013)

8 Climate Council (2014); IPCC (2014)

9 Tourism Victoria (n.d.)

10 Jopp et al (2010)

11 Hughes (2014); Arlington & Wong (2013); Blue Mountains Economic Enterprise (2013)

12 Tourism Research Australia, (2011)

13 Worboys (2003); Ganewatta; (2006); Walters & Clulow (2010); Blue Mountains Economic Enterprise (2013); Deloittee (2014); Hughes (2014)

14 Climate Commission (2011)

15 Ruhanen & Shakeela (2012)

16 Ruhanen & Shakeela (2012)

17 Gossling & Hall (2006)

18 Becken & Hughey (2013)

There are four risk management stages, namely prevention, preparedness, response and recovery, which are commonly applied to tourism. Prevention and preparedness are ongoing strategies which seek to minimise potential risks through mitigation, collaboration within destinations and government departments, training and planning. Response and recovery are strategies applied after an event has happened[19]. It is on the latter two stages on which tourism has traditionally focused, with many tourism and risk management papers written on response and recovery[20] and only a few studies on prevention or preparedness[21]. Given the ongoing increased threat of bushfires, this paper examines risk preparedness in a rural NSW tourism destination using a case study approach. The research explores the context of tourism business owners' decision-making, examines who should take responsibility in the light of current government policy and the value of established community networks. The following review provides an overview of findings from recent bushfire events in Australia and their recommendations as well as barriers and challenges for small businesses to prepare for disaster risks. Furthermore, a comparison is made between the Australian states of Victoria and New South Wales to better understand the two bushfire preparedness systems that are in place for tourism operators and to compare government approaches.

Australian Bushfires

Today human behaviour is directly and indirectly increasing the risk of bushfires in Australia. For over 65 million years, bushfires have been a natural part of the continent's geography and ecological pattern, but human interaction with the land and climate change are now intensifying these events[22]. In the past, Aboriginal Australians used this natural phenomenon as a land clearing technique; hence using fire as a method to care for the country[23] and as an agricultural system[24]. Such land management approaches are no longer comprehensively applied in modern Australia[25]. Meanwhile, human-induced greenhouse gases are intensifying climate change[26]. These changes in climate not only increase bushfire conditions, which can start fires, they are also fostering changes in eucalypt forest growth, which may cause additional bushfire challenges[27]. As climate change affects the recurrent patterns of fire (frequency, intensity, seasonality)[28], it reduces the length of the season in which it is safe to conduct fire hazard reduction burns[29]. Consequently, human action to reduce risk is increasingly constrained and yet is becoming more important.

The cost of bushfires has long-term impacts. Those caught up in an event can suffer lasting

19 APEC, UNWTO, PATA (2006)

20 Ritchie (2008); For example Walters & Mair (2010), Prideaux (2003), Walters & Clulow (2010), Ritchie et al. (2011)

21 For example Ritchie, B., Bentley, G., Koruth, T. & Wang, J. (2011)

22 Hughes (2014)

23 McGregor et al (2010)

24 Gammage (2011)

25 Gott (2005)

26 Perkins (2013)

27 Matthews (2012)

28 Hughes (2014)

29 Matthews (2012)

psychological effects; there can be both losses to ecosystems and damage to the water quality[30], financial loss for businesses, economic impacts to maintain emergency services and insurance costs[31]. For example, the Alpine fires in 2003 burnt 1.73 hectares, destroyed 551 houses, killed 110,000 farm animals, obliterated the habitat of threatened species, and resulted in the loss of 1,000 tourism jobs and $121 million in summer visitor income[32]. The Black Saturday fires in 2009 cost tourism $44 million[33], and the Blue Mountain Fires in 2013 resulted in the loss of $100 million and 518 jobs[34]. Such events result in tourism business closure, loss of salary and flow-on effects to local communities[35]. In short, bushfires can have a lasting catastrophic effect for local communities and the economic loss is expected to rise by 2.2% annually[36].

Challenges for Micro & Small Businesses: Barriers to implementing risk management and to adapting to a changing climate

Micro and Small Businesses (MSBs) are at the forefront of stakeholder groups vulnerable to disaster risks[37]. Structured steps to implement and manage risk mitigation and adaptation require tourism businesses to be able to identify what their risks are in the first place. In reality, identifying climatic risks may be something for which very few small businesses are adequately prepared[38]. This is because businesses tend to centre risk assessments on financial, economic and legal risks, dismissing disaster risks[39], such as bushfires. This may, in part, be due to MSBs' lack of practical knowledge. There are tourism risk management resources (e.g. tool kits) that encourage business managers to determine risks from historic records, consultation with insurance companies and brainstorming[40]. However, such approaches require an understanding of local geography and past events which are not always understood by new Tree Change residents (individuals who have moved from metropolitan to rural areas)[41], or are not recorded in government records[42]. Consequently, this lack of knowledge can restrict businesses' abilities to determine prevention and preparedness measures[43].

MSBs are also affected by psychological and contextual barriers which mesh with the complexities of everyday business life to cause a lack of preparedness. Such barriers include:

30 Hughes (2014)
31 Ganewatta (2006)
32 Worboys (2003)
33 Walters & Clulow (2010)
34 Blue Mountains Economic Enterprise (2013)
35 Blue Mountains Economic Enterprise (2013); Sanders (2008)
36 Deloittee (2014)
37 UNISDR (2013)
38 STCRC (n.d.).
39 UNISDR (2013)
40 Department Energy Resources & Tourism/Tourism Australia (n.d.)
41 Warren (2013)
42 Prideaux (2003)
43 Warren (2013)

- The scale of uncertainty[44]
- Absence of part-time owners[45]
- Prioritization of the daily routine[46]
- Scepticism due to false warnings[47]
- Lack of time and financial resources[48]

In addition, tourism businesses will only address the most probable risk due to their busy day-to-day operations and limited available resources[49], making it unlikely that they will prepare detailed plans or update them[50]. This indicates that, in order to persuade tourism to better prepare, the reasoning behind business owners' decision-making must first be understood.

There are great complexities to what motivates preventive and preparedness action. For example, three factors may contribute to managers taking positive, proactive risk assessment action: the social norm influence or a reference group; their past experience; or their positive attitude[51]. However, these factors are still very much affected by local knowledge[52], training and retraining[53]. Research conducted with residents of bushfire prone areas shows a different set of psychological motivations which influence preparedness. Higher levels of previous personal experience of bushfire events and stronger home and place attachment can lead to a higher importance being given to preparedness. However, what constitutes being sufficiently prepared is very subjective and, for some, means applying measures only when a threat is imminent. For others, their place attachment means they are unwilling to take measures to prevent a fire. For example, their attachment to nature is expressed by not cutting back their loved garden[54]. These findings have not been tested from the perspective of a rural tourism MSB nor with regard to concern for visitor safety.

Generally speaking, there is a striking lack of preparedness within the tourism industry for the risks of climate change and its consequences[55]. The lessons learnt from past disasters are often forgotten by the public sector and by operators[56], although this is not always the case[57], as discussed below. For example, tourism providers can be wary about informing visitors of previous disasters[58], or they can ignore advice through warning fatigue[59], which

44 Turton et al. (2010); Bollin (2011); Sydnor-Bousso et al. (2011)
45 Warren (2013)
46 Sydnor-Bousso et al (2011); Eriksen and Gill (2010)
47 Hall (2006)
48 Sydnor-Bousso et al (2011); Bollin (2011)
49 Cioccio and Michael (2007)
50 Hystad & Keller (2008)
51 Wang & Brent (2011)
52 Warren (2013)
53 Department Energy Resources & Tourism/Tourism Australia (n.d.)
54 Paton, Burgelt Prior (2008)
55 Cioccio & Michael (2007); Gössling & Hall (2007); Mair, Ritchie, & Walters (2014); Ruhanen & Shakeela (2013)
56 Prideaux (2003); Sanders (2008)
57 Paton, Burgelt, Prior (2008)
58 Rittichainuwat (2013)
59 Mackie (2011)

may leave some to continue to operate under a 'business as usual' mantra[60]. Denying a bushfire threat in a destination does not draw attention to future dangers for any newly arrived Tree Changers who may be less prepared for local risks. Consequently, it places a burden on the limited resources of local volunteers and emergency services[61]. Communities, therefore, need to share responsibility and become more proactive, for example by developing networks to help them be better prepared[62].

The call for sharing responsibility

Prideaux's[63] assessment of Australian disasters and tourism responses led to the clear recommendation that government and destination managers should be conducting risk assessments on potential disasters and then educating tourism operators on the dangers and evacuation protocols. By 2010, the term 'Shared Responsibility' became widely used in emergency management issues following the Black Saturday bushfires[64]. Shared responsibility means community safety does not rely exclusively on one party, but on several stakeholders, involving national and state agencies, councils and households[65]. Each stakeholder has a responsibility to act in bushfire risk management. However, responsibilities may not be equally allocated. The term 'Shared Responsibility' matches the Australian Government funded Tourism Risk Management Guide which emphasises a partnership with government and community agencies to establish action plans, as well as developing roles and responsibilities unique to each destination[66]. Achieving these levels of preparedness requires the use of a centralised risk management framework[67] by which destinations proactively collaborate with the emergency services.

Notwithstanding the good intensions of shared responsibility, there are significant challenges to overcome in actually delivering results. Shared responsibility requires compromise and cooperation but it also causes vulnerabilities because no single group can be individually blamed for negligence[68]. Therefore, while the concept of shared responsibility might be considered noble, it also gives actors the opportunity to shift responsibility between parties. Practical application of the vision of shared responsibility requires combining different agendas from multiple actors who each have their preferred standards. If this vision is to deliver successful and practical improvements in bushfire risk management, relationships and processes which take responsibility, have

60 Ruhanen & Shakeela (2013)
61 Warren (2013)
62 Cioccio & Michael (2007)
63 Prideaux (2003)
64 Royal Commission (2010)
65 Teague et al (2010)
66 APEC/UNWTO/PATA (2006)
67 Faulkner (2001)
68 Eburn (n.d.)

to be established[69]. This is a complex matter, as demonstrated by a comparison between the neighbouring Australian states of News South Wales and Victoria, which apply very different approaches.

Who takes responsibility for tourism risk management? A comparison of Victoria and NSW.

NSW has not taken a lead in taking responsibility to prepare the tourism industry for bushfires, leaving a gap in the bushfire-prone regions to be filled by MSBs and destination mangers. Victoria, meanwhile, has invested considerable time and resources into following the Royal Commission's recommendations. The emergency services and tourism organisations in Victoria have worked together to raise bushfire awareness and to develop preparedness advice for businesses and visitors. This has been achieved by creating a partnership and forming a Tourism Crisis Management Group, involving Tourism Victoria and the Victorian Tourism Industry Council (VITC). This group liaises with local and regional tourism bodies and the state's emergency services. VTIC is able to lobby the government for resources to help the recovery of affected regions, and destinations play an active role by coordinating the group's grassroots efforts and contributing to promotional campaigns after a crisis[70]. In this manner, tourism and emergency organisations are linked and collaborative. Furthermore, bushfire risk management is encouraged as a *normal* function of business operations in Victoria and operators receive advice with:

1 A range of advisory online publications

2 Terms of business/ cancellation policies

3 Visitor centre information collateral

4 Tourism business training workshops

5 Insurance advice[71]

In comparison, NSW has no equivalent structure, information or tourism operator training. The NSW Rural Fire Service[72] provides a bushfire survival plan template for the general public. This information is focused on urban properties, not specifically businesses. Although the RFS does include limited information on leisure and recreation, it has no information for tourism businesses regarding how to educate guests or staff. A further challenge to prepare tourism is the make-up of tourism in rural NSW. For example, holiday homes can be one of the largest accommodation types and located in bush land. Such structures only need to comply with residential planning codes rather than formal hospitality requirements (comprehensive smoke alarm use and larger asset protection zones)[73] and advice from industry groups does not include bushfire risk management guidance[74]. As a result, NSW does not have a formal or informal link between tourism and the emergency services at a state level, nor does it have advisory information, codes

69 McLennan (2012)

70 Tourism Victoria (n.d.)

71 Tourism Victoria (2014)

72 RFS (2013)

73 Shoalhaven City Council (n.d.)

74 Estate Institute NSW (2012)

of practice and responsible practices to offer destinations or MSBs.

This review indicates that, while tourism faces greater threats from extreme weather events and bushfires, tourism businesses are not sufficiently prepared due to a range of barriers, which particularly affect MSBs. While research recommends centralised planning formats and collaboration, not all regions benefit from this approach in Australia, leaving the concept of 'Shared Responsibility' by the wayside, relying on operators' own initiative and drive.

So, in practical terms, are current planning codes and community norms sufficient to help tourism businesses be prepared? Even if there are frameworks in place, workshops and bushfire survival plans, there is little research into what is preventing preparedness becoming a mainstream activity for MSBs in rural areas. For those business owners new to a region, are local norms and frameworks specific enough to stimulate preparedness or do they foster a misguided level of optimism resulting in only minimal preparedness steps? Are community leaders prepared to step in and fill the gaps? In the absence of frameworks provided by state authorities, research also needs to consider the preparedness level of a destination management organisation and, in particular, if message themes and communication strategies have been predetermined. If tourism is to become more sustainable and contribute positively to rural economies in the long-term, more research is required to explore MSBs' bushfire preparedness in rural areas of Australia.

Research Design

The aim of this research study was to establish why rural tourism businesses in NSW may or may not implement bushfire risk management (BRM). In order to understand operators' motivations and actions, research into the perceptions of risk, the influencing context on decision-making and attitudes towards taking responsibility needed to be researched. Three research questions explored the BRM topic:

1 How do rural tourism businesses perceive the risk of bushfires to their community in general and their business in particular and do they undertake prevention and preparedness activities in BRM?

2 What is the context of their decision-making process and the reasoning behind their actions?

3 Who should take responsibility for BRM within a destination and how?

This study required looking at tourism operators, key stakeholders and community leaders in order to better determine the dynamics between the levels of tourism within a destination. A case study approach was selected so that the researchers could "go beyond the technical aspects of methodology"[75]. A case study can be significant if it is a typical representation of public interest and important in policy terms[76]. Primary and secondary research was used in order to collect data to plan and conduct the research. This data included local bushfire data, tourism population figures and destination management

75 Beeton (2006, p.42)

76 Yin, R., (1994, quoted in Beeton 2006 p. 39)

structures. The case study method involved researching three groups: first, tourism operators/community members who live in the destination and provide tourism services; second, key tourism stakeholders that mange regional destinations; and thirdly, community leaders and volunteer emergency services located in the case study area.

Qualitative research, generally used for more ambiguous concepts and complex topics[77], was therefore seen as the appropriate method to conduct the research as it "explores attitudes, behaviour and experiences"[78]. In-depth interviews with tourism operators and community members were chosen to facilitate a holistic understanding of a subject[79], such as fire management and local disaster history. These interviews were unstructured, in the form of an interview which gave respondents the possibility to elaborate on a topic with little interaction from the researcher[80]. Findings were analysed with a consideration of the complexity of the context in which business owners make decisions. A semi-structured survey was designed to interview key tourism stakeholders which enabled flexibility and probing for clarifications, while asking the same question to each respondent meant the information given in interviews could be compared[81].

A forum was conducted to examine the visions and practice of shared responsibility, presenting the two earlier phases of research to tourism and community leaders and the local emergency services. Respondents attending the forum (18 participants) included local representatives of the Rural Fire Services, tourist association representatives, tourist business owners, community and environment associations and key community members. There was an exchange of ideas and views between the participants and a survey was distributed at the end of the meeting. Using an action research approach the researchers were able to make observations while participating in respondent-led conversation, allowing research findings to flow back into the environment from which it was generated[82]. The research took place between August and September 2013, outside the bushfire season, which lasts from 1 October until 31 March[83]. During the bushfire season, the awareness among the population living in bushfire-prone areas is usually higher due to media coverage and weather conditions[84].

77 Saunders et al (2009)
78 Dawson (2009, p 14)
79 Dawson (2009)
80 Richards & Morse (2007)
81 Dawson (2009)
82 Ritchie & Lewis (2003)
83 RFS (2015)
84 Eriksen & Gill (2010)

Sample

Table 1 gives an overview of the types of businesses and Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs) which were interviewed, as well as the number of respondents and their position. In total, 45 interviews were conducted and 17 site visits took place.

Table 1: Phase One Respondents

Type of Business / Organisation	Number interviewed	Position Respondent(s)	Interview length, min.	Method
RTOs NSW	4	Tourism Manager	10 – 15	Telephone; semi-structured
Local Councils South Coast NSW	4	Tourism Manager	10 – 15	3 telephone, 1 email; semi-structured
Caravan Parks Shoalhaven	1	Manager	10	Telephone; semi-structured
KV Tourist Association	2	Former and current president	30	Face-to-face, in-depth; telephone, semi-structured
Sustainable Land Management Group	1	Founders (couple)	45	Face-to-face; in-depth
Local Fire Brigade	1	Captain	90	Face-to-face, in-depth

Table 2: Phase Two Respondents

Type of Business / Organisation	Number interviewed	Position Respondent(s)	Interview length, min.	Method
Accommodation	20	Owner / Manager	20 – 60	Face-to-face; semi-structured
Other businesses (e.g. restaurants)	10	Owner / Manager	10 – 30	Face-to-face; semi-structured
Activity provider	2	Owner / Manager	45	Face-to-face; semi-structured

Table 3: Phase Three Respondents

Type of Business/ Organisation	Number attended
KV Tourist Association	2
KV Environment Group	1
KV Community Association	1
KV Historic Society	1
KV Pioneer Museum Trust	1
Tourism provider	3
Community members	6
Local RFS Captain	1
RFS regional community manager	1
State MP	1

Case Study Area

The local council area of Shoalhaven in the state of New South Wales is, with close to 2.5 million visitors per annum, one of the most popular tourist destinations in Australia outside the metropolitan areas. Shoalhaven is an area highly prone to bushfires, with over half of the land devoted to national parks and state forests, excluding private land with forest cover. Kangaroo Valley (KV), consisting of a village and nine hamlets, is located in Shoalhaven and was chosen as the study area as it has a high degree of forest cover and its tourism sector is predominantly populated by micro-tourism businesses. Approximately 1000 people (community estimate) reside in Kangaroo Valley. The local tourist association has close to 92 paid members, but it is estimated that there are also 600 homes which are primarily used as weekend or holiday lets of which many are found on commercial rental websites. At the beginning of January 2013, KV was one of the places in NSW where a catastrophic fire danger warning was issued.

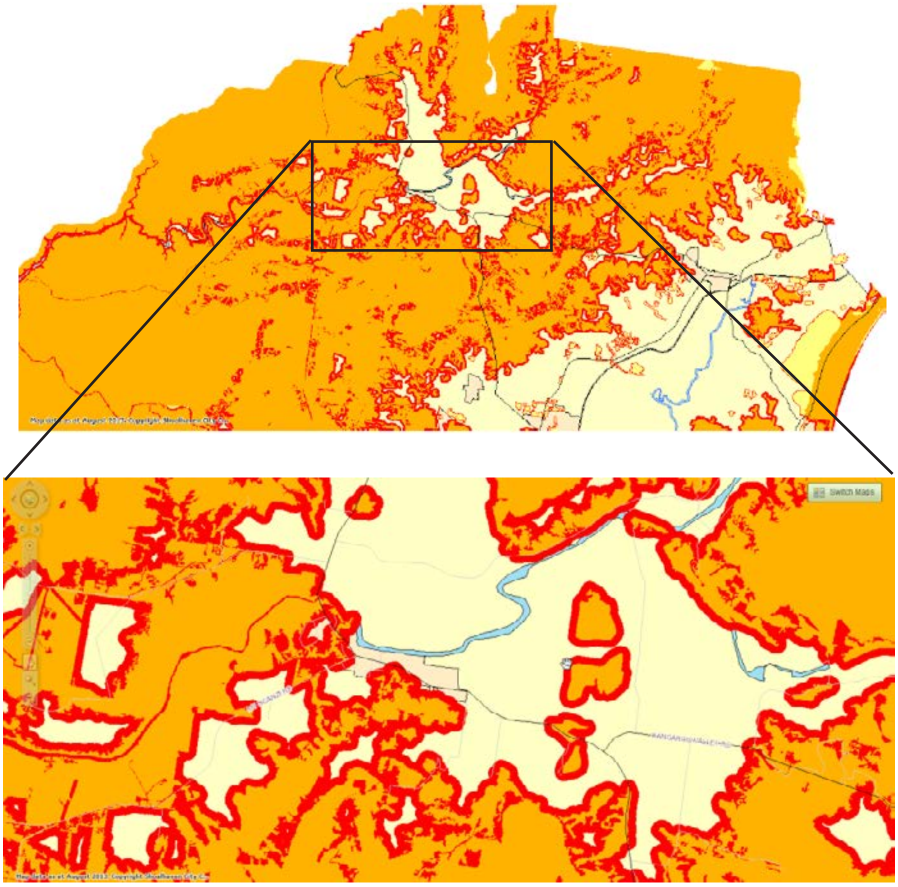

Figure 1: Map of bushfire prone land in Kangaroo Valley

Findings

The findings include an overview of the current local level bushfire awareness and bushfire prevention, and preparedness of tourism operators. An insight into the decision-making process will follow, with an explanation of the factors which trigger action or inaction. The last two sections will elucidate the perceptions of responsibility.

Phase One: Tourism Operators

Overall, respondents seemed to be misinformed about the risks to the area and had an almost blasé attitude to living with the danger of bushfires. The local fire brigade captain stated that the valley is under extreme risk of bushfires, but that the village is relatively safe. There were a couple of business owners or managers who either volunteered themselves or had relatives who were part of the local fire brigade and were well informed about the bushfire prone areas. The majority of respondents who had no involvement with the fire brigade believed that only the outskirts close to the national parks were are at high risk. Several people mentioned that living in Australia simply goes hand-in-hand with risks like bushfires, particularly in rural regions close to bush land.

> *"I live in Australia. It's always a concern."*

Bushfires were seen as an inevitable, natural part of the Australian environment. Only two respondents saw the high risk of bushfires in a broader context and felt that the increase in bushfire risk was due to the increase in extreme weather across the globe. One accommodation owner was planning to sell her business within the year to move to a place with lower bushfire risk, stating:

> *"Climate change would be the reason I'm leaving."*

When prompted about bushfire risk to their business, some thought even smaller fires in the area would affect all businesses due to negative media publicity. Contrastingly, others believed that only a devastating fire spreading through the whole valley would affect businesses, while the rest of the business owners did not believe that any fire, no matter how small or large, would affect their business.

> *"If a fire goes through will my business suffer? Short-term: Yes. Long term: No. Bushfires go through so quickly the valley will regenerate again and be just as beautiful as it was before."*

The decision-making process pertaining to extreme weather events risks indicated that most of the tourism operators were not prepared with a written plan, as recommended by the fire authorities. It is not a legal obligation to have a plan and, therefore, it cannot be forced upon people. The majority of respondents indicated that if the fire would come close, as was the case in January 2013, they would simply discuss it verbally with their partner. One of the important facts to mention is that small businesses in the area are usually managed by a couple with only 1 or 2 staff members, if any.

In terms of property preparedness, it was observed that approximately two thirds of the accommodation providers implemented basic prevention and preparedness measures at their properties, such as clearing gutters or creating an asset protection zone. The closer the property was to forests, the higher the appearance of preparedness. Preparing the property was seen as part of regular maintenance for owners living on site. As emergency services and fire brigades only offer advice and people are not obliged to implement every step, it is difficult to assess whether a property is fully prepared. One respondent said that it is hard to know how prepared is prepared enough:

> *"This is very typical for all properties in KV. Last year, when we had that catastrophic day, you suddenly realise just how much you still haven't got. You saw so many people clearing their guttering, rushing around and you think: we should have done this before. You suddenly realise how unprepared you are. You think you are prepared, but you are not."*

Most of the accommodation providers recognised the importance of preparedness measures for the property and followed the advice of the RFS. When it came to discussing how to deal with guests, however, the issues identified seemed enormous.

One respondent pointed out:

> *"The other stuff is easy, the preparation, the maintenance, the preventative stuff, that's quite simple. Everyone should sort of know how to do that, but dealing with the people is the big thing you got to worry about."*

There is no information or training on bushfire preparedness for tourism businesses in NSW. Subsequently, the research found that there is no consistent approach to what information should be given to guests, nor is there any regulation for cancellation policies or evacuation procedures (unlike the state of Victoria). Similarly to the emergency services, the tourism sector is often government-led, meaning it is affected by wider policy. Without state-implemented initiatives, tourism businesses are uninformed about how to manage bushfires. Nevertheless, providing information does not necessarily guarantee responsible action. The tourist association had sent out a template for evacuation procedures during the extreme fire risk days in January 2013. There were some respondents who said they had followed the advice and gave out information to their guests during that time. On the other hand, several respondents interviewed for this research said they could not remember the content of the email. A few businesses provided factsheets for their guests, including general information such as emergency contact numbers. However, there were only 3 of 30 businesses which had a written evacuation plan. Although the catastrophic danger rating means, according to the RFS, that people should leave the area, only a few people did so when the rating was issued in January 2013.

However, all business owners felt it was obvious to give information to their guests about the possible risk of a bushfire before and while guests were staying at their accommodation. As there are no standard procedures about when to evacuate guests, owners generally make the decision based on their own judgement. Their judgement is very much influenced by their perception of bushfire risk. In January 2013, there were a couple of people who argued the catastrophic fire danger rating was an overreaction and, therefore, reassured their guests it would be safe to stay. Others saw an immediate threat and left the area, advising their guests to do the same. However, it became clear that the owners' influence on the guests' decision to leave the area can differ significantly. While some people listen to advice, others simply chose to ignore it. This also relates to the fact that many people who are unfamiliar with the area are completely unaware of the risks of these weather conditions.

Many respondents said it would be easy to communicate within their business in terms of BRM because it was usually a couple who owned and managed a business. One respondent said that "as long as you know your own property and your own business" there would not be any difficulties in BRM. This is an important point to note because "most of the homes which have been private homes have been sold and have become weekend rentals and weekenders". Currently, the minority of accommodation businesses are managed by people living on the property. Consequently, an increase in holiday rentals also means that more accommodation businesses are managed by someone unfamiliar with the property. Holiday rentals are typically managed by agencies or managers who are responsible for numerous properties. One real estate manager acknowledged the difficulties as the properties are dispersed over the area, and so the risk for each one is different.

> *"[I can] advise them [the owners] to do something, but it's up to them what they wanna do."*

Additionally, the issue is not only remote property owners, but also holiday leave taken by staff and owners of accommodation businesses. For example, one respondent said she would usually go on holiday for six weeks in the middle of the bushfire season, but had not thought about briefing the person who would look after her business about what to do in case of a bushfire. Last but not least, even business owners living in the valley, and who are present all year round, acknowledge that briefing staff was sometimes forgotten.

Decision-making process

The preparedness and prevention decision-making process appears highly complex. Determining factors for the decision of whether to prepare or not include those which relate to the business and those which concern the owner themselves. There were found to be four characteristics of businesses that were influential in determining willingness to prepare for bushfires. These are:

Laws and regulations: Nearly half of all accommodation businesses had implemented preparedness measures on their property due to building restrictions from the local council. These regulations apply to residential houses as well.

Location and size of the property: Properties in high-risk areas, generally took more property prevention and preparedness measures. As properties in rural areas can be vast and sometimes include cottages spread over an extensive area, managers or owners require more time and staff to prepare than properties in urban areas. The size of the property is also, therefore, a determining factor for property preparedness.

Seasonality: The bushfire season is also peak season for most tourism businesses, which makes the decision to take a financial loss by, for example, cancelling bookings, even more difficult. One respondent said that "when winter is quiet and you have your ups and down periods and you sort of rely on the busy periods". That being said, the peak season may be different depending on the target group of the business. For example, one accommodation offering yoga retreats has lower visitation during the summer months and is busier during the winter months and outside school holidays.

Reliance on sales: The decision to take a financial loss is generally more difficult when a business relies heavily on sales for income. In the main, the businesses that were run in a way which provides a supplementary income were more willing to cancel bookings. One of the biggest differences in preparing a residential household and a tourism business relates to sales. A residential house may burn down and the owner be left homeless, but at the same time this person still has their job. In contrast, tourism business owners would not only lose their homes, but also their livelihood. However, this scenario depends on the type of accommodation and whether it is self-contained. For example, holiday rentals are only a second home and the income from tourists is supplementary.

In addition to the business-related factors, personal considerations also play a major role in decision making. As the model below shows, the owners' decision whether to take preparedness and prevention measures for their business is a constant cycle of personal values, beliefs, emotions and knowledge. This cycle is influenced by opinions of friends, family, and local experts, personal experiences and public information.

Knowledge may be specific to a previous job or it may be based on what an owner learned at school or university. What people in Kangaroo Valley knew about bushfires often stemmed from open days at the local fire station, informal chats with the fire brigade, awareness programmes, the general media or the RFS. A few businesses, particularly those located close to or in the village, did not prepare because fires had never reached the village in the past and, therefore, based on their previous knowledge, they did not believed it would happen.

Nature connection **values** influenced prevention in the sense that respondents did not want to remove vegetation they 'loved'. Likewise some wanted to plant vegetation close to the house in order to provide privacy from neighbours.

Beliefs can evoke **emotions**. The fear of death motivated one person to take as many preparedness actions as possible and another person to not even have a bushfire survival plan. Stress made the first person write a detailed plan in order to feel prepared, whereas, for the second person, that stress was too much to handle and she felt helpless. It is apparent that a feeling of control plays an important role in how decisions are made. One respondent said: "Living in cities is not what life's all about. I think too much of your life is controlled by the environment around you, whereas you are in this environment you control the environment". People coming to live in the valley now have the feeling they own nature, treating trees as decoration for their properties. This sense of ownership and the consequent perceived control over nature may give owners a false sense of security.

Knowledge, values, beliefs and emotions are constantly shaped by personal experiences, public information as well as friends, family and local experts.

Personal experiences with fires, but also general life experiences play an essential role for the decision-making process. The urban-to-rural movement, as described by Eriksen and Gill (2010) and generally described as tree-change, also shapes the population of KV. The majority of tourism businesses in KV are less than a decade old. Almost every respondent had lived in an urban environment prior to moving to the area which means they had either no direct fire event experiences or local knowledge, factors which shape the perception of bushfire risk and consequently the decision-making process.

Public Information like documentaries on television, advice given by the RFS website or any other information can also influence people's beliefs and knowledge. One respondent said:

> *"When they do aerial shots, when there has been a fire, on television, and you look at the gardens and you see European trees are ok, but Australian leaves just explode and catch alight. So I think European trees may be a good idea around your house".*

Several respondents referred to the local fire brigade as an information source they would trust and listen to.

> *"I'm not prepared to listen to someone who comes in and says do this and that, because they come in next year and tell you to do something else. I listen to the blokes who are in the bushfire team".*

One of the conclusions from the community workshop was that prevention and preparedness is best managed on a local level between neighbours. In this manner, tourism operators would be conforming to a 'local solution'. The strategy for guest and staff evacuation and a system for crisis management communication was, unfortunately, left unresolved and demonstrates that tourism operators and community groups require leadership and guidance even if they do develop their own localised risk management steps.

Phase Two: Destination Management Findings

The question thus arises: Who is responsible for managing the threat of bushfires for the tourism industry in NSW?

The state tourism organisation, Destination NSW, seems to have passed the responsibility for bushfire preparedness to the National Parks. However, although the National Parks may carry out hazard reduction burns, they are only responsible for their designated areas and not the whole tourism industry. In a similar way, most RTOs did not see it as their task to prepare the tourism industry.

> *"As far as risk warning and everything else like that we say that is not our responsibility. That is a responsibility of the services that exist and are trained in that area, that's not a tourism industry responsibility".*

Due to the lack of available information in New South Wales on what exactly tourism preparedness means, preparedness was usually only thought of in terms of property preparedness, and the implications for guests and employees were disregarded.

> *"A lot of our members are bush-based, so they are aware that they need to keep their grounds clear, their gutters clean of all those kinds of things"*

Another RTO provided an alternative view which demonstrated the lack of clear accountability.

> *"The main activities are pretty much determined by the State Government, through Destination NSW, and at this stage their core activities and objectives are to market the xx region as a visitor destination. It [risk management] is probably something that is over-*

looked and is probably more seen as a responsibility of our local government members".

In spite of this respondent's suggestion that it is the responsibility of the local government, there is no consistency in local councils having conducted tourism risk assessment. Only two of the councils interviewed had completed a risk assessment, identifying general risks such as ageing infrastructure, but they gave no consideration to bushfire threats to visitors or tourism businesses. This is despite the acknowledgement that bushfires would be a threat to tourism in their area. Respondents saw the risks as only short-term dangers which required only responsive measures.

"We introduced a large marketing campaign to get people back to the area".

In brief, governmental organisations at federal, regional and local levels all declared promotional activities as their main role, alongside crisis response, but did not feel that risk management was their task.

BRM, according to the local councils, is the task of the **emergency services**. Also, at a community level, tourism businesses recognise the responsibility for guests and employees but, regarding taking responsibility for the village, it is widely believed that the local fire brigade should be responsible for managing the bushfire threat. Furthermore, for advice and information, businesses contacted or plan to contact the RFS. However, the local fire brigade is, like the RFS, run by volunteers and has limited resources. Emergency services do provide information, training and support for prevention and preparedness measures for properties, but topics like evacuating guests, staff training, insurance coverage and terms of business during risk events are not included. Moreover, there was no resolve to ensure that holiday homes complied with the same standard of fire warnings and protection zones as commercial accommodation. Likewise, the local fire brigade is not informed about tourism activities or numbers. A town evacuation plan shared with tourism operators did not exist.

One respondent summed up the problem:

"It needs to be clear who is responsible for it [encouraging bushfire preparedness]. I think at the moment it's not clear who is responsible for that communication".

There is a clear lack of concordance between local emergency services, who are not informed of tourist numbers or locations, the National Parks, who are only responsible for their land management areas, and the tourism operators', who believe the emergency service will be solely responsible.

Phase Three: Community Forum

Research was shared at a community forum, which ran for two hours to explore the question of who should assume responsibility for BRM in the destination.

Respondents did confirm that the research information and the interaction with local emergency services had changed many of their opinions and consequently recognised the bushfire risk as a greater threat. The survey recorded that 77% considered the community 'unprepared' or 'poorly unprepared'. While they did recognise the severity of risk (23% Catastrophic, 30% Extreme, 15% Severe and 23% Very High), they nevertheless felt that the sheer scale of the task was beyond their resources and energy. Most community leaders acknowledged that one of the major issues is giving appropriate information to the tourists in an emergency situation, because visitors are usually unfamiliar with the area and might have language barriers to understanding. However, the group was undecided about whether they should form part of a comprehensive plan; 38% felt visitors were as important as residents, 38% felt they should not be the main focus and 24% said they were the responsibility of tourism operators alone. The overall lack of business and tourism-specific preparedness was found to be concerning, but did not prompt a call for action.

No member of the community was prepared to assemble a group to progress a destination-wide plan. Only one recommendation appeared feasible: to work at a very close neighbourhood level, by which small groups of residents would meet and share ideas, workload and establish a network. Respondents were surprised at the scarcity of information and the limited resources at the RFS's disposal. While the vision of shared responsibility was acknowledged, there were no procedures to put this into practice. The agendas of the different community groups did not strongly include BRM or any collaboration between groups, and knowledge of past bushfire events were not comprehensively shared with others. While the survey did indicate a high level of acceptance that everyone was responsible for protecting Kangaroo Valley, an almost equal expectation that the emergency forces should take responsibility was also evident.

Discussion

Although awareness of the bushfire threat among business owners is generally high, not enough is being done to utilise the resources, however limited they may be, and implementing prevention and preparedness measures. Likewise, while there are bushfire advisory materials available and a shared tourism/ emergency services framework in place in Victoria, the lack of any formal procedures and materials in NSW means that destinations are not taking sufficient bushfire preparedness measures. Within the case study area, the community leaders acknowledge the bushfire threat but are not required to formalise any networking or apply any social norms to galvanise collective action. This deficiency leaves tourism businesses to prepare and communicate with visitors based on their own personal opinions and judgement.

Organisations at every level seem to shift or avoid responsibility to the extent that eventually no one is dealing with the issue of unpreparedness, while at the same time bushfire conditions are intensifying due to climate change. Consequently, there is no orchestration of resources. The community forum demonstrated that even when evidence of the risk was presented, the scale of the challenge was seen as too large and overwhelming, meaning that participants tended find ways to shift responsibility towards the emergency services because the task was not specifically relevant to their organisation. Consequently, the findings support previous research findings that the tourism industry, even in extreme risk areas, is unprepared. It is therefore important to consider the factors which influence the decision-making processes of business owners.

Overall, information on climate change and bushfires can be interpreted differently and, therefore, knowledge has to be treated carefully. What one person believes they know may change due to new reasoning or other influences. In terms of fire risk management, knowledge increases with every extensive fire and, as a result, the advice given changes. Although wisdom helps to promote action, the community forum demonstrated that knowledge is not being shared or applied. This confirms earlier observations that Tree Changers and part-time owners do not have sufficient advice to promote prevention and preparedness. There are so many warnings from emergency services that eventually they are no longer taken seriously. The desensitising effects of over-exposing the public to warnings have also been confirmed in this research.

Generally speaking, climate change adaption and bushfire literature does not account for the level of complexity involved in the decision-making process. Such literature seems to overlook the important role that local knowledge can play in the application of information in the relevant contexts and in line with psychological motivations. Likewise, the opinions of friends, family and local experts, personal experiences and public information can all trigger change. This was clear in both the qualitative research and the community meeting. For example, if everyone in a business owner's entire neighbourhood had a bushfire survival plan, it would be socially unacceptable for them not to have one as well. Also, it should be understood that pure risk management can come across as dull, frightening, or both. A bushfire preparedness measure should not, therefore, be exclusively linked to preparing for a risk, but it should also be promoted as an opportunity for positive change. For example, drawing on people's close relationships with their animals, the creation of a larger last resort area in case of an extensive bushfire and using part of it as an animal park would have several benefits for the community. While this animal park would provide a place for animals to come in the case of a bushfire, it would also create a meeting place for families. Risk preparation and creating positive experiences have to go hand-in-hand with public information from various sources. Documentaries, case study videos, radio reports and brochures on how to handle guests will make tourism businesses consider implementing new ideas into their business practices.

Social factors appear to be key to the decision-making process. It became clear that laws and regulations are as important as the opinions of friends and family members. It is clear that a motivator for one person may be a barrier for another. Therefore it is extremely difficult to find a blanket solution for encouraging all tourism businesses to embrace climate change adaptation strategies and bushfire risk management because of different psychical motivations and real life commercial realities. As such, a single-focus approach to encourage tourism bushfires preparedness is unlikely to succeed. The interaction between social factors and psychological motivations is shown in Figure 2. This illustrates how knowledge from family, friends, local experts, public information and personal experiences can have an influence on a MSB owner's values and beliefs, and thus stimulate bushfire preparedness. However, knowledge alone is frequently insufficient to challenge existing values and beliefs. Knowledge is often unlikely influence the complexities of day-to-day operations, in which bushfire preparedness is a low priority[85].

85 Sydnor-Bousso et al. (2011); Eriksen and Gill (2010)

Equally important for preparation is each stakeholder's acknowledgment of responsibilities. To achieve this, the question, "who am I responsible for?" needs to be asked. Such a question is generally not difficult to answer as it is part of everyday operations. Tourism businesses are responsible for their guests and employees, local councils and tourism associations focus on their members, and the state tourism organisations and RTOs are concerned with coordinating efforts and supporting action. If responsibility is assumed by all, BRM can potentially benefit whole communities because businesses in smaller communities are interlinked and interdependent. However, the lack of commitment demonstrated by the community forum participants is an indicator that the vision of shared responsibility requires processes supported by legislation[86].

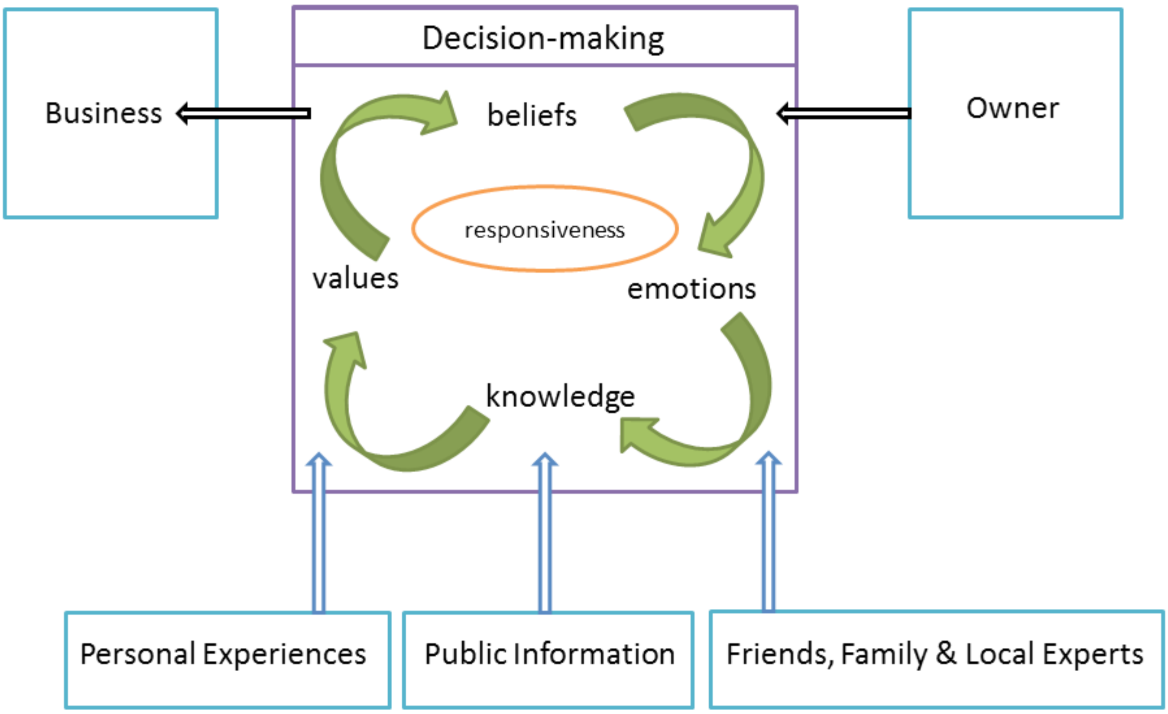

Figure 2: Decision-making process for bushfire risk management

Developing neighbourhood networks has been recommended[87] but, to date, there has been no progress in this regard. It is the opinion of the authors that without a structured assessment of risk and the education of operators by the authorities[88], small business owners will continue to be vulnerable to disasters. Even if a vision of shared responsibility was strived for within communities, there is no process to formulate methods and agreed practices to make this vision a reality.

Conclusion

The research conducted demonstrates a void between MSBs and government interventions to guide and train operators. However, even with information available on bushfire preparedness, there is no guarantee that operators will continuously apply the rigours of

86 McLennan (2012)

87 Cioccio & Michael (2007)

88 as recommended by Prideaux (2003) and Faulkner (2001)

risk management. The findings clearly demonstrated that, while the vision of a shared responsibility has been recommended, the message is far from understood. Tree Changers and holiday homeowners have a particular disadvantage as they have insufficient local knowledge to comprehend the challenges, and thus would struggle to plan appropriate strategies.

Most serious of all the findings is that very few operators actually considered customer safety and evacuation plans in detail and are, therefore, wholly unprepared in the event of a crisis. Given the limited local emergency resources, this must surely highlight to government and peak bodies the urgent need to achieve a true sharing of responsibility if the economic benefits of tourism are to be sustainable at regions prone to disaster risks. Progress can, in part, be started through leadership, but without leadership either at a state or local level, the authors strongly believe it is unlikely that NSW will see progress in rural destinations. A lack of time, money, motivation and local knowledge, compounded by exasperation, prevent a change from occurring without strong and clear leadership. To stimulate local leadership, it is recommended that grant funding and collaboration between government agencies and community groups be introduced. Local leadership could also help stimulate community resilience, which can help MSBs, an approach already proposed a decade ago by Irvine & Anderson (2004).

Taking responsibility and making BRM a priority is influenced strongly by an individual's priorities of what is important (values), what can be sacrificed (emotions), and ultimately their awareness (knowledge and beliefs). Action may be motivated through a combination of social identity factors: neighbourliness, sharing and bonding with community members. By collaborating with neighbours, making bushfire preparedness a social norm, local networks might sustain preparedness. Tourism operators can be motivated through business improvement strategies rather than the concept of risk, which is perceived as dull.

Just as climate change is gathering strength, we need to build momentum that incorporates multiple approaches, both direct and indirect, at a national, state and community level. These approaches must promote leadership, individual responsiveness and innovativeness.

End Note

These findings were presented to the Tourism Industry Council NSW (TICNSW) and contributed to the introduction of a strategic policy to make tourism better prepared for extreme weather events and their consequences. A bushfire preparedness seminar was organised in Sydney in November 2013 and as a result a risk management resource kit was uploaded on the website. This seminar revealed the differences between the Victorian and NSW systems in front of a mixed audience from tourism businesses, marketing experts, state tourism organisation and emergency services representatives. The TICNSW has agreed to progress a range of initiatives, including advocacy, lobbying and the publication of a rural tourism bushfire guest evacuation guide (in collaboration with the ICRT). However, it is not experiencing the partnership forged in Victoria between the government and private sector to share responsibility. A 'Quality Customer Service and Extreme Weather Events' workshop prepared by the ICRT-Australia will be tested in 2016 with TICNSW but, as yet, it has received no local government support.

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Engaging customers through sustainability communications in small tourism accommodation websites

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Abstract

This research analyses the relation between the motivations of small tourism accommodation providers for acting sustainably, and the quality of their communication of sustainability messages to the market. This study examines the reasons why six small tourism accommodations engage in sustainability practices and how that is reflected on their websites. The study (1) reviews three motivations to act sustainably; (2) reflects on some of the challenges encountered when communicating sustainability; and (3) analyses how the businesses communicate their sustainability practices. This paper highlights the importance of the message, which needs to be credible, customer-focused and persuasive to be effective. All three aspects score low in the businesses analysed, demonstrating a missed opportunity of using sustainability communications to enhance the quality of the product, improve the customer experience, secure marketing advantage and contribute to repeats and referrals.

1. Introduction

Sustainability communication (SC) is a vital part of marketing small tourism accommodations providers (SAPs) concerned about sustainability. The aim of SC is to engage customers with SAPs by appealing to the benefits for customers whilst also addressing the triple bottom line of social inclusion, environmental sustainability and economic growth, allowing a dialogue about the company as a whole[1]. Policy-makers and academics have recently been encouraging businesses to act more responsibly[2], and stakeholders have demanded more responsible behaviour[3], pushing businesses to market their sustainability operations. However, the websites of these busineses do not use these sustainability practices to enhance consumer communications. SAPs communicate mainly informally[4]; and they are cautious in using SC to attract customers, perhaps because of their motivations for engaging in sustainability[5], their reticence to moralise[6], or for their low skills in marketing and communication[7].

1 Belz & Peattie, 2013
2 Sampaio et al, 2012
3 Font et al, 2012
4 Garay & Font, 2012
5 Font et al, 2014
6 Kreps & Monin, 2011
7 Villarino & Font, in publication

SAPs owners/managers have an important role as marketers, as *"honest and responsible marketing of tourism"*[8] is needed to influence consumers to embrace sustainability[9] and to meet -or exceed- expected financial performance. There is a need to communicate more effectively to stakeholders[10] to overcome challenges like message persuasiveness, consumer scepticism, greenwashing[11], greenhushing[12], or sustainability myopia[13]. This study seeks to find out how SAPs communicate sustainability according to their motivations to act sustainably, taking into account some of the challenges inherent in effective communication, and in terms of how best to use persuasion.

The structure of the paper is as follows. First, four major subjects are assessed: (1) the reasons why SAPs engage with sustainability; (2) how to communicate sustainability to the customer; (3) the role of credibility in communications; and (4) the use of persuasion. Next, the methodology section justifies the coding frame based on the previous assessment and outlines the process of the website content analysis. Finally, results are presented and suggestions made.

2. Literature review

2.1. Why SAPs engage in sustainability?

There are different factors that lead SAPs to engage in sustainability. SAPs' motivations will influence how they communicate[14] to engage with customers. Businesses are influenced by external factors, mainly stakeholders' pressure and market appeal[15], and internal factors: altruism, competitiveness and legitimacy[16]. A further description of these internal motivations follows that is based on the largest research of this kind so far, by Font et al[17], and complemented by the general literature.

First, in altruism-motivated businesses (ALTs), values, world-views, personal ethics, habits and lifestyles, are closely linked to the principles of their owners/managers, as their raison d'être. Though ethics are considered more important, their organisational goal can be defined as a trade-off between financial and values. This approach generally leads to higher customer satisfaction and loyalty, and also to lower profits. ALTs show a stronger willingness to adopt sustainability than businesses with other profiles, but due to internal not external motivations. SC is the result of direct and informal communication with customers, being averse to see SC in commercial terms.

Secondly, competitiveness-motivated businesses (COMs) are the largest profile, confirming

8 Krippendorf, 1987, p.175

9 Smith & Font, 2014

10 Du et al, 2010; Garay & Font, 2012; Font et al, 2014; Jameson & Brownell, 2012; Villarino & Font, in publication.

11 Jameson & Brownell, 2012

12 Font et al, under review

13 Ottman et al, 2006

14 Font et al, 2014

15 Raviv et al, 2013

16 El Dief & Font, 2010; Garay & Font, 2012

17 2014

that economic profitability is the prevalent paradigm[18], although with altruistic reasons playing a key role too[19]. COMs engage in fewer sustainability practices than the other two profiles, aiming for short-term, self-interest motivations, such us commercial advantage[20] and generating market appeal to consumers. They are thus less likely to be interested in social improvement, image or legitimisation, referring to a wide range of barriers to the implementation of further sustainable practices. This profile prefers to communicate face-to-face, avoiding formal channels.

Third, legitimacy-motivated businesses (LEGs), the smallest business profile, undertakes sustainability practices mainly motivated by external factors as they are seeking image benefits from being seen to respond to stakeholders' demands[21]. Thus, they implement visible social practices and promote actions requiring the consumers to change their behaviour or encourage them to contribute to charitable activities. LEGs are more active in communicating sustainability and in using social media. However, Font et al[22] affirm that businesses in this profile do not, surprisingly, stand out in terms of how they communicate sustainability, as this would normally be expected for their legitimisation focus and interest in complying with social norms.

2.2. Communicating with the customer

Effective SC requires a full focus on the target market rather than on the sustainable attributes of the company, or on its altruistic, competitive or legitimacy reasons to act sustainably. It is critical to communicate how the customers' wants, needs and benefits will be met through what the company is offering to them. Thus there is a need to avoid sustainability marketing myopia to trigger sales and achieve customer engagement through compelling content. Consumers, with or without sustainability values, may look at other aspects such as performance, efficiency and cost effectiveness, health and safety, symbolism and status, or convenience[23]. Sustainability should be presented as an extra value contributing to increase the customer experience. Also, by making sustainability the normal thing to do[24], through social normalisation, will encourage more sustainable behaviours among consumers[25], thus playing an important role in consumer persuasion.

2.3. Communicating credibly

Effective SC needs credibility[26] in order to avoid the growing[27] consumer scepticism about sustainability claims[28]. Scepticism has two forms[29]. The first one is caused by using

18 Raviv et al, 2013
19 Garay & Font, 2012
20 Bonilla-Priego et al, 2011
21 Bonilla-Priego et al, 2011; Font et al, 2012; Font et al, 2014
22 2014
23 Ottman et al, 2006
24 Grant, 2007
25 Rettie et al, 2012
26 Du et al, 2010; Ottman et al, 2006
27 Leonidou et al, 2011
28 Belz & Peattie, 2013; Ottman et al, 2006
29 Forehand & Grier, 2003

communications that induce distrust through the use of marketing strategies that seem manipulative or deceptive, like greenwashing. Greenwashing is a practice that utterly affects the credibility of the claims being made[30] by intentionally disclosing positive sustainability information about a company's performance while omitting the negative side with the intention of self-creating a positive image[31]. Lack of credibility has inevitable negative implications for the company's image and its financial performance.

The second form of scepticism is related to consumer's perceptions about the reasons underlying a company's sustainability practices, thus determining the consumers' attitudes towards that company[32]. Two motivations are recognised[33]: business-serving, or self-interest, focused on benefitting the company and public-serving, or altruism, focused on benefitting the community. Companies with significant benefits that communicate uniquely their philanthropist reasons, or so-called moralising, are considered deceptive by consumers. This is not the case when companies express business-serving motivations, e.g. using a pragmatic frame. Omitting information to consumers about potential business benefits through sustainable practices is considered deceptive. The same negative insights appear in cases of engagement in sustainability because of exogenous pressures[34] as in the case of LEGs, as it diminishes credibility.

It is important to note though that there is a debate in the literature regarding whether an organisation should justify an issue by appealing to moral concerns, organisation self-interest, or both. Kreps & Monin[35] anticipated the negative consequences of moralising as follows. (1) The business is perceived as less competent, efficient or dominant. (2) There is a reduction of likability, creating a rigid image that is less open to discussion, thereby impacting negatively on the persuasiveness of the message[36], as will be explained later. (3) The risk for the smooth running of an organisation that is seen as publicly moralising, as it creates an environment where any employee can moralise too and therefore induce confrontation within the company. (4) The last is related to consistency and commitment; a public moral frame, such as the sustainability policy, will impose commitment in the future.

Some authors[37] assert that only altruistic messages will succeed. Others[38] state that by communicating both public-serving and business-serving motivations to engage in sustainability, the credibility of the company will be enhanced, as consumers accept a win-win scenario with benefits for both business and society[39]. In tourism it was suggested that public moralisation has positive implications in persuasiveness as it enhances credibility [40]. The next section looks at the role that persuasion has in communication.

30 Carlson et al, 1993

31 Lyon & Maxwell, 2011

32 Carlson et al, 1993; Du et al, 2010; Ellen et al, 2006; Forehand & Grier, 2003; Villarino & Font, in publication

33 Forehand & Grier, 2003

34 Carlson et al, 1993; Ellen et al, 2006

35 2011

36 Bettinghaus & Cody, 1994; Cialdini, 2009; O'Keefe, 1990

37 Font et al, under review; Villarino & Font, 2015

38 Du et al, 2010; Ellen et al, 2006

39 Porter & Kramer, 2006

40 1987

2.4. Communicating persuasively

The use of persuasion in communication will, among other benefits, help to engage customers with the content, facilitating the dialogue with them, and enhance their experience, improving sales. Persuasion aims to consciously influence others by modifying their beliefs, values, or attitudes[41]. Four theoretical approaches are reviewed next, showing the role that both sustainability marketing myopia and credibility can play in diminishing persuasiveness. Finally these theories are applied to the persuasive characteristics of the message.

Theoretical approaches

Social Judgement Theory (SJT) claims that the most important aspect of a message is the clarity with which the message identifies the position it advocates[42]. Thus any attempt at greenwashing, which diminish credibility, will lessen the impact of persuasion, exposing the company at risk of stakeholders' backlash and encouraging greenhushing[43]. As shown in table 1, greenwashing can occur in different ways[44].

SINS OF GREENWASHING	
Omission of information	A narrow focus on the positive attributes omitting the negative or other important ones.
Vagueness	The use of vague terms, expressions with a broad meaning, or jargon with the results of hidden or misleading information.
No evidence	The claim is not backed up with evidence.
No sense	"Greening" a "brown" product/company or attribute, e.g. organic food grown and brought from the other part of the world.
Irrelevance	Irrelevant claims that may be truthful but are not relevant because, for example, they are mandatory.
Lack of veracity	The use of false claims, labels, words or images to mask the reality.

Table 1: Sins of greenwashing. Based on Terrachoice (2010).

Cognitive Dissonance Theory (CDT) argues that people will try to avoid experiencing dissonance, having preference for supportive, thus consonant, information. Dissonance appears when the opposite of one element follows from the other, for example: *I take a long-haul flight to go on holidays aware that flying contributes to CO_2 emissions*. Consonance appears when both statements support each other, for example: *as flying contributes to CO_2 emissions, I choose a vegan diet during holidays*. According to this theory, mainstream holidaymakers will be attracted to features consonant with their perceptions and useful for them, as cost, health and safety or other attributes positively impacting on their experience, confirming the importance of avoiding sustainability marketing myopia. Also, two-sided messages with consonant (pro-argument) and dissonance (contra-argument) reasons are more persuasive than those focused on only one-side argument, as credibility

41 Bettinghaus & Cody, 1994; O'Keefe, 1990

42 Leonidou et al, 2011; O'Keefe, 1990

43 Lyon & Maxwell, 2011; Font et al, under review

44 Terrachoice, 2010

is enhanced[45], thus supporting the argument of communicating both public-serving and business-serving motivations.

Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) analyses how individuals engage with and elaborate information, e.g. how they scrutinise the quality of the message, with two main routes that are not mutually exclusive[46]. The first, the central route, is followed by people with high elaboration: messages that match the receiver's attitude towards them and the argument's strength will influence their persuasive capacity. An attitude change for those receivers with high elaboration will be more persistent over time and have a greater impact on their behaviour[47]. Individuals with low elaboration will use the peripheral route, being motivated by heuristics, which govern whether the receiver would follow the message[48]. Cialdini[49] argues that in general we need heuristics, as we cannot be expected to highly elaborate the message on every occasion. *What is expensive must be good* is a classic heuristic. However the main three heuristics are credibility, liking and consensus; highly credible, likable communicators and the reaction of the majority, linked to social normalisation, will enhance message persuasiveness. As elaboration of the message increases, the influence of heuristics decreases. To elaborate, receivers must give attention to the message first and then be able to comprehend the message in order to learn from the content of it. That is the focus of the last theoretical approach.

Message Learning Model (MLM) is based on four underlying processes sequenced for persuasion to occur: attention, comprehension, yielding and retention. Four variables influence these processes: the receiver, the channel, the source and the characteristics of the message[50]. Regarding the receiver, two issues are important: a credible message and a focus on the customers' needs. In terms of the channel, SAPs already know how to set up quality websites; and their challenge is in writing sustainability content[51]. As the messages used in websites draw attention towards the content rather than the source of the message[52], the next analysis will focus thus on six variables that make a message content more persuasive.

Message characteristics

The first variable relates to the meaning of the message. Denotative meaning refers to the definition a community has agreed for any given word, e.g. the dictionary meaning. Conversely, a connotative meaning, such as *eco-friendly*, reflects the attitude that message receivers develop towards words, the meaning being more abstract and therefore affecting the clarity of the message, making it less effective[53] and persuasive[54]. Thus, following SJT, denotative meanings are more persuasive. The second variable refers to the logical and

45 Bettinghaus & Cody, 1994; O'Keefe, 1990
46 Bettinghaus & Cody, 1994; O'Keefe, 1990
47 Bettinghaus & Cody, 1994
48 Bettinghaus & Cody, 1994; O'Keefe, 1990
49 2009
50 Bettinghaus & Cody, 1994
51 Villarino & Font, 2015
52 Bettinghaus & Cody, 1994
53 Bettinghaus & Cody, 1994
54 Carlson et al, 1993

emotional appeals of the message. When a positive emotion is expressed, messages grab the attention and are easy to comprehend, a first step towards persuasion as indicated in MLM. Positive emotions are more likely to be memorable than logical appeals and create a stronger bond between the business and the customer. Humour in particular promotes a positive mood and affect, but is not useful when used alone[55]. However, negative appeals, like fear or guilt can be disempowering[56]. Conversely, logical messages, although useful to people with high elaboration, inform but do not persuade enough to change people's behaviour[57]. In general, mainstream tourists have low elaboration and prefer more emotional texts rather than logical, technical appeals[58].

The third variable refers to explicit and implicit messages. Explicit messages state the conclusion or recommendation, are longer, more repetitive and more coherent, making them less likely to be misunderstood and increasing the learning of their arguments. Conversely, implicit messages leave the receivers to figure out the conclusion by themselves. The predominant finding in literature is that explicit messages are more persuasive[59]. The fourth variable refers to commitment, as the force engaging consistency, one of the most important factors in generating credibility[60] and an important rule of persuasion[61]. As already stated, public moralisation[62] tends to generate a lasting commitment, as receivers tend to believe that a written statement reflects the true attitude[63] of the message giver, especially long-term commitments[64], thus enhancing credibility.

Social proof, the fifth variable, states that in ambiguous situations we tend to follow what the majority does[65], the consensus heuristic exposed in ELM. Consumers are more likely to adopt behaviours that are seen as normal, a perception that changes over time[66]. Thus, by communicating sustainability as normal, an increase in engagement in sustainability can be expected through social normalisation[67]. The level of experience is the last variable. It is defined as the "*customer's cognitive and affective assessment*"[68] of all the interactions with a company. Customer experience in SAPs refers to the customer's journey and can have a positive impact on satisfaction, word-of-mouth reviews and loyalty[69]. By making customers participate in a learning process it is likely to create an emotion, improve their experience and the outcomes related to it[70]; and by making the process easy and simple

55 Bettinghaus & Cody, 1994
56 Belz & Peattie, 2013
57 Bettinghaus & Cody, 1994
58 Wehrli et al, 2013
59 O'Keefe, 1990
60 Belz & Peattie, 2013
61 Cialdini, 2009
62 Kreps & Monin, 2011
63 Cialdini, 2009
64 Du et al, 2010
65 Cialdini, 2009
66 Rettie et al, 2012
67 Miller et al, 2010
68 Klaus & Maklan, 2013, p.228
69 Klaus & Maklan, 2013
70 Villarino & Font, in publication

to achieve, improve customer response[71]. Experience contributes to the empowerment of people to make decisions, eliciting a change in attitude, and leading to the creation of new social norms[72].

3. Methodology

This exploratory research was carried out through a website quality content analysis (QCA), a commonly used method to understand SC in companies[73]. It is a systematic and flexible methodology to interpret the meaning of a given material, e.g. the units of analysis, by reducing its data following a coding frame[74]. Six SAPs were analysed, two altruism-motivated (ALT01; ALT02), two competitiveness-motivated (COM01; COM02) and two legitimacy-motivated (LEG01; LEG02). The categorisation of these six companies under these profiles was done with the expert help of a member of staff from the South Downs National Park, who had experience of working with companies in this area. This person was asked to grade 25 SAPs according to the three possible profiles, from which the researcher chose the final six.

The next step was to develop the coding frame, made up of the 4 dimensions analysed in the literature review, with 25 variables that will be explained next (Table 2). To keep the analysis simple, all the variables were classified as dichotomous according to their effectiveness in communicating sustainability, either positive or negative. A message is considered effective if it is credible, focused on customer benefits and uses positive variables of persuasion.

DIMENSIONS	MORE EFFECTIVE +VARIABLES (positive)	LESS EFFECTIVE -VARIABLES (negative)
Sustainability	1- Management 2- Maximise benefits for local community 3- Enhance cultural heritage 4- Minimise environmental impacts	5- Unspecified
Beneficiary	6- Customer	7- Altruistic 8- Business
Credibility	9- Credible message	10- Omission of information 11- No evidence 12- No sense 13- Lack of veracity
Persuasiveness	14- Denotative 16- Emotional appeal 18- Explicit 20- Commitment 22- Social norms 24- Experience	15- Connotative 17- Logic appeal 19- Implicit 21- No commitment 23- No social norms 25- No experience

Table 2: Coding frame and variables according to their effectiveness communicating sustainability.

71 Stanford, 2014

72 Miller et al, 2010

73 Jose & Lee, 2007

74 Schreier, 2012

The *sustainability* dimension categorises behind how sustainability is represented in company websites follow the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC) as "*the world-wide minimum requirement for tourism businesses of all size to approach sustainability*"[75]. These criteria correspond to variables 1 to 4 respectively in the coding frame. (1) Sustainability management, like "*we use low energy bulbs through the house*" (LEG02); (2) maximising social and economic benefits for the local community, "*we sell charcoal from a small local producer*" (ALT02); (3) enhancing cultural heritage, "*West Sussex offers some of the finest walking country in the British Isles*" (COM02); and (4) reducing negative impact on the environment, "*recycled from a de-commissioned Sussex barn*" (ALT01). An additional variable was added, (5) general / unspecified focus, to cover vague sustainability statements such as "*providing sustainable green tourism to West Sussex is paramount to us*" (COM02).

The *beneficiary* dimension, based on Font et al[76], assesses who is to gain from what is communicated in the sustainability message. There are three possibilities: to benefit the (6) customer, "*there is a discount if you are arriving by foot or bicycle*" (ALT02); to focus on (7) altruistic motivation, "*Green Tourism – a philosophy, not a product*" (COM02); or to benefit the (8) business, "*we use low energy bulbs through the house*" (LEG02). The customer variable is considered to positive, as the customer must be the focus of an effective message.

The *credibility* dimension refers to company-induced scepticism. The sins of greenwashing, shortened to 4 for a simple analysis, were used constituting the four negative variables: (10) omission of information, "*the bus is eco friendly with a bio toilet and a low voltage lighting*" (COM01) using vague terms; (11) no evidence, "*we are* […] *an award-winning social enterprise charity*" (ALT02), when no award is shown; (12) no sense, "*providing sustainability green tourism*" (COM02); and (13) lack of veracity, for which there are no examples from the businesses analysed since no site analysis was conducted. Messages not falling in any of those variables were considered (9) credible, as "*The* [ALT02] *is proud owner of a Green Tourism Business Scheme Gold Award*".

The *persuasiveness* dimension scrutinises the message according to the variables explained earlier. (14) Denotative meaning, as in "*We practise and promote sustainability as a process of making decisions which balance economic, social and environmental factors for positive benefit*" (ALT02), as there is no room for misinterpretation; or (15) connotative meaning as in "*all waste is recycled where possible and water is not wasted*" (LEG01), this being a very abstract statement. (16) Emotional appeal, for instance "*built in 1832 and decommissioned in 1902, a tea-shop, a home, part-destroyed during the second world war and lovingly rebuilt in the 50's. Owned and filmed by the BBC, moved due to erosion – and now, beautifully restored and renovated*" (COM01) is appealing; or (17) logical appeal, as in "*We offer an opportunity for our guests to experience the beauty of West Sussex County*" (COM02) is just communicating a fact.

(18) Explicit message, "[We are] *a Charge Point for the ebikes*" (LEG02), as it is fairly clear; or (19) implicit message, as for instance "[We are] *the proud owner of a Green Tourism Business Scheme Gold Award*" (ALT02) where they provide an assumption of sustainability behaviour. (20) Commitment, for instance in "*there is a discount if you arrive by foot or bicycle*" (ALT02) they publicly state that a discount is available; or (21) no commitment, as in "*why*

75 GSTC, n.d.

76 under review

not give the car a day off and enjoy our local walks? (and help the environment as well!)" (LEG02) there is no mention of what the business is doing. (22) Social norms, although not accurate, for instance in "*We believe we can all make the decision to live in a way that's better, greener, happier and more just*" (ALT02), the implicit message is presented as a normal way to live; or (23) no social norms, as in "*breakfast for lovers of real, whole food*" (ALT01) making the target segment very specific. (24) Experience, reflected in "*for those who wish to explore the area we have links with local bike hire companies and are more than happy to suggest scenic walks*" (COM02) by enhancing cultural heritage through a biking experience; or (25) no experience, as in "[We] *sponsor The Rosemary Foundation as preferred Charity*" (LEG02) where the customer is not involved.

The next step in the methodology was to carry out an analysis of the sustainability messages from the six business websites. The QCA software Nvivo was utilised, assigning 1 point for any of the variables contained in those messages, taking into account that a message could contain various claims referring to different variables. Results were analysed introducing in Excel the attributed numerical ratings presented in absolute frequencies and using percentages in some cases. To complement the findings –and to contribute to their reliability–, a person involved in *Our Land* foundation (OLR) was contacted to comment on the results as a form of causal research. *Our Land* is a platform available to all UK protected landscapes to develop and promote sustainable rural tourism and in which the six businesses participate.

4. Results and analysis

4.1. Communicating sustainability

55 sustainability messages were found in the six websites. Consistent with the literature reviewed, ALTs have most messages (24), as would be expected being sustainability the right thing to do for them; 15 are from COMs and 16 from LEGs. 38 messages out of 55 refer to GSTC categories (see table 3). Unsurprisingly, the most popular claims relate to minimising environmental impacts, from ALTs, concluding that sustainability is mostly related to "*help the environment*" (LEG02) because environmental issues are easier and more attractive to communicate[77], and because "*the environment is what SAPs believe sustainability is about*"[78].

Table 3: Sustainability claims used by altruism, competitiveness and legitimacy businesses.

GSTC CATEGORY	TOTAL CLAIMS	ALTs	%	COMs	%	LEGs	%
Minimising environmental impacts	27	12	40.0	7	29.2	8	40.0
Maximising social benefits	20	7	23.3	8	33.3	5	25.0
Management	18	9	30.0	4	16.7	5	25.0
Enhancing cultural heritage	9	2	6.6	5	20.8	2	10.0
Total	74	30	100.0	24	100.0	20	100.0

77 Smith & Font, 2014

78 OLR, personal email, 12th September 2014

4.2. Communicating with the customer

The focus on customer benefits is low (38,3%), confirming sustainability marketing myopia, so there is a missing opportunity of using sustainability as marketing value[79]. As expected, LEGs have the greatest focus on customers (56,3%); messages from COMs are focused mainly on business benefits (43,8%) following by customer-focused messages (37,5%). However, ALTs stress mostly altruistic benefits (57,1%) and less customer benefits (28,6%) (see Figure 1). An altruistic message like "*The Belle Tout Builder Boys charity calendar was released to raise money for Everyman Charity*" (COM01) would not attract mainstream customers; only those with high elaboration might respond well. Contrarily a message like "*We offer an opportunity for our guests to experience the beauty of West Sussex Country, which we are located in the heart of. For those who wish to explore the area we have links with local bike hire companies and are more than happy to suggest scenic walks*" (COM02) is more likely to trigger bookings.

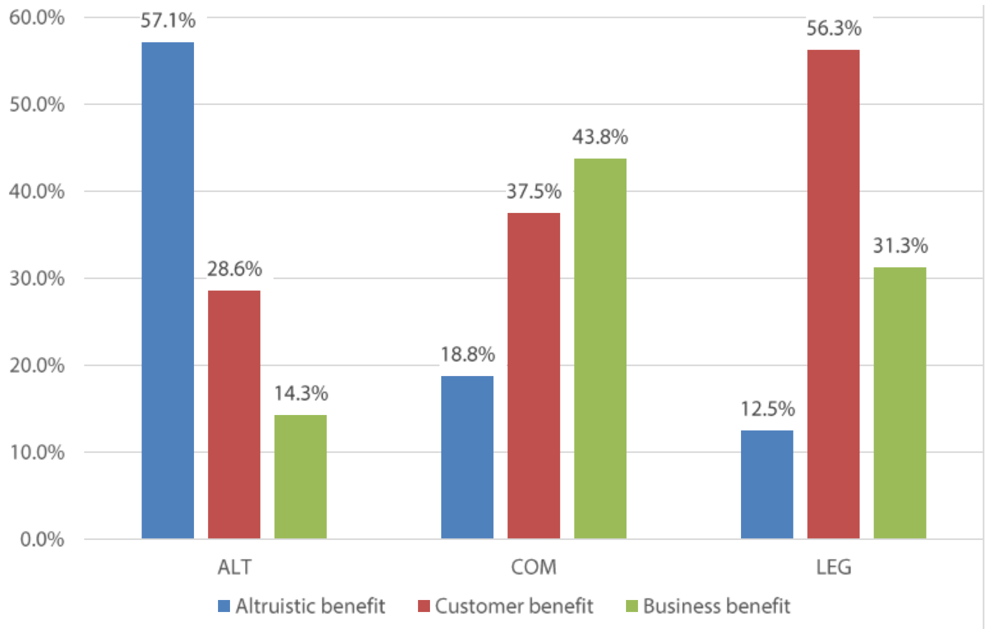

Figure 1: Focus of sustainability messages in websites according to business profile.

4.3. Communicating credibly

29.1% of the sustainability messages are not credible (see Figure 2), mainly due to lack of evidence, affecting the company's reputation and diminishing consumer trust. Credible, detailed, specific, clear, understandable, complete and truthful statements[80] backed up with evidence[81] are absolutely necessary to avoid putting consumers off. COMs are the most credible with a 86.7% credibility score. ALTs businesses are the least credible, with 41.7% of their messages lacking credibility. For example, "*we are […] a beacon for sustainability and an award-winning social enterprise charity*" (ALT02) showing no evidence of the awards won is considered unreliable. LEGs' profile is in between the other two, with 25% of no credible messages.

79 Belz & Peattie, 2013; Villarino & Font, 2015

80 Leonidou et al, 2011

81 Du et al, 2010

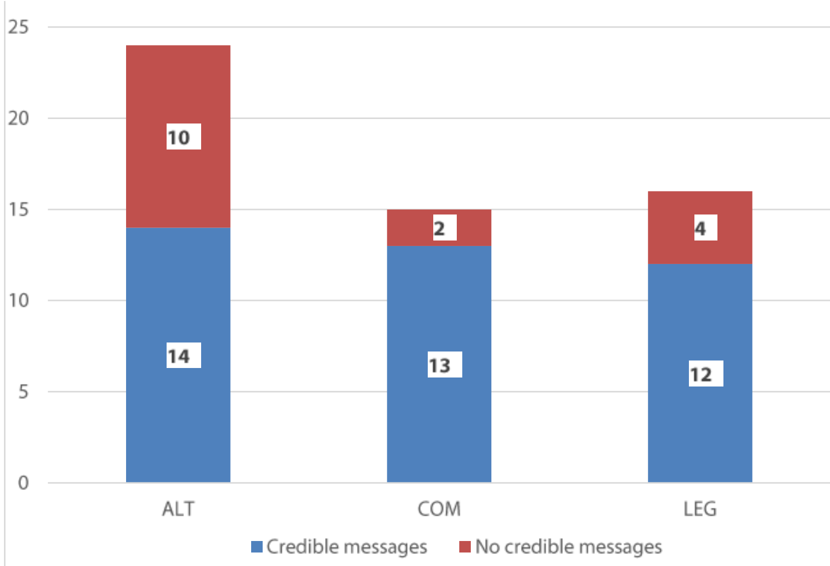

Figure 2: Credibility in sustainability messages according to business profile.

4.4. Communicating persuasively

A first analysis of message persuasiveness was made over the 55 sustainability messages, with non credible and non customer-focused messages included. Results show a substantial room for improving persuasive SCs, as the average message persuasiveness was only 38.5%, in line with the 39.3% found by Villarino & Font[82]. None of the business profiles flourish in persuasive communications. COMs is the profile most persuasive (45.1%), marginally above LEGs (43.6%). Again, ALTs score the lowest (30.7%) (see Table 4).

Table 4: Persuasive variables in messages by profile and totals.

PERSUASIVENESS								
+ VARIABLES	**ALTs**	**% ALTs**	**COMs**	**% COMs**	**LEGs**	**% LEGs**	**TOTAL**	**% TOT**
Denotative	13	54.2%	12	80.0%	13	81.3%	38	69.1%
Emotional appeal	2	8.3%	3	20.0%	2	12.5%	7	12.7%
Explicit	10	45.5%	11	73.3%	13	81.3%	34	64.2%
Commitment	14	63.6%	10	62.5%	7	50.0%	31	59.6%
Experience	2	8.3%	5	33.3%	6	37.5%	13	23.6%
Social norms	2	8.3%	0	0%	0	0%	2	3.6%
TOTAL	43	30.7%	41	45.1%	41	43.6%	125	38.5%

The use of emotional appeals to grab the attention of the message is barely a practiced (12.7%); logical and descriptive messages are preferred, only effective for customers with high elaboration[83]. Positive emotions are recommended to engage mainstream customers

82 2015

83 O'Keefe, 1990

because they contribute to the heuristic likability[84]. A quarter of the messages refer to experience, missing the opportunities of empowering customers in the learning process of sustainability[85] and increasing their loyalty[86]. By making customers aware of the local sustainability issues, the sustainable development agenda will advance. Unsurprisingly, the use of social norms is practically non-existent, in line with top awarded sustainability businesses[87]. It is remarkable that the selected LEGs do not use any social norm, contrarily to what the literature suggests they could do.

According to the literature, a message will be more persuasive when it is credible and focused on customer benefits. A second analysis was made to find out whether this study could demonstrate this point. From the 55 sustainability messages, only 19 refer to GSTC categories, are credible and have a customer beneficiary focus (see Figure.3). Results show 30% more persuasiveness than in the average sustainability message – that is 50.5% against 38.5% (see Tables 4 and 5); being LEGs the profile that scored highly in persuasion, although with room for improvement.

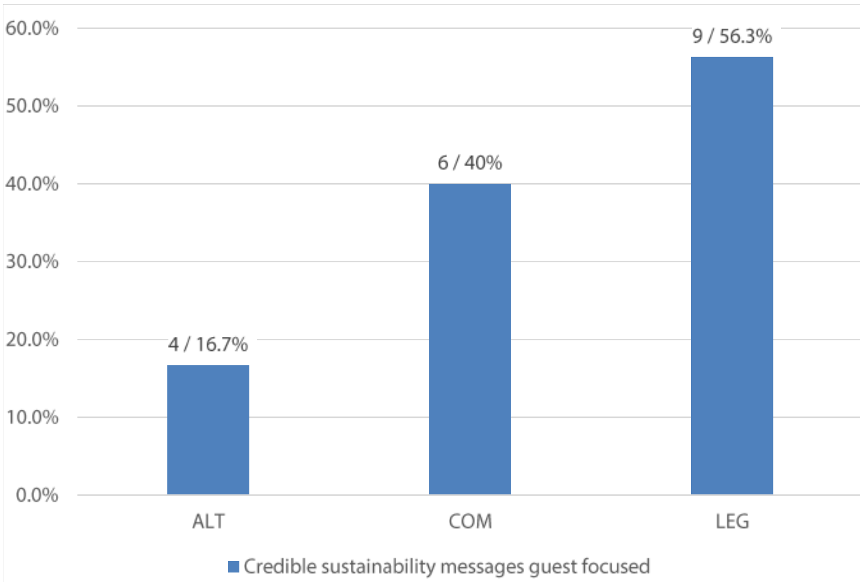

Figure 3: Credible customer-focused sustainability messages in number and % according to business profile.

PERSUASIVENESS		
+ VARIABLES		
Denotative	18	94.7%
Emotional appeal	3	15.8%
Explicit	15	83.3%
Commitment	9	52.9%
Experience	11	57.9%
Social norms	0	0%
TOTAL	**56**	**50.5%**

Table 5: Persuasive variables in credible sustainability messages focused on customers

84 Bettinghaus & Cody, 1994

85 Cialdini, 2009; Stanford, 2014

86 Villarino & Font, 2015

87 Villarino & Font, 2015

5. Conclusions

Businesses talk about sustainability according to their motivation to engage in it. ALTs seem more concerned about sustainability as they communicate more than others, focusing on philanthropic issues, although with the lowest effectiveness as their messages have the lowest credibility and lack of customer-focus, and therefore achieve the lowest persuasiveness. COMs have the lowest number of sustainability messages, most of them focused on business benefits, with the highest credibility but also low on persuasiveness. Finally, LEGs follows similar patterns than COMs; with a similar number of messages, mostly focused on customer benefits. However, their credibility is lower than COMs and so is their persuasiveness. In conclusion, all profiles face important challenges to achieve effective sustainability communication.

Some 30% of the sustainability messages are not credible, mainly due to lack of evidence. More than 60% of sustainability messages are not aimed at customers, preferring altruistic or self-regarding messages. The evidence demonstrates that businesses fall into sustainability marketing myopia, inkeeping with findings from Villarino & Font[88]. Only features positively contributing to the customer experience will persuade mainstream customers. Persuasion is not possible if credibility is lacking and marketing myopia is present, ending up with only 38.5% of the messages being persuasive. However, although messages that are both credible and customer-focused are 30% more persuasive, there is still room for improvement. Businesses do not sufficiently communicate emotionally in order to engage customers. Lack of time and resources is what businesses state constantly[89] to justify themselves. Lack of social norms is evident, showing little acknowledgment about their potential to create change, as people will change and adapt if social norms are recognised and enforced.

The role of certification schemes in communicating sustainability seems important to justify the findings. Certification schemes have an important responsibility to play on what to communicate and how to do it effectively; as OLR argues, *"many* [SAPs] *have been influenced in how they write about sustainability by schemes* […] *they tend to follow a similar format* […] *there is quite a lot written about environmental achievements based around energy, water and waste, I think because that is what they have been encouraged to think about"*[90].

Although this research is not conclusive due to the small sample analysed, the industry could benefit from some explicit recommendations. First, all profiles share a lack of integration of sustainability into marketing, contributing perhaps to the gap between the intention to buy sustainable and the actual behaviour. It seems there are two different approaches to management[91], with a disconnection between marketing communication and sustainability communication. Therefore SC is not used as a source of competitive advantage[92]. The sustainability agenda will advance through integration with marketing, putting the customer at the centre of the message, being necessary to work with owners/

88 in publication

89 OLR, personal email, 12th September 2014

90 personal email, 12th September 2014

91 Villarino & Font, 2015

92 Bonilla-Priego et al, 2011

managers to improve their sustainability marketing skills.

Second, businesses must understand that sustainability is not about saving the Earth, it is about creating more meaningful experiences for the customer while maximising the triple bottom line. As businesses act according to their motivations to trade, different approaches are needed. ALTs need to understand that sustainability is not about "commercialising" values, and that their values can become an important part of customer experience, spreading those values among them. ALTs have most potential to advance the agenda if they get to communicate effectively. COMs need to integrate sustainability, not only as an eco-savings approach, but also as part of a more quality experience focusing more on what is there for their customers rather than for themselves. LEGs need to understand that sustainability is more than an environmental policy or a green certificate. Sustainability has to be embedded in all their communications showing what is in there for their customers.

Third, the research opens up the possibility of working with businesses in persuasive communication. Specific training in the use of social norms, appealing messages, and customer encouragement to experience sustainability practices would definitely improve their communications. Sustainability requires a holistic approach[93] embedded at a strategic level. ALTs, as a values-motivated profile, is the group that can best approach sustainability holistically. There is a segment within ALTs that stands out for their business skills, and a segment within COMs with high business skills and altruistic motivations[94]. By working with those businesses to integrate sustainability with their marketing; to make credible statements; to focus on communicating better experiences to customers; and to communicate more persuasively; we will create models to follow, encouraging other businesses, customers and stakeholders to engage in more sustainable behaviour[95], contributing to make sustainability the normal thing to do.

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93 Belz & Peattie, 2013

94 Font et al, 2014

95 Miller et al, 2010; Rettie et al, 2012

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Facilitators and Barriers of Towel Reuse Programmes

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Abstract

Towel reuse programmes are a frequently chosen measure to contribute to environmental performances of hotels. Whilst guest participation and environmental management system implementation has been researched in the past, employee participation in such programmes had not been in the spotlight so far. Various demographic, internal and external factors influence pro-environmental behaviour at the workplace. The aim of this research is to compare influencing factors proposed in literature to facilitators and barriers identified in two case study hotels. Evidence of such barriers was found during process reviews, towel reuse checks in guest rooms as well as in-depth interviews with employees. This indicated that organisational set-up, educational background, the lack of: standard working procedures, trainings, interventions, monitoring the programme and active feedback cycles are all affecting employee participation. Social proof in form of work colleagues and guests expectations as well as management commitment and inspiration have also to be pinpointed as influencing factors.

Keywords

towel reuse programme; environmental performance; employee participation; pro-environmental workplace behaviour

Introduction

Over recent years environmental performance in the hospitality sector has gained importance and Environmental Management Systems (EMS) have been implemented. The hotel industry generates more negative environmental impact than the public perceives , consuming vast amounts of energy and water[1] . The Towel Reuse Programme (TRP) is frequently selected to reduce these impacts resulting in considerable economic benefits through costs savings by minimising resources. A card in the guest room offers guests the option to reuse their towels or placing them on the floor for housekeeping (HSK) to replace. Besides the hotel management establishing and monitoring the TRP, it involves guests by participating and requesting towel reuse as well as room attendants (RA) by acknowledging this request. As previous studies researched factors influencing guests' participation, this study is designed to shed light on factors influencing RAs' behaviour, which consequently contributes to the programme's success or failure. Research on guest behaviour showed that interventions to increase guest participation proved to be more effective when information on the reasons and benefits had been provided[52]. The industry standard message (environmental concern) had been compared to two messages with descriptive norms on 'what other guests do in the same situation' . The 'global' norm, referred to the percentage of guests in the whole hotel participating in the TRP, the 'provincial' norm to the particular guest room. The latter resulted in highest guest participation scores. This indicates that social proof explaining behaviour of people being influenced by other people's behaviour and consequently assuming that this is the 'correct' behaviour. Information or observation of how others behave becomes an especially powerful factor.

As can be seen in the figure below, the influences of all other stakeholder needs to be considered as these are interrelated. As in most cases pro-environmental behaviour does not maximise individual benefits but mainly affects other people or the environment, this research evaluates internal and external factors influencing hotel employees' participation in the initiative. Three main stakeholder groups are involved in TRPs with the hotel management in the provider perspective, room attendants in recipient perspective and guests in the wider perspective. For a successful programme, influencing factors need to be determined, facilitators enhanced and barriers removed (Figure 1).

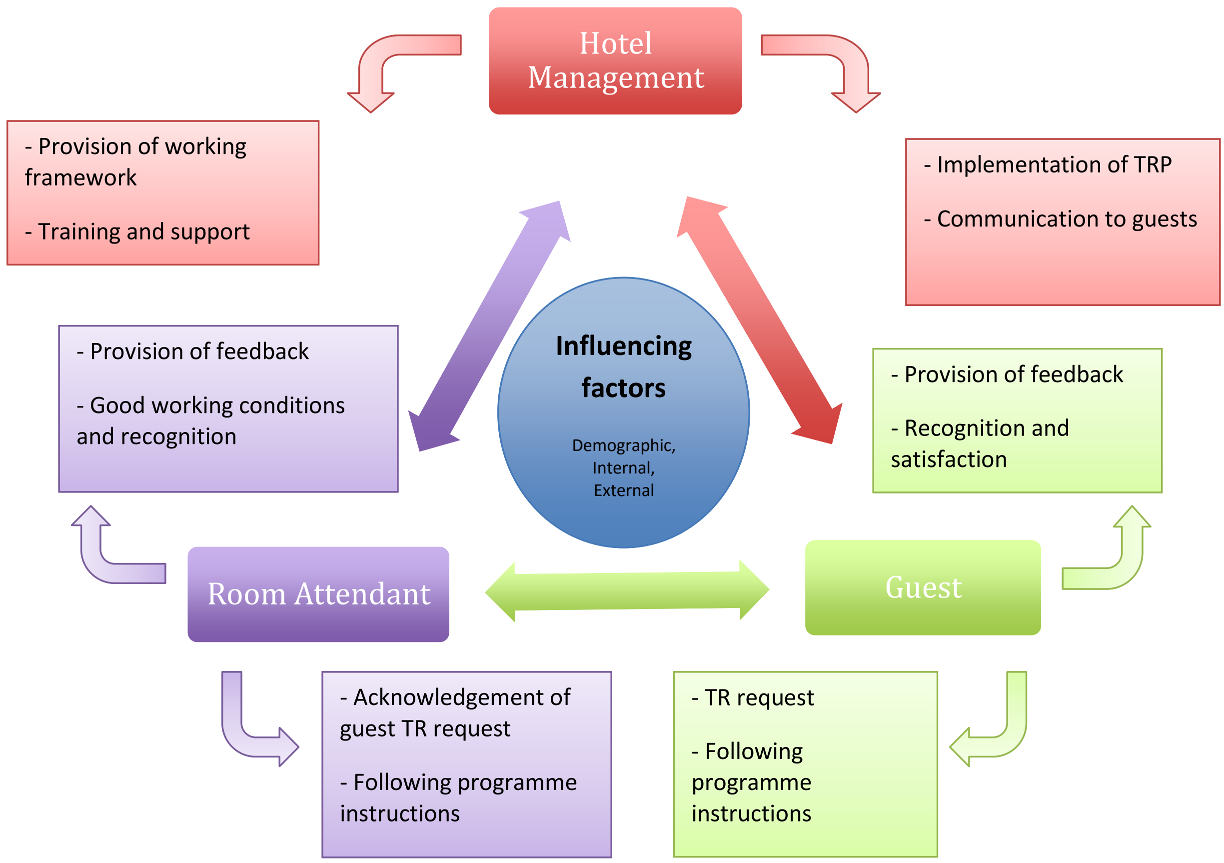

Figure 1: The three stakeholder relationships within TRPs

Source: Koehler (2014)

The term 'pro-environmental behaviour' is commonly used to refer to a person considering and consciously seeking to minimise environmental impacts of actions and behaviour[1] [2]. Ramus and Steger (2000, p.606) introduced this in the workplace context as "any

1 Barr et. al. 2010

2 Kollmuss and Agyeman 2002

action taken by employees that she or he thought would improve the environmental performance of the company". Most frequently studied in hotel settings is the behaviour of reusing towels[18 3 4 5 6 7].

Intention is suggested to be composed of behavioural (assessment of possible consequences), normative (social pressure) and control (presence or absence of resources and opportunities) determinants[8]. Also, personal capabilities including possessing skills and knowledge, context and habits as well as physical infrastructure and technical facilities can be taken into account[9 10]. Often pro-environmental behaviour can only take place if the necessary infrastructure is provided (external institutional factor). The more difficult, time-consuming, or expensive the required personal behaviour is, the weaker is its dependence on attitudinal factors[26 11]. General capabilities, such as literacy, social status and power as well as socio demographic values, as in gender, education and income levels may act as an indicator for personal capabilities[12]. In the case of TRPs might language skills be a constraining factor, as several RAs did not understand instructions in previous research[13].

Cultural norms possibly play an important role influencing RAs' perception of the TRP. In addition to the motive of behaving consistently with one's internal value system (personal norms), people seem to behave in accordance with expectations of relevant others (social norms)[14]. Social proof suggests that people view types of behaviour as correct in a given situation to the degree that they see others performing it[15],[16]. The locus of control represents an individual's perception of whether one has the ability to bring about change through one's own behaviour[17]. Well-established habits are not always easily overcome. Prospective employees, who are genuinely concerned about the environment, will be more likely to commit to environmental initiatives[18]. A lack of trust in specific institutions often stops people from acting pro-environmentally[19].

3 Goldstein et. al. 2007
4 Goldstein et. al. 2008
5 Cialdini 2005
6 Mair and Bergin-Seers 2010
7 Shang 2006
8 Ajzen 2009
9 Han et. al. 2010
10 Steg and Vlek 2009
11 Stern 2000
12 Stern 2000
13 Goldstein et. al. 2008
14 Stern et.al. 1993
15 Cialdini 2001 in Shang et. al. 2009
16 Goldstein et. al. 2007
17 Newhouse 1991
18 Bohdanowicz and Zientara 2008
19 Blake 1999

Behaviour change and interventions

The acknowledgement of TR requests can be performed by RAs due to various reasons. Organisational motivation helps to increase cohesiveness and teamwork among employees as well as 'the feeling of shared values'[20]. It suggests that hotel management should clearly communicate the motives behind initiatives, as well as their impacts and benefits. Leaders high in inspirational motivation stimulate their employees to go beyond their individual needs for the collective good and inspire them through their passion and optimism to overcome psychological setbacks and external obstacles[21]. Sharing of information, team awards, articulation of values and peer pressure are valuable means[22]. Environmental committees and meetings are used as a forum to report and discuss issues. Education and training are very important for successful implementation[23] [24] [25][26].

Promoting effective behaviour change begins by carefully selecting behaviour to be changed, examining factors causing those behaviours, applying well-tuned interventions and systematically evaluating the effect of these interventions[27]. Two approaches are suggested. First, informational strategies can be set antecedent (before) or as a consequence (after) behaviour takes places or structural strategies (as in rewards/sanctions) can be chosen altogether. It is necessary to look at each case (or hotel) separately to understand existing barriers and facilitators in the context of the TRP. There is a tendency towards informational strategies[28], however sometimes increasing knowledge and awareness in form of antecedent strategies does not necessarily lead to pro-environmental behaviour. Not all employees share their employer's interest and consider environmental training activities as boring, time-consuming and wasteful[29]. Structural strategies use as rewards to motivate behaviour change have been proven to be more effective than sanctions[30]. Even though structural strategies seem to be more effective than informational strategies, not all interventions require the use of incentives, yet these may involve eliminating external and/or internal barriers and put in place feasible alternatives[31]. The most effective behaviour change programmes seem to involve combinations of intervention types[32] [33]. Those include moral approaches that appeal to values, efforts to change the incentive structure by providing rewards or sanctions and community management involving the establishment of shared rules and expectations.

20 Chan and Hawkins 2009
21 Robertson and Barling 2013
22 Bohdanowicz et. al. 2011
23 Hart 2005
24 Morrow and Rondinelli 2002
25 Rondinelli and Vastag 2000
26 Ayuso 2006
27 Steg and Vleg 2009
28 Kollmuss and Agyeman 2002
29 Tracey and Tews 1995
30 Geller 2002
31 Mair and Bergin-Seers 2010
32 Gardner and Stern 1996 quoted in Stern 2000
33 Steg and Vlek 2009

Service quality and overall image have a positive association with revisit intention. To the author's knowledge no research has been conducted yet to examine guest satisfaction with TRPs. Often enough guests hang their towels up on the rack for reuse, but find them replaced on return to the room, which might negatively influence guest satisfaction[34 35 36 37]. Environmentally conscious guests might be discouraged to continue participating when finding clean towels on return. Many previous studies focus on the relation programmes play between the provider perspective (hotel management) and recipients (employees)[38 39 40] or the wider perspective (guests)[41 42]. Influencing factors identified in these relations inform the objectives in this study as it specifically aims to examine the link to employees.

Methods

The research was conducted in November and December 2013 in two different business hotels with roughly the same size (150 to 200 rooms) in the United Kingdom. Prior to the interviews a process review had been conducted to observe and question working practices, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and the organisational culture. By performing a daily towel reuse checks in guest rooms (TR requests by guests and acknowledgement rates of employees) data was collected from the second day onwards for four days in total.

Data collection

This study is designed to evaluate factors influencing the TRP participation of employees with qualitative methods (process review and interviews) as well as descriptive quantitative methods (TR sample check of rooms). Two case study hotels were selected, an independent and a group hotel, and one week each was spent in each. These two hotels were similar in regards to size and business focus, however differed in their organisational set up, which made it interesting for the researcher to compare the findings. Case studies are regarded as particularly suitable for answering "how"' and "why" research questions as they deal with operational links that can be traced over time[43]. A process review at the start of the research week helped to understand the status quo of the initiative as well as the organisational set up. As employees were aware that the researcher was studying the TRP this could have influenced their alertness to the programme.

Quantitative phase

The research week continued with daily towel reuse (TR) checks of sample rooms offer descriptive statistics of actual guest towel reuse requests and room attendant acknowl-

34 Heney 2009
35 Johnson 2008
36 Meade 2013
37 Siegle 2012
38 Park 2009
39 Tzschentke 2008
40 Nicholls and Kang 2012
41 Goldstein et.al. 2008
42 Mair and Bergin-Seers 2010
43 Yin 2003

edgement rates over four days. Unlike Goldstein's study, this study includes 'mixed signs' (towels not placed on towel rack or on the floor as indicated on TR sign, but hung on doorknobs, doors, beds, etc.) in the TR check of sample rooms in order to understand employees' behaviour and participation under various circumstances.

Qualitative phase

The research week ended with in-depth interviews with room attendants (RAs) and key informants (KIs) of hotel management (HSK Supervisors, HSK and Rooms Division as well as General Managers) aimed to determine the factors influencing TRP participation of employees. By asking how processes could be more efficient and effective, strengths and weaknesses of this initiative were assessed. Interview questions were semi-structured and designed to include various factors discussed in the literature[44 45 46 47]. Inductively oriented and theoretically driven approaches were both employed when analysing the collected qualitative data[48]. This is important for exploratory research as it allows the author to have an open mind to identify new elements in the data that have not been derived from the literature before, whereas the theoretically driven approach provides added dimensions of previous research experience[49]. Two sets of questions, one for KIs (hotel manager, director of operations, HSK manager, HSK supervisor) as well as one for RAs were prepared to identify facilitators and barriers of the TRP. These related to pro-environmental behaviour, environmental management and green initiatives in general to understand different perspectives on situations an employee finds him/herself in as well as experiences and opinions related to the TRP in particular. The data was collected from two employee levels, key informants (KIs) at executive and supervisory level, and room attendants (RAs), to provide a rich data set[81]. In this case study there is no restriction in the length of service of employees at the hotel as the length of service of HSK staff can be low. For confidentiality reasons, titles and names of informants as well as the hotel names are not mentioned.

Intervention

The present study further examined employee behaviour by setting interventions. Intervention signs were designed to see whether descriptive norms seeking reciprocation in messages are more effective than traditional environmental cooperation messages. Descriptive norms have been proven to increase participation of guests in previous studies[50]. Behavioural interventions are generally more effective when they are systematically planned, implemented and evaluated. Two separate messages were placed successively over two days on information boards inside the HSK office and on the HSK office door in form of coloured, laminated A4 sized signs. The industry's perceived acknowl-

44 Kollmuss and Agyeman 2002

45 Stern 2000

46 Ajzen 2009

47 De Groot and Steg 2009

48 Miles and Huberman 1994

49 Chan and Hawkins 2011

50 Goldstein et. at. 2007

edgement rate of 75% was used[51]. After the first day of inspections of sample rooms, an intervention message with a descriptive global norm was displayed ('around 75% of guests participate…'). The descriptive global norm was reflected in the appeal for the RA to generally join in the TRP and acknowledge any guest TR requests. After the second day of room inspections on the sample rooms, an intervention changed into a message with a descriptive provincial norm ('around 75% of our guests participate…, …join your fellow colleagues…'). The provincial norm targeted the situation of the employee's immediate surroundings and the team within the hotel. RA interviewees were asked during the interview if they noticed any signs and if they could remember the message. The author had accepted the possibility of a cumulative effect of both signs being seen by the same employee.

Results

Both the independent and the group hotel offered the researcher a good opportunity to conduct a process review. Sample sizes of TR in guest rooms were higher at the group hotel due to more independence given to the researcher (had to be accompanied by a supervisor at the independent hotel). More interview partners were available at the independent hotel due to time constraints of RAs at the group hotel (agency staff).

Process review

At the independent Hotel (IH), the environmental policy, the hotel's environmental commitment and initiatives as well as Corporate Social Responsibility values and the Green Tourism Business Scheme (GTBS) certification were not mentioned during the departmental induction and were missing on training records as well as job descriptions and specifications. Amongst other green initiatives, there were no standards written specifically for the Towel Reuse Programme. The towel reuse card had no eye-catching design, contained spelling errors and provided no accompanying message on the reasons the hotel is practising this programme. After HSK had serviced a 'stay on room' (a guest staying more than one night), the researcher could not effortlessly determine the difference between 'used' and 'clean' towels, as towels-to-be-reused were folded back the same way as fresh towels and put on the rail. There were no daily HSK briefings observed. Guests can rate 'the overall environmental and sustainable practices undertaken by the hotel' in the HSK part of the customer service survey.

The group hotel (GH) provided no formal departmental induction for HSK RAs and supervisors due to using out-sourced agency staff. Due to the absence of the induction to line staff the HSK environmental policy, the hotel's commitment to the environment, its initiatives or Corporate Social Responsibility values were not introduced. Health & Safety training was provided only. No environmental policies and procedures were specified in job descriptions and the hotel's commitment to the environment not outlined. As there was no training manual in place, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) were missing for green working practices such as TRP. No training pictures for RAs (e.g. towel set up standard) were displayed and the agency employee handbook lacked hotel's policies and

51 Goldstein et. Al. 2008

corporate values. The TR card had an eye-catching design, explaining the reasons for participation, was placed in the guest bathroom on a sill behind the toilet. The researcher could effortlessly distinguish between 'used' or 'clean' towels, as reused towels were generally kept the way the guest left it. Fresh towels were folded and put on top of the rail.

Towel reuse check

A room list was given to the researcher with 'stay on rooms' in the morning. Rooms were then consequently checked with the supervisor (at IH) or independently (at GH), if the guest had already left the room for the day. If they had, the bathroom could be inspected and a TR check was completed. As outlined on the TR card the following qualified for TR request: Yes – towel on the rail, radiator or the hooks; Yes mixed signs – towel placed over the door, bed, chair, or the side of the bathtub.

At IH, due to the circumstance that reused towels were folded back the same way as clean towels, the researcher relied on optical signs (such as creases, wrinkles, wetness, etc.) of use on the towels on the first two days. However, this seemed to prove difficult and unreliable. Therefore a pencil-marking method of checking TR request and acknowledgement was adopted from Day 4 (third day of TR check) onwards. It provided proof of actual TR acknowledgement after the RA had serviced the room. A sample size of 20 rooms per day was targeted, however this was not always possible due guests being back in the room, 'do not disturb signs' (day 3) or a limited number of stay on rooms (day 5). Generally, guest TR request numbers were high, if 'Yes' and 'Yes mixed signs' were added together. It resulted in a participation rate of over 77% on all four days. With the exception of Day 3 (with a 50/50 rate), the positive TR acknowledgement rate of RAs was higher than the neglect of TR requests. Further, it showed a positive trend towards Day 5 with 100% on the last day (however a smaller sample size has to be noted).

At GH, the researcher experienced the same issues with sample sizes due to guests being back in the room, Do-not-disturb (DND)-signs or higher numbers of check outs. TR requests were low during the first three research days, even though 'Yes' and 'Yes mixed signs' were added together. The participation rate remained under 37%. After consulting the HSK manager, it was decided to remove the towel card from the bathroom and place it on the guest bed (which is not the company standard) on Day 3. The last TR check day showed a 75% participation rate out of a smaller sample size. The positive TR acknowledgement rate of RAs was higher than the neglect of TR requests. However after peaking on Day 3 and 4 at 76%, it dropped significantly on Day 5 to 52% (a smaller sample size on Day 5). Especially the number of rooms with mixed signs for TR and no RA acknowledgement (No to mixed signs) had been high (7).

A comparison of guest TR requests and RA acknowledgments over four days showed differences between the two hotels (Figure 2).

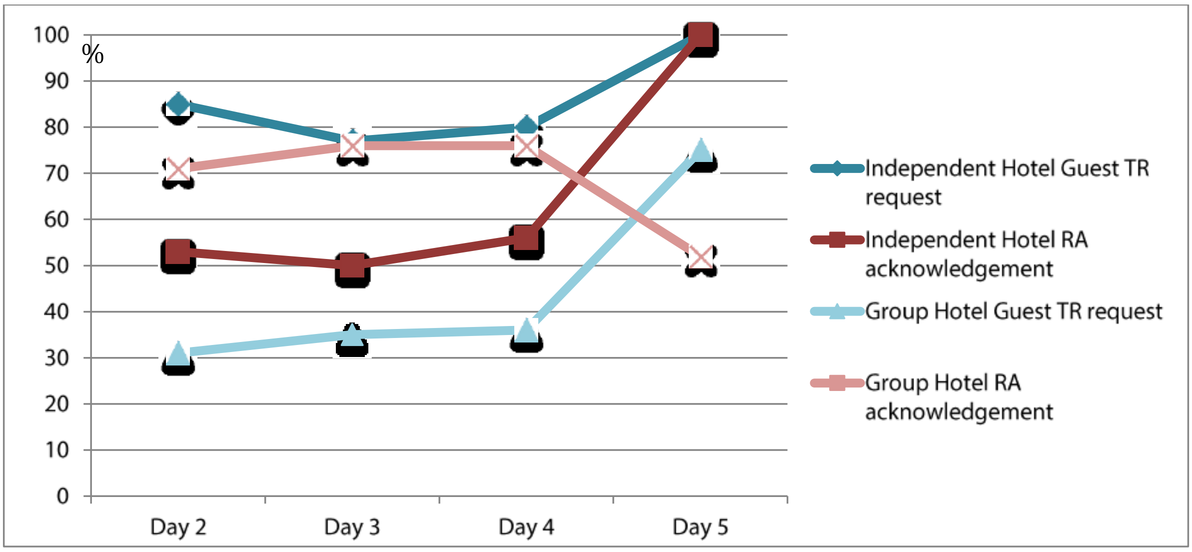

Figure 2: Comparison of TR checks at the two hotels

Source: Koehler (2012)

Interviews

15-minute interviews with RAs and KIs provided valuable insight views and supported the researcher to identify facilitators and barriers of the TRP.

Nine interviews at IH were held mainly in the HSK office. Not all RAs spoke sufficiently English to take part. Five interviewees were English native speakers (two of those were RAs); the rest had Asian ethnic background. The average length of service was 2 years.

Five interviews were conducted at GH. Unfortunately due to time restrictions, interviews with RAs had to be held in guest rooms during their shifts. KIs' interviews were held in the HSK office. RAs' target of rooms to be cleaned per hour is very high. Due to language barriers only three RAs could be interviewed. None of the RA interviewees were English native speakers with nationalities from Eastern and Southern Europe and an average length of service of 9 months.

Environmental performance and the TRP

All employees at IH were aware of TR procedure, however interpretations varied. Mixed signs of guests' TR intention were not met with a clear instruction on how RAs are supposed to react and proceed. RAs were aware of the possibility that guests might think that requests are ignored due to interpretations. Most RAs believed they did not ignore any TR requests. Some RAs are folding TR towels back to "make it a little bit tidy", some leave it hanging "if it is wet, we leave it hanging so it can dry" with individual procedures of folding towels back. KIs opinions on why RAs might ignore TR requests range from: communication failure, language barrier, misinterpretation of intentions, fear of complaints or the feeling that the room does not look tidy. Information on environmental performance and initiatives are important to employees. Especially native speakers mentioned general staff meetings as an information source. Most RAs did not know how savings generated by environmental initiatives are invested and KIs generally believe that cost savings should be absorbed by the business. KIs state that departmental managers choose relevant information for inductions and on the job trainings. TRP related guest complaints are recorded directly via Customer Satisfaction Report or other customer feedback review sites. KIs state that guests will be informed of the programme in case of complaints. However, not all RAs seem to inform guests. KIs believe to provide moral support to staff, which is confirmed by the majority of RAs.

Employees at GH were aware of the TR procedure, yet interpretations of mixed signs varied. KIs could not explain the procedure on mixed signs for TR. KIs believed language barrier to be the main reason for not acknowledging TR requests and further, that personal pride in making the room 'look tidy' and therefore replacing the towels, played an important role for RAs. However, RAs stated that TR requests are not ignored. KIs believed that acknowledgement of TR did neither result in less work nor require extra time and effort. RAs strongly agreed to the TRP resulting in less work. Only KIs directly employed by the hotel showed a good awareness of environmental initiatives; agency staff (all RAs and one KI) less so. Interviewees believed that cost reduction was the management's main motivation for the TRP; concern for the environment and society were secondary motivators. The majority of interviewees agreed that the TRP is true to the hotel's corporate values. Three of four KIs believed that cost savings related to environmental initiatives should be reinvested in environmental initiatives at the hotel, however did not communicate how. The majority of RAs did not show any interest. KIs stated that complaint rates in regards to the TRP were low and believed the programme was explained to guests. However, not all RAs informed guests of the programme in case of a complaint. KIs affirmed that support is provided to staff, if procedures were followed correctly, which was fully confirmed by RAs. Guests could not rate the hotel on its environmental performance in the Guest Satisfaction survey and feedback related to the TRP was not actively sought. KIs did not believe that the TRP played an important role in the hotel group's sustainability review.

Pro-environmental behaviour

Employees at IH showed an understanding of environmental initiatives; yet were engaged to different degrees. They strongly agree to working in a hotel with green programmes enables to protect the environment, be more socially responsible and perform environmental friendly practices. KIs believe that staff participation in TRPs takes more time and effort than RAs actually state. Both groups agree that the TRP improves guest satisfaction. It is very important for KIs what hotel guests think of the green working practices. Mainly colleagues and co-workers believe staff should participate in green working practices, family and friends less so. Interviewees practise water efficiency at home. KIs agreed slightly stronger to this habit. Both groups claim to replace their personal towels at home on average every third day. The majority of RAs do not believe that daily fresh towels increase the guests' comfort; while KIs' opinion is divided in this matter. Environmental attitude is not considered during the recruitment process, but management aims to influence workplace pro-environmental behaviour by leading by example and by providing reasons for particular behaviour to be practiced. All RAs feel that managers are interested in the environment, yet claim they are not encouraged enough to participate. RAs stated for encouragement a desire to know about the reasons, impacts and benefits. Especially the native speakers considered it as common sense to participate as they always had to (e.g. at school); others have to learn the basics of environmental protection.

At GH, the majority of employees agreed that working in a hotel with environmental initiatives enabled to protect the environment and be more socially responsible. Especially KIs employed directly by the hotel showed and understanding of environmental initiatives, yet were engaged to different degrees. Most RAs were not aware of any environmental practices they could perform in their job role. Neither colleagues nor family and friends seem to raise expectations to the staff member's participation in green working practices. It is more important for KIs what guests think of the green working practices than it is for RAs. KIs agreed slightly stronger to practicing water efficiency at home than RAs. Not one employee stated to change their personal towels every single day (on average every four to five days). The majority believed that fresh, daily-replaced towels increased the guests' comfort. Not all RAs believed that their managers are interested in the environment and that procedures were clearly communicated. Top management declared to inquire about social and environmental initiatives during the interview of new staff (directly employed). The HSK manager had mainly not the opportunity to interview RAs (agency staff); however if interviewed, RAs were not asked any questions related to environmental attitudes.

Behaviour Change and Intervention

Mainly informational strategies were practiced at IH to induce behaviour change. Management was involved and a green team had been established. There was no reward/sanction system with incentives in place. Most RAs were aware of the existence of a green committee, however not all felt sufficiently informed. General staff meetings were held on a quarterly basis to discuss environmental practices and statistical reports and communicate the policy and green issues were included in departmental meetings. RAs stated to enjoy reading information on the notice board and confirmed that they do not receive frequent environmental training. Many RAs tend to apply initiatives they practice at the hotel also at home. KIs confirmed that the TRP is neither monitored nor measured; some RAs feel their efforts in participating in programmes are not successful due to a lack of such. Both groups believe that 'concern for the environment' is the hotel management's main motivation for the TRP; cost reduction and concern for the society are secondary motivators. Almost all interviewees agreed that the TRP is true to the hotel's corporate values. Neither KIs (with exception of one top manager) nor RAs showed an understanding of the hotel's CSR values. KIs were generally very proud to have a GTBS Gold Award and believed it to be an 'extra added value' for guests. However, the majority of RAs was not clear about what GTBS is about. Only one of four KIs said that environmental practices were included in the employee appraisal system with an informative aspect only. The majority of RAs could remember the intervention signs placed in and in front of the office, however, no difference on behaviour between of the two messages was noticed.

Mainly informational strategies were set up at GH for directly employed staff, which did not include agency staff (RAs). Top management seemed very informed and engaged. KIs believed that all relevant information is communicated to staff, especially to those with a work email address, however threat of information overload was mentioned. Online training programmes were available with some compulsory courses for KIs (directly employed), which were not available for RAs. Monthly meetings contained a section about sustainability and minutes were displayed on staff notice boards, yet agency staff did not show any knowledge/interest. RAs stated that they did not feel sufficiently informed, as they were not part of meetings. Environmental practices were not included in the appraisal system. Three of four KIs stated that they tried to influence pro-environmental work behaviour by training people. However, HSK had no regular meetings or trainings and those take only place in case time allows it. All RAs believed to have the environmental knowledge to do their job, but at the same time, two of three prefer to receive more training. When asked what encourages participation in environmental initiatives, RAs claimed knowledge of reasons, impacts and benefits. Only one RA applied environmental knowledge learnt from initiatives practised at the hotel at home. There were no reward/sanction systems in place and KIs confirmed that the TRP is neither monitored nor measured. Most RAs felt that their initiatives and programmes should be better monitored. The majority of RAs could not remember the intervention signs placed in and in front of the office.

Discussion and Conclusion

Differences in the organisational set up as in independent and group hotel seem to partially influence working practices. Top management at both hotels showed positive environmental attitudes and organisational involvement, which is suggested to be essential[52]. Also, clear communication of practices and physical difficulties influence participation[53] [54]. GH has well developed information channels and trainings as well as initiatives and awards organised across the hotel group, however RAs did not receive the same trainings and opportunities due to their agency status. Time scarcity for RAs at GH, resulted in less available time for briefings and meetings. All IH staff attended inductions as well as meetings, which resulted in better knowledge regarding the hotel's performance and initiatives compared to GH. There was clearly a need to explain motives, reasons and benefits of having initiatives such as the TRP to RAs in both hotels. Interviewees confirmed that they either did not always understand the information provided to them (IH) or did not feel sufficiently informed (GH).

Basic environmental knowledge is required for people to consider pro-environmental behaviour[55]. Some interviewees stated that environmental education at schools (in the UK) as well as habits performed and accepted in society (especially amongst work colleagues) represent a foundation to enable identification with the hotel's corporate values. This is line with educational and social background playing a role in identifying oneself with employers' principles and practices[56]. As employees need to understand the programme

52 Park 2009

53 Watson 2010

54 Mair and Bergin-Seers 2010

55 Stern 2000

56 Chan and Hawkins 2011

to be able to follow it[57], language and reading skills can be pinpointed as important influencing factors. KIs at both hotels mentioned that possibilities for RAs to ignore TR requests result amongst others from communication failure and language barriers. RAs at IH showed a greater length of service and better language skills. GH employed RAs and supervisors via an agency and interviews revealed that often RAs started with little knowledge of English and left when their skills had improved.

The provision of Standard operating procedures (SOPs), trainings and meetings could actively target lost opportunities[58] at GH. Habits and working practices in the form of SOPs are a key factor in environmentally significant organisational behaviour[59][60]. SOPs in training folders and job descriptions were in place at IH, yet not particularly developed for the TRP. At GH there were no SOPs or up-to-date job descriptions available and therefore RAs as well as agency supervisors mainly rely training by shadowing other colleagues. The lack of SOPs, job descriptions and formal training coupled with a shorter length of service might lead to greater inconsistency[61].

Overall, IH achieved better positive convergence as smaller sample sizes yielded higher TR requests rates and provided solid RA acknowledgment. IH could improve by eliminating 'mixed signs' cases as well as ignored TR requests. GH has opportunities to realise higher levels of RA acknowledgments by eliminating 'mixed signs' cases. KIs at both hotels acknowledged possibilities for confusion and misinterpretation of mixed signs, yet did not offer a solution.

The majority of RAs at both hotels feel that initiatives should be better monitored. Governance is one of the most salient factors[62]. Only IH offered the opportunity for guests to rate their satisfaction with the hotel's environmental performance. If GH would include the TRP in the survey, results could be benchmarked with the group's sister hotels. This feedback as well as the peer pressure[63] in form of benchmarking tools could further enhance performance. Employees at both hotels saw the TRP generally in a positive light, as it did not take more time or effort. This is important as additional workload can hinder employee commitment[64]. Social proof also represented an influencing factor[65] as interviews, TR room checks and intervention signs raised awareness of a social norm and community expectations amongst staff. Acknowledgement for TR with mixed signs might have been seen as the (new) correct behaviour.

The researcher found more evidence in staff involvement at IH than at GH. As the locus of control represents an employee's perception of the ability to bring change through own behaviour[66], it could be that agency staff showed less conformity. The fact that RAs at IH

57 IHG 2011

58 Meade 2013

59 Stern 2000

60 Bohdanowicz et. al. 2011

61 Worsfold 1999

62 Chan and Wong 2006

63 Bohdanowicz et. al. 2011

64 Chan and Hawkins 2011

65 Cialdini 2001

66 Newhouse 1991

strongly agreed to working in a hotel with green programmes enabled them to protect the environment, be more socially responsible and perform environmental friendly practices, supports this conclusion. RAs at GH stated that they were not aware of environmental friendly practices in their job role, which clearly links to the lack of SOPs and training.

The majority of RAs at IH could remember the intervention signs placed on noticeboards, walls and doors inside and in front of the office. The circumstance that a training folder and job descriptions are available at IH as well as regular meetings are held and RAs further show greater length of service and possess better language skills seem to influence awareness for informational interventions. With that said, it did not seem that one of the intervention messages was more effective. However, as the sense of social obligation and reciprocation is powerful[67] and messages with provincial norms achieved higher guest participation[68], it stands reason that these will be more successful with employees too. At GH intervention signs were generally not noticed, which could again result from the lack of formal training other than on-the-job-training (shadowing other RAs), having irregular meetings and working under higher time pressure.

This study provides valuable insights into two different work place settings and reveals factors influencing participation of employees in TRPs. It is often assumed that employees automatically understand the hotel's motives and are able to list reasons and benefits; however this is not always the case. Hotel management needs to be aware that ignored TR guest requests by RAs represent missed cost saving opportunities as well as possible defamation due to "green washing". For this reason the importance of TRPs needs to be elevated and feedback cycles for employees established. Environmental performance is also required to be included in guest satisfaction surveys. By following steps for intervening change and targeting identified facilitators and barriers, employee participation can be increased.

Following influencing factors could be identified and are compiled and listed as facilitators or barriers in Table 1.

Management attitudes towards the environment are crucial as it is managers who instigate a concrete organisational culture, which guide individuals' daily work behaviours[69]. It was known to the researcher in advance that General Managers (GMs) of both case study hotels had the reputation of being interested in environmental management. For this reason they were approached and asked if they would like to take part. A GM not engaged in these issues might have denied access.

It has to be emphasised that this study is a snapshot of two separate cases at different times and in different locations. The importance lies in the contribution of some evidence found in two separate weeks that help to increase knowledge of barriers and facilitators for employees being involved in towel reuse programmes. The identified factors are aimed to support management of other hotels, individual or part of a group, in their decisions targeting the optimisation of their TRPs. So far, evidence of guests doubting the

67 Goldstein et. al. 2007

68 Goldstein et. al. 2008

69 De Groot and Steg 2009

seriousness of TRPs was found in grey literature[70]. Even though it might be difficult to get permission from hotel management for researchers to contact their hotel guests directly[71], one essential missing part is to find out how guests see acknowledgment of RAs. If an inclusion of a rating of environmental performance in guest satisfaction surveys becomes more regular in the future, this could open up an opportunity for research in this direction.

Table 1: Facilitators and Barriers of TRPs

FACTORS	FACILITATORS	BARRIERS
Demographic	• Prior environmental education (schools, at home) • Language and reading skills	• Lack of education
Internal	• Basic environmental knowledge • Knowledge of programme's impact and benefits • Sharing hotel's values and motives	• Lack of shared norms, beliefs and values; belief that increase of guest comfort by daily change of towels • Missing locus of control • Distinctive habits and routines (other workplaces, at home)
External	• Expectations of work colleagues, management and guests to participate; Social Proof (Community expectations) • Provision of SOPs (Institutional) • Communication, Meetings, Briefings (Institutional) • Monitoring of programme / Peer pressure (Institutional) • Intervention signs and training (Institutional)	• Management not interested (Institutional) • Extra time, effort or work required (Physical difficulties)

Source: Koehler (2014)

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71 Godfrey 2012

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