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Teaching Sustainability by Developing Irresponsible and Responsible Business Ideas for Tourism and Hospitality Industry

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Title: Teaching Sustainability by Developing Irresponsible and Responsible Business Ideas for Tourism and Hospitality Industry

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Abstract:

This paper reflects on the views derived from students who engaged in activities aimed at switching their mindset along the ethical and sustainability spectrum via an entrepreneurship course for a hospitality and tourism degree programme. This study adopts the idea that sustainable practice is not universal. Outcomes and bottom lines vary based on the positioning of sustainable practice within the sustainable development spectrum (Macbeth, 2005). For example, the weaker form of sustainability is egocentric and focuses on growth and resource exploitation. The strong form of sustainability is homocentric and focuses on the interests of the collective over the individual. The extreme form of sustainability is ecocentric, focusing on nature's right. It is anti-economic growth and supports the reduction of population growth. Different forms of sustainable practice will benefit different groups of stakeholders and priorities given to them. It is suggested that ethical values are the main driving force that influence sustainability positions and practices. Therefore, it is important to understand and to be reflexive about the ethical position that forms our sustainability paradigm and which will lead to the practice of sustainable tourism. In essence, the students were guided to propose and discuss tourism and hospitality business concepts based on different ethical and sustainability perspectives to meet the needs of different stakeholders. Instead of teaching them about what is bad or good or what is right or wrong, this pedagogical approach guides students to experience different forms of value systems and allows them to understand how each perspective leads to different outcomes. The best we can do is to equip students with the tools to support their thinking and help them understand sustainability and ethical values associated with their ideas. They need to take the journey to develop, test out, and further refine their ideas and nurture their personal values as future practitioners equipped with sustainability tools, skills, and ideals.