

**PLANNING ECOTOURISM TRAILS TO FACILITATE ENVIRONMENTAL
EDUCATION**

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To God be all the glory.

ABSTRACT

TITLE OF THESIS: Planning ecotourism trails to facilitate environmental education

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The study is placed in the realism philosophy and in the context of a three-tiered ontology. The empirical domain includes the two approaches ecotourism and environmental education. The real domain includes the trail event. The actual domain includes the agents. These agents are the trailist, trail owner, trail planner, environment, authority and host community.

The research adopts a dualistic research approach and combines the inductive and deductive processes. The study is structured by pre-determined research aims and the three-tiered ontology of realism. Theoretical discussions and case studies are employed to achieve the research aims and answer the research problem.

The research examines the link between ecotourism and environmental education, existing trail planning processes and the different agents participating in ecotourism trail planning. The conceptual analysis concludes that environmental interpretation and education are by definition essential parts of ecotourism. Nine ecotourism trail planning principles in a four phase trail planning framework are proposed to facilitate the implied environmental education responsibility of ecotourism.

The principles emphasise that 1) the primary purpose of the ecotourism trail to facilitate environmental education should be clearly stated, 2) the needs of all the agents participating in the trail planning process should be identified, 3) the trail purpose and the trailist's needs should be expressed in context of the total trail environment (biophysical, social, behavioural and physiological), 4) the agents should actively participate in the complete trail planning process in decision-making situations, problem solving situations, management tasks and planning of environmental education activities along the trail, 5) participatory discovery and interactive enlightening and educative experiences should be included on the trail, 6) the diversity and discontinuities in the trail environment should be used to unlock the environmental education potential of the trail, 7) economic and other benefits should be generated, to uplift and empower the host community, to provide "value for money" for the trail user, and profit for the trail owner, 8) responsible and sustainable planning should be undertaken towards the total environment and the trail event, and 9) the total ecotourism trail environment and the interests of the agents should be conserved and protected.

The proposed principles and planning framework are seen as a universal framework dependent on and directly influenced by the context and environment in which the framework and principles are applied. The proposed principles and framework can contribute to the multipurpose planning of tourism and increase and enrich the personal satisfaction of the ecotourism trail user, contribute to the protection of the very resource on which trails depend, integrate the community actively in the planning process and stimulate sustainable economic benefits for all the role players. The framework combines the ecological and the human dimensions of Human Geography into one. Future research can test the principles and framework in other trail environments, using a wide range of agents, in order to determine the degree to which the framework can be generalised.

OPSOMMING

TITEL VAN DIE PROEFSKRIF: Beplanning van ekotoerisme-staproetes om
omgewingsopvoeding te fasiliteer

deur Elizabetha M.J.C. Schaller

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Die studie is geskryf teen die agtergrond van die filosofie van die realisme en in die konteks van 'n drielaag-ontologie. Die empiriese domein sluit twee benaderings in, naamlik ekotoerisme en omgewingsopvoeding. Die reële domein sluit die staproetegebeurtenis in. Die aktuele domein sluit al die rolspelers in. Hierdie rolspelers is die stapper, staproete-eienaar, -beplanner en -omgewing, owerheidsinstansies en die gasheergemeenskap.

Die navorsing neem 'n dualistiese navorsingsbenadering aan wat die induktiewe en deduktiewe prosesse insluit. Die studie word gestruktureer deur voorafbepaalde navorsingsdoelstellings en die drielaag-ontologie van realisme. Teoretiese besprekings en gevallestudies word gebruik om die navorsingsdoelstellings te bereik en die navorsingsprobleem te beantwoord.

Die navorsing ondersoek die skakeling tussen ekotoerisme en omgewingsopvoeding, bestaande staproete-beplanningsprosesse en die verskillende rolspelers wat deelneem aan ekotoerisme-staproetebeplanning. Die konseptuele analise kom tot die gevolgtrekking dat omgewingsinterpretasie en opvoeding per definisie essensieel deel is van ekotoerisme. Nege ekotoerisme-staproetebeplanningsbeginsels binne 'n staproetebeplanningsraamwerk met vier

fases word voorgestel om ekotoerisme se geïmpliseerde verantwoordelikheid ten opsigte van omgewingsopvoeding te fasiliteer.

Die beginsels beklemtoon dat 1) die primêre doel van 'n ekotoerisme-staproete, naamlik om omgewingsopvoeding te fasiliteer, duidelik gestel behoort word, 2) al die behoeftes van die rolspelers wat deelneem aan die beplanningsproses, geïdentifiseer behoort te word, 3) die doel van die staproete en die stapper se behoeftes uitgedruk behoort te word in die konteks van die totale omgewing (biofisiese, sosiale, gedrags-, en fisiologiese omgewing), 4) die rolspelers aktief behoort deel te neem aan die hele beplanningsproses van die staproete in besluitnemingsituasies, probleemoplossingsituasies, bestuurstake en die beplanning van omgewingsopvoedingaktiwiteite op die staproete, 5) deelnemende ontdekking, interaktiewe kennisverwerwing en opvoedkundige ervarings ingesluit behoort te word op die staproete, 6) die diversiteit en diskontinuiteite van die staproete se omgewing gebruik behoort te word om die omgewingsopvoedingpotensiaal van die staproete te ontsluit, 7) ekonomiese en ander voordele geskep behoort te word om: die gasheer gemeenskap op te hef en te bemagtig, waarde vir geld aan die stapper te lewer en die staproete-eienaar 'n wins te laat maak, 8) verantwoordelike en volhoubare beplanning onderneem behoort te word ter wille van die totale omgewing en die stappegebeurtenis, en 9) die totale omgewing van die ekotoerisme-staproete en die belange van die rolspelers beskerm en bewaar behoort te word.

Die voorgestelde beginsels en beplanningsraamwerk word gesien as 'n universele raamwerk wat afhanklik is van en direk beïnvloed word deur die konteks en die omgewing waarbinne die raamwerk en beginsels toegepas word. Die voorgestelde beginsels en beplanningsraamwerk kan bydra tot die meerdoelige beplanning van toerisme en die verryking van die ekotoerisme-stapper se persoonlike ervaring, bydra tot die beskerming van die hulpbron waarvan die staproete afhanklik is, die gemeenskap aktief betrek by die beplanningsproses en volhoubare ekonomiese voordele skep vir al die rolspelers. Die raamwerk kombineer die ekologiese en die menslike dimensies van Menslike Geografie. Toekomstige navorsing kan die beginsels en raamwerk

toets binne ander staproete-omgewings, deur gebruik te maak van 'n verskeidenheid rolspelers, om te bepaal tot watter mate die raamwerk veralgemeen kan word.