Tourism Management Perspectives 34 (2020) 100653

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Tourism Management Perspectives

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/tmp

Integrating spirituality in tourism higher education: A study of tourism educators' perspectives

Barkathunnisha Abu Bakar*

Hospitality and Tourism Management, #06-04 King's Centre, 390 Havelock Road, 169662, Singapore

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:
Tourism higher education
Tourism studies
Tourism educators
Tourism teaching
Spirituality
Spirituality in tourism education

ABSTRACT

Academic discourse supporting the inclusion of spirituality in higher education has grown across many disciplines. Scholars are arguing for the integration of spirituality into the contemporary intellectual landscape. However, the significance of spirituality to tourism higher education has not been adequately understood and little research has been undertaken.

This paper presents findings from a qualitative study exploring tourism educators' perspectives about the role and importance of spirituality in tourism higher education. Based on the findings from in-depth interviews of tourism educators, the author presents a discussion and examination of respondents' interpretation of spirituality, their viewpoints on the inclusion of spirituality in tourism education, including the perceived challenges and the effects of embodying a spiritually-grounded paradigm on classroom teaching and learning experiences. Recommendations are provided on how a meaningful engagement of spirituality can be fostered in tourism higher education.

1. Introduction

In tourism education, there is increasing discussion about the need for a transformative education that supports tourism's potential as a world-making force that encourages cross-cultural communication and peace-building between people (Caton, 2012; Hollinshead, 2009). Higgins-Desbiolles (2006) urges academics, planners and practitioners not to regard tourism solely as an economic powerhouse and acknowledge the potential power of tourism as a serious social force with transformative capacities. The author reinforces a wider vision of tourism's role in societies and the global community to foster "cosmopolitan awareness" that promotes respect, interdependency and peace (p.1205). However, this necessitates going further to see tourism educators shift our focus from investigating impacts to unlocking the potential of tourism to improve human and ecological conditions (Caton, 2012). It entails facilitating the development of our tourism students as future practitioners and tomorrow's leaders to be responsible global citizens or *globo sapiens* (Malaska, 1997). Graduate *Globo sapiens* are characterised as wise, global citizens willing to think critically and to assume responsibility for their impact on communities and the planet (Kelly, 2008).

Caton, Schott, and Daniele (2014) emphasise tourism's imperative for global citizenship as it is a global phenomenon which has the potential to impact on the social, economic and cultural well-being of host communities. Our students need to embrace our common humanity, respect communities and their resources, and promote positive change. Tourism higher education management and educators have a serious role in influencing our future leaders to live lives of consequence and setting the foundation for a sustainable approach to tourism. Joel M. Podolny, former Dean of Yale School of Management, emphasised that occupations are defined as professions to the degree to which they serve society (Podolny & Khurana, 2007, p. 9). In that vein, unless our future tourism professionals live up to that stewardship standard, we need to question what tourism higher education is actually doing. We do not imply that universities are the *only* places where students acquire intellectual and moral values. However, ethics and value commitment are fundamental to any profession and professional higher education has to address this. We support renowned academic, Ronald Barnett's call for universities to foster learning beyond the acquisition of skills and specific knowledge and emphasise the cultivation of ways of thinking and being – hope, imagination, integrity, thoughtfulness – that are essential in an uncertain and highly complex world (Barnett, 2012). This direction in tourism education would emphasise what is special and particularly positive about tourism as a subject of study and would provide an advantage to distinguish this field of study from others (Airey, 2016).

* Corresponding author: Barkathunnisha Abu Bakar, Murdoch University (Singapore Campus), #06-04 King's Centre, 390 Havelock Road, Singapore 169662.
E-mail address: n.abubakar@murdoch.edu.au.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2020.100653
Received 18 August 2019; Received in revised form 8 February 2020; Accepted 18 February 2020
2211-9736/

In line with these debates and discussions, some notable tourism academics have proposed a values-engaged scholarship in tourism education, where students develop practical wisdom, interrogate the ethics of their positions, are reflective of their actions and emotionally engaged with the social consequences of their actions (Atelejevic, 2009; Caton, 2015; Moscardo & Murphy, 2011; Sharpley, 2015). A 'critical turn' was witnessed with the emergence of Pritchard, Morgan & Ateljevic's (2011, p. 951) 'hopeful tourism' perspective in a humanistic tourism education that develops students' critical thinking, reflection and emotional engagement with the social consequences of tourism actions. Furthering this academic discourse, Barkathunnisha, Diane, Price, and Wilson (2018) advocated that it is possible to apply alternative ways of knowing and to engage multiple dimensions of being, including the spiritual dimension, to facilitate transformative learning in tourism higher education. They proposed a spirituality-based platform in tourism education that will direct students towards their inner selves, enable them to expand their consciousness and to see their lives as part of the universal human experience.

There is no universal conceptualisation of *spirituality*, and the various definitions by notable scholars (Palmer & Zajonc, 2010; Shahjahan, 2010; Tolliver & Tisdell, 2006) reflect commonality in the recurring themes "but do not reflect a consensus of thought" (Greenstreet, 1999, p. 649). The three key themes include: (a) spirituality as a state of transcendence where one is involved in meaning-making and in a quest for the purpose in life; (b) spirituality as a process that involves achieving self-awareness, being authentic to oneself and connecting to something larger than one's ego; and (c) spirituality as a sense of wholeness, the ability to experience meaningful connection to one's core self and a mutual interdependency with other humans and the biosphere (Canda & Furman, 2010; Estanek, 2006; Heelas & Woodhead, 2005; Lindholm & Astin, 2008).

A spiritually-based tourism scholarship could focus on how the educational goals, curriculum and learning processes can be reoriented and expanded to balance the cognitive, affective and spiritual development in our students to leverage their human potential (Barkathunnisha et al., 2018). The integration of spirituality in tourism education aims to develop students' sense of interconnectedness and interrelationships with all aspects of life that includes humanity, ecology and the larger universe. It is about nurturing a deep sense of compassion and unity, relatedness and concern for the ultimate meaning and purpose of life through education (Wright, 2004).

The growing global interest surrounding spirituality and its inclusion in higher education has led to scholarly contributions from many geographical regions, including Asia, Africa, Australia, New Zealand and United States of America (Moss, 2011) and across various disciplines such as geography, business, healthcare and environmental sciences (Dylan & Coates, 2012; Harlos, 2000; Wright, 2004; Zapf, 2005). There have been book-length discussions on spirituality in higher education by eminent scholars (Hooks, 2003; Kazanjian & Laurence, 2000; Palmer & Zajonc, 2010, Tacey, 2004) and special issues of journals dedicated to spirituality in higher education, which include among many, the *Journal of Management Education* (Vol. 24) and *New Directions for Teaching and Learning* (Volume 104). Scholars have long acknowledged spirituality as an integral part of adult education and adult development (Bennet Hooks, 2003; Chickering, Dalton, & Stamm, 2006; Dillard, 2006; Denton & Ashton, 2004; Estanek, 2006; Kazanjian & Laurence, 2000; Palmer & Zajonc, 2010; Parks, 2000; Rendón, 2008; Shahjahan, 2010; Tisdell, 2003) and shown correlations between spirituality and transformative learning (English & Gillen, 2000; Groen, 2004; Jones, 2005; Tisdell, 2000; Zajonc, 2003). Publications have provided frameworks for the study of spirituality, provided discussions on how spirituality is integrated into teaching and learning, and offered recommendations with respect to curriculum and pedagogical practices (Duerr, Zajonc, & Dana, 2003; Fenwick & English, 2004; Watson, de Souza, & Trousdale, 2014). It can be argued that the emerging question in contemporary education landscape is not whether spirituality should be addressed but *how* it should be addressed and what the nature of that curriculum design could be.

Most of the scholarly work on the integration of spirituality in education focuses primarily on students (Philips, 2002; Sharma-Persaud, 2006) and centres on the integral role of spirituality in meaning-making, its contribution towards student development, promoting authenticity and creativity in academic spaces, and the transrational construction of knowledge. However, with few exceptions (Astin & Astin, 1999; Fetzer Institute, 2003; Bradley & Kauanui, 2003; Higher Education Research Institute, 2005; Lindholm, Astin, & Astin, 2006; Tisdell, 2000; Hooks, 2003), the research on spirituality has ignored the spiritual experiences and lives of faculty (Lindholm et al., 2006; Shahjahan, 2010). Specifically, in the context of tourism higher education, there has been very little dialogue not only on integrating spirituality in the educational process but also on how it informs the thinking and practices of educators within the classroom space.

This current study will contribute towards a nascent body of valuable literature on integrating spirituality in tourism higher education. More specifically, the main aim of this study is to explore tourism educators' perspectives of and experiences with the concept of spirituality in tourism higher education. The paucity of studies focusing on educators, together with the lack of research in the topic area of spirituality in tourism studies, suggests that this research has the potential to make intellectual and empirical contributions to the larger academic debates surrounding tourism studies. This study is an attempt to examine the presence of spirituality in tourism education and should not be regarded as a definitive measure of the prevalence of spirituality in tourism higher education. It is an emergent step towards seeking alternative and non-traditional teaching perspectives and practices in tourism education through unearthing the silences of the spiritually grounded academics. The intent of the paper is not to advocate for an 'ideal' tourism education but to caution higher education management and educators to be mindful of the utilitarian philosophic assumptions that underpin today's higher education (Airey, 2016). This paper attempts to create an intellectual space for "hopeful tourism scholars" (Pritchard et al., 2011, p. 953) to function more from a spiritual core in their journey towards developing the potential of our students to be global citizens.

The paper begins with a broad overview of the key themes in the spirituality discourse, followed by a discussion on the significance of centring spirituality in the tourism academy and the current challenges that marginalise spirituality. Following that, the paper presents the findings of a qualitative study in which tourism academics, representing various tourism higher education institutions globally, share their perceptions of spirituality and its inclusion in tourism higher education.

1.1. Conceptions of spirituality

The dilemma and debate surrounding spirituality as a concept, and the impact of.

its elusive nature on any kind of definitive understanding, inform the author's epistemological thinking. Wane (2002) posits that arriving at a neat definition of spirituality can be problematic as it is something so unique, personal, and individualistic. Conceptualisation of spirituality is multi-dimensional (Astin, et al., 2011) subjectively constructed and shaped by different worldviews (Mayhew, 2012). It is a floating concept which is always in the process of being defined and defies a static description. (Tsiris, 2017). Despite the complexity and lack of unanimity around the concept, there are unifying themes that appear relevant for its' inclusion in tourism higher education. For the purpose of this paper, spirituality is defined as "the human search for meaning, purpose and connection with self, others, the universe and ultimate reality, however one understands it" (Sheridan, Wilmer, & Atcheson, 1994, p. 365).

Spirituality is a significant part of human development and forms part of our knowledge system that "influences, instigates and initiates actions" (Lee & Marshall, 2003, p.30). It reflects an individual's inner consciousness which surfaces from within, beyond the programmed beliefs and values (Guillory, 2000). Spirituality frames our identity and the ways in which we think and feel about ourselves and others (Milner, 2006). Shields (2005) views spirituality as a way of life and claims that it is not merely a way of knowing but a way of being and becoming in the world.

In any academic discourse of spirituality, it is important to deconstruct and separate the terms religion and spirituality. Many scholars have argued that spirituality is broader than any single formal or organised religion and it is possible to be spiritual without being religious (Bhagwan, 2010; Estanek, 2006). Religion is an institutionalised form of shared faith by a group with prescribed doctrines, dogmas and tenets while spirituality is an individual pursuit, a human search for meaning and purpose in one's life and a sense of interconnectedness with other beings (Sheridan et al., 1994; Zinnbauer et al., 1997). Davis, Hook, & Worthington Jr, (2008) distinguished religious spirituality, which involves feelings of closeness to God, described by principles observed by a group, from secular spirituality, which is based on a sense of closeness to humankind and driven by a personal quest for meaning and purpose. Spirituality in education refers to the secular form of spirituality and specifies learners' and educators' development of a sense of interconnectedness and interrelationships with all aspects of life that includes humanity, ecology and the larger universe.

1.2. Spirituality in higher education

Scholars and educators have advocated for the inclusion of spirituality in higher education and that it should play a significant role in the teaching and learning process (Barnett, 2012; Dillard, Abdur-Rashid, & Tyson, 2000; Hooks Hooks, 2003; Shahjahan, 2010). Empirical studies have validated that spiritual development in students plays a critical role in advancing many academic and social outcomes of higher education (Astin et al., 2011). The positive outcomes of the inclusion of spirituality in education include enhancing learners' inner consciousness and promoting a heightened sense of connectedness to self, society and the ecological environment (Palmer & Zajonc, 2010; Watson et al., 2014). Tisdell (2000) explained that spiritual development is an essential aspect of student development and ignoring the role of spirituality is to overlook a potentially powerful means through which learners construct meaning and knowledge. Palmer argues that the omission of spirituality in education, that is grounded on a positivist paradigm, can lead to a one-sided perspective of education as "intellect, emotion, and spirit depend on one another for wholeness" (Palmer, 1998, p.4).

There is a lack of empirical research on the link between spirituality and the faculty in higher education (Rendón, 2008; Shahjahan, 2010). To date, the largest study was undertaken by UCLA Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) of 40,670 faculty members at 421 U.S. colleges and universities. It also revealed that faculty who self-identified as being spiritual, based on three measures (I consider myself a spiritual person, I seek opportunities to grow spiritually and I integrate spirituality in my life) used more "student centred" pedagogical methods in their teaching (Lindholm & Astin, 2008). They showed greater interest in students' personal development without compromising their intellectual and vocational development, adopted a more holistic view of higher education and were more likely to use student-centred pedagogy, such as cooperative learning, group projects, and reflective writing, in their teaching. These faculty were more likely to employ pedagogical approaches that enhanced students' capacity for compassion, connectedness, accountability and responsiveness, and that facilitated students' self-awareness and development of their moral character. Bell, Rajendran, and Theiler's (2012) study of 139 academics in Australian universities suggested that academics with high levels of spirituality at work (individual, work unit and organisation-wide) tended to experience fewer instances of ill-being, more instances of wellbeing, less job threat stress and less job pressure stress.

However, it is observed that spirituality in the academy is often silenced and marginalised. Academics are hesitant to embody spirituality or engage in a discourse within the confines of the academy for fear of being ridiculed and due to perceived conflicts with colleagues who regard spirituality as unprofessional and inappropriate in higher education (Dillard et al., 2000; Tsiris, 2017). In Kvarfordt, Sheridan, & Taylor, 2017of Canadian social work educators, the reasons for the non-inclusion of spirituality was the perceived lack of faculty knowledge and experience, and a fear of bias among faculty or students against one religion or indeed against religion/spirituality in general. Bhagwan (2011) found in her research of South African educators that, while majority saw the relevance of spirituality to education, they were cautious about what to teach and how to teach as they lacked the preparedness in terms of knowledge and pedagogy but were also aware of the fears regarding its' appropriateness in the classroom space. Hurtado, a noteworthy feminist academic of colour, who advocates for alternative modes of knowledge production and the inclusion of spirituality in higher education, laments that even writing a paper on the reasons why spirituality is marginalised in the academy, and discussing the benefits of including it in the academy, has been most challenging. Engaging in such discourse runs the risk of being expelled from the academy, ridiculed by many scholars, accused of interest-group politics and is not richly rewarded (2003). Shahjahan (2004) who studied spirituality among academics in Canadian universities describes the disquiet on the topic of spirituality in the academy as, "the spirituality of people has been silenced and put at the margins of the academy, where people cannot express it, and can only practice it outside its walls (p. 687)."

The current higher education landscape which is underpinned by corporatisation and characterised by an audit culture (Airey, 2016) has led to a teaching and research overload that consequently provides little opportunity for academics' personal and spiritual development (Mayes, 2001). The neoliberalistic orientation in universities, which is also evident in tourism education (Dredge, Airey, & Gross, 2015), is driven by measurable outcomes, privileges a culture of secularism and invalidates spiritual ways of knowing (Zine, 2004). The internal aspects of faculty development – values, beliefs, hopes, fears – get little attention (Astin, 2004). Zohar and Marshall (2000, p.181) observe that there is a state of "spiritual stuntedness" among academics; where there is too much self-consciousness, academics become overly concerned with form and appearances and shut themselves from what matters deeply. This leads to an absence of spirituality in teaching which in turn, influences all their relationships and every aspect of their work. Teachers experience a kind of "values schizophrenia" (BallBall, 2003, p.221) where effectiveness, performance and excellence are prized more than compassion, authenticity and purpose.

The current interest in a humanistic approach in tourism education, the more holistic perception of the nature of tourism education, and the ethical concerns of tourism development (Caton, 2014; Hollinshead, 2009; Pritchard et al., 2011) – necessitates for the inclusion of spirituality in the classroom spaces within tourism higher education. This current study aims to address the knowledge gaps, deepen our understanding on educators' spirituality and explore possible synergies in tourism higher education. Specifically, the study seeks to explore the following research questions:

(1) How do tourism educators define and perceive spirituality?
(2) How do tourism educators perceive the integration of spirituality in tourism education?
(3) What are the main challenges and recommendations for the inclusion of a spiritually-grounded paradigm in tourism education?

2. Research methodology

This study employed an exploratory, qualitative paradigm (Merriam

Table 1
Profile of respondents.

Pseudonym	Gender	Childhood religious affiliation	Ethnoracial identification	Courses or subjects taught	Levels taught in tourism higher education	Years of teaching experience in tourism higher education	Highest academic qualification	Current position in academic institution	Mode of employment
Carolyn	F	Taoism	Southeast Asian	Tourism Hospitality	Undergraduate Postgraduate	15–20 years	PhD	Associate Professor	Part time permanent contract
Anne	F	Christianity	White European	Tourism Hospitality	Undergraduate Postgraduate	15–20 years	PhD	Associate Professor	Full time tenured
Jay	M	Atheist	White Australian	Tourism Events	Undergraduate Postgraduate	More than 40 years	PhD	Emeritus	Retired
Maua	F	Christianity	Black African	Tourism	Postgraduate	Less than 5 years	PhD	Research Fellow	Full time, fixed contract
Anand	M	Hinduism	South Asian	Tourism Hospitality Events	Undergraduate Postgraduate	15–20 years	Masters	Adjunct	Casual/ Secessional
Jonah	M	Christianity	White European	Tourism Hospitality	Undergraduate Postgraduate	15–20 years	PhD	Professor	Full time tenured
Paula	F	Christianity	White American	Tourism Hospitality	Undergraduate Postgraduate	More than 30 years	PhD	Emeritus	Retired
Kylie	F	Christianity	White American	Tourism Hospitality	Undergraduate Postgraduate	15–20 years	PhD	Associate Professor	Full time tenured
Pendo	M	Christianity	Black African	Tourism Hospitality	Undergraduate	5–10 years	Masters, PhD. candidate	Lecturer	Full time tenured
Freida	F	Christianity	White American	Tourism	Undergraduate	15–20 years	PhD	Senior Lecturer	Full time tenured
Agnes	F	Christianity	White Australian	Tourism Hospitality	Undergraduate	20–25 years	PhD	Tutor	Casual/ Secessional
Arnold	M	Christianity	South East Asian	Tourism Events	Undergraduate	15–20 years	PhD	Lecturer	Full time tenured
Erin	F	Buddhist	South East Asian	Tourism Hospitality Events	Undergraduate Postgraduate	5–10 years	PhD	Lecturer	Full time fixed contract
Sanjay	M	Hinduism	South Asian	Tourism Hospitality Events	Undergraduate Postgraduate	25–30 years	PhD	Academic Position	Part time
Huda	F	Muslim	South East Asian	Tourism Hospitality Events	Undergraduate Postgraduate	15–20 years	PhD	Senior Lecturer	Casual/ Secessional
Kate	F	Buddhist	East Asian	Tourism Hospitality	Undergraduate Postgraduate	More than 30 years	PhD	Professor	Full time tenured
Jomo	M	Christianity	Black African	Tourism Hospitality	Undergraduate	15–20 years	Masters, PhD. candidate	Senior Lecturer	Full time fixed contract
Waan	F	Buddhist	South East Asian	Tourism Hospitality	Undergraduate	10–15 years	PhD	Associate Professor	Full time tenured
Yaron	M	Jewish	Middle Eastern	Tourism Hospitality	Undergraduate Postgraduate	10–15 years	PhD	Senior Lecturer	Full time tenured
George	M	Christianity	White Australian	Tourism	Undergraduate Postgraduate	5–10 years	PhD	Lecturer	Full time tenured
Siti	F	Muslim	South East Asian	Tourism	Undergraduate Honors Prog Postgraduate	15–20 years	PhD	Lecturer	Full time fixed contract
Jessie	F	Christianity	South East Asian	Tourism Hospitality Events	Undergraduate Honors Prog	10–15 years	PhD	Senior Lecturer	Full time tenured

& Simpson, 2000) that originates from an interpretive approach. A thematic analytic approach was adopted to sampling, data collection and data analysis. As the focus of the study is on spirituality, qualitative research was regarded more relevant to explore the personal and subjective interpretations (Pandya, 2015) of the tourism educators' spiritual orientations and their perspectives of spirituality as part of their teaching pedagogy. The qualitative approach, establishes a relationship-oriented process whereby respondents are considered as subjects rather than objects of research (Shahjahan, 2005) and play an active role in shaping the research process. Qualitative studies provide rich descriptive data from the respondents' narratives (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), contribute new knowledge to this complex and deeply important area of human experience (Kapuscinski and Masters (2010) and deepen our analysis in a topic area that hitherto has received inadequate focus in terms of research and knowledge development (Lindholm & Astin, 2008).

2.1. Research design

A group size of 22 participants was selected to enable an intensive exploration of subjects' narratives. Interviews with the small sample size presented the required depth to comprehend the richness of their lived experiences. A purposeful and snowball sampling technique was utilised to recruit tourism educators from universities internationally who self-identified with the following criteria: (a) they comprise/are university faculty teaching tourism (b) they self-identify as being spiritual; (c) they do not consider their spirituality as dogmatic or evangelical and (d) they are conscious that they integrate spirituality in their professional and personal lives. These criteria were important as the self-identified participants would have thought about the topic and be able to define and discuss spirituality in terms of how it relates to tourism education in higher education settings. Self-selection was relevant to this study as the respondents were more likely to be committed to take part in it, and to have a greater willingness to provide more insight into their lived experiences. Certainly, the limitations of self-selection bias are acknowledged. The educators' decision to participate in the study may have reflected some inherent bias in the characteristics/traits of the participants, or may have exaggerated some particular finding from the study (Sharma, 2017). The selected sample is recognised as not being representative of the tourism academy or educators who consider themselves spiritual.

The recruitment of the respondents was undertaken through a two-phase process. In the first phase, schools or departments of tourism education globally were identified, followed by a listing of all tourism educators from the selected schools. These tourism educators were then contacted via email to ask if they would be interested to participate in the study based on the criteria. The email described the purpose of the study, provided informed consent procedures, defined the terms religion and spirituality in the context of the current study, and explained the significance of their contribution. The list of questions for the semi-structured interview was also provided in the email. To ensure a clear understanding of the two notions, *spirituality* and *religion*, participants were provided the following definitions that were consistent with conceptualisations found in literature (Canda & Furman, 2010). Spirituality was defined as "the human search for meaning, purpose and connection with self, others, the universe and ultimate reality, however one understands it." Religion was defined as "a systematic body of beliefs and practices related to a spiritual search (Sheridan et al., 1994, p. 365)."

In the second phase, the author utilised academic networks, requesting recommendations of educators who might meet the criteria of the study. A list of prospective participants was gathered through this process and was further filtered through reviewing each prospective's academic and activist work as well as courses they were teaching. For instance, most of the prospective respondents' academic work centred on humanistic and value-based education, critical studies, sustainability, gender issues, social justice, feminist research, academic agency and spirituality. Some of their activist work include working with NGOs, indigenous communities, community-based tourism, people with disabilities and women-centered tourism projects. Following the vetting, 25 respondents were contacted and invited to participate in the study. Theoretical saturation was achieved after 22 interviews at which point interviewing was concluded. Table 1 provides a demographic description of the sample group. Pseudonyms were used to protect respondents' privacy and anonymity.

2.2. Data collection process

A semi-structured interview process was used to encourage deliberation about the topic and facilitate spontaneous conversation, questions and inquiry. Questions were selected from various related studies (Barker & Floersch, 2010; Kvarfordt et al., 2017; Shahjahan, 2010) and modified to be applicable to a tourism education context. Respondents were individually interviewed and the conversations were audio-recorded for transcription. To further our understanding and complement the interview data, where relevant, participants provided documents such as curriculum vitae, published articles, and information of courses that they teach. The multiple sources of data collected facilitated triangulation and addressed the self-selection bias.

2.3. Data analysis

Wolcott (1994) suggested continuously reviewing the transcripts and documents until "it makes sense and feels right and key ideas and themes flow from it (p. 99)". Following every interview, a preliminary analysis was undertaken along with a follow-up analysis after the conclusion of all the interviews. Participants were provided a copy of the transcription of their interviews and feedback was sought to increase dependability of the findings.

The data was analysed using NVivo software. To begin the coding process from the transcribed interviews, interview questions were used as an interpretive framework, and to derive primary analytical categories (Shahjahan, 2005). These included: definitions of spirituality, its relevance to tourism and tourism education, challenges in integrating spirituality and strategies to facilitate the integration of spirituality. Line by line coding and analysis was undertaken and memos on the interpretation of each code were documented (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A focused coding followed this process, where recurrent codes and similar responses were identified to integrate into already existing broader categories, or sorted into a new category (Charmaz, 2014). A methodological journal was also kept to critically reflect on the influence of the authors' preconceived knowledge and personal experiences on the interpretation of the findings. To ensure validity, the final data set was cross-checked so that (i) the codes in relation to the responses were consistently applied across all interviews; (ii) codes were correctly grouped under the thematic categories; and (iii) themes were appropriately grouped under the higher-level constructs.

3. Findings & discussion

The participants' perspectives about the integration of spirituality in tourism higher education were assessed through questions centring on their conceptualisations of spirituality, rationale for its inclusion in tourism higher education, the challenges faced and recommendations for the integration of spirituality in tourism education.

3.1. Definition and meaning of spirituality

Some of the respondents expressed the inherent complexity and challenge of conceptualising the notion of spirituality and encountered difficulty in articulating their understanding. Anand expresses, "*I'm kind of, in the process of really finding out. I think it's still a journey in that sense. So, not – at this moment – not able to put a concrete belief, and say, Hey, this is it. I've defined it, and this is how it looks*".

3.1.1. Key themes in the definitions

Respondents' description of spirituality was multi-dimensional and as a meta-concept, the umbrella term *spirituality* covered a wide range of dimensions. The analysis revealed the terms "*transcendence*", "*self-realisation*", "*oneness*" "*divine*", and "*connection*", "*love and compassion*", "*purpose*" and "*nature*" as the main descriptors of the notion. The various conceptualisations gathered in the interviews can be broadly classified into three main themes proposed by Barkathunnisha et al., 2018which are: 1) interconnectedness; 2) transcendence; and 3) personal quest for meaning.

3.1.2. Interconnectedness

The relational dimension of spirituality emerged as a predominant theme in the definitions. Spirituality was experienced as a sense of interconnectedness with everything, which include the Universe, all of humanity and the ecological environment. This was observed in Carolyn's view that spirituality is "*about connection to myself, being true to myself. But also, to the people who I work with and the people that I live my everyday life with.*" Jonah who describes himself as non-religious, expresses his connection with nature as "*I feel spiritual in nature. Being in oneness with nature and feeling the awe of nature.*" Paula, who practices yoga and meditation regularly adds that:

> "*It's like a higher power or higher energy, beyond our life. And we are connected, each of us, to that energy. Therefore, we are connected to each other. To me, spirituality is a lot about the sameness, the humanity in each of us. And the connection between all human beings, and all living creatures. So, there's a web of connectivity. I'm at the point now*

where I'm saying that everything is spiritual."

A connectivity to their inner selves appeared to be a theme among most of the respondents, with Maua identifying it as "*self-consciousness*" and Waan, an educator from Thailand, expressing it as "*getting back to your inner self and knowing the deeper you*".

3.1.3. Transcendence

Most of the academics' narratives reflect the metaphysical aspect of spirituality which is something beyond what is known and experienced in the physical world. For Anne, spirituality is a deep feeling of beauty and love. Maua, who is originally from Zimbabwe, relates spirituality to the capacity to stand outside one's present sense of time and place to view life in a broader worldview. To her, spirituality is closely connected to the depth of her being and identity (culturally and personally) and she shares, "*I think this idea of spirituality, I guess it's not an intellectual question. It's a bigger question that we don't have answers to. So, it is part of my existence. I don't know the answer to where the self-consciousness comes from.*" Pendo, an educator from Nigeria, claims that his spirituality is closely connected to the African traditions and culture as:

> "*When you talk about spirituality in the African context, it's all about things that we cannot see as ordinary. You're trying to understand the world beyond the things you can see. On a day to day basis, transcending from where we are, to understand the things beyond the human eye."*

3.1.4. Personal quest for meaning and purpose

The educators' narratives reflected spirituality as the pursuit of something trans-personal that served as an ontological basis for an ethic of compassion, love and service to humanity. Various powerful metaphors were used to reflect the spiritual development within themselves that include "*inward journeys*", "*sacred*" and "*quests."* Kylie regards spirituality as human being's quest for meaning and as "*having a bigger sense of purpose in your life, having a connection with something bigger than yourself, feeling connected also to the truest version of yourself and knowing yourself*". Internal connectivity and introspection appear as main elements of spirituality for some educators. For Anand, an educator originally from India, spirituality raises the notion of self and the effort to realise oneself through service to humanity while for Erin, who frequently practices yoga and meditation, it is the process of looking inwards at the meaning of doing things. Huda, an Indonesian, asserts that:

> "*Spiritual intelligence is more related to, the way and purpose of your life. It is not about only praying to God. It is about understanding the meaning of why I am here. If we understand the meaning of that, you will give the best of you. I am here as a human being. I will be mindful of people. Being nice to people. It is very, very important.*"

3.2. Integration of spirituality in tourism higher education (THE)

There was congruence among the educators about the place of spirituality in tourism education and the purpose for incorporating it. The relevance of spirituality to tourism higher education is rooted in three broad themes; 1) nature of the tourism industry; 2) nature of tourism education; and 3) relevance to tourism subjects.

3.2.1. Nature of tourism industry

Yaron, an educator from Israel, views the tourism industry as a special industry and it's about "*our mind.*" Arnold and Carolyn consider it as an industry that promotes care for others and where people come seeking connections, with the environment, with people and their past. Sanjay observes tourism as a process of reciprocity of various kinds and in essence tourists as spiritual and caring. He explains: "*A tourist is somebody who wants to make friends. And this is the basis for the platform of spirituality. We want to transcend our own culture and make friends with people of other cultures so that we can develop peace and understanding with various people of the world.*"

Kylie remarks:

> "*Tourism, is all about connections between people and cultures, about meetings and places. I feel it's important probably for every discipline, but more for ours. I think because there are the ecologies of tourism, like culturally, and environmentally, we need to really take good care of those. If we don't tend to those carefully, we have no basis for tourism in the first place.*"

3.2.2. Nature of tourism education

There is a consensus among most of the educators that the moral challenges and pressures facing the tourism industry necessitates the development of ethical integrity and responsible stewardship in future practitioners. Anne and Freida felt that the tourism academia and the industry are not doing well in relation to sustainability, social justice and gender equality. George highlights the exploitation of tourism for business purposes and the need to teach our learners to appreciate culture, the environment and communities.

As tourism touches human lives so deeply, Carolyn feels that tourism education should not merely focus on the transactional things and profit-making motive but should integrate the spiritual dimensions. Pendo and Kylie propose that students have to be guided to develop the skills, emotional and spiritual resources to understand their place in the world as responsible stewards.

Tourism's role in world-making and its role in improving human condition was reflected in majority of the educators' narratives. Paula, who resides in Hawaii, sees the face-to-face connection among travellers bearing a huge potential to bring us together as human beings, promoting understanding in love and breaking down those barriers of separation. She believes in the potential for tourism to be part of the awakening of society:

> "*If we can see tourism and the education of tourism with that huge potential to connect us together, I think it (spirituality) is extremely relevant. Tourism education can allow us to see our common humanity and not our differences. Spirituality means honouring yourself and honouring living creatures. Our industry has not always done that and still doesn't do that. I believe that those concepts of spirituality are absolutely necessary, and we can bring tourism to its higher level.*"

Carolyn believes that spirituality has a role to play as education in itself is about meaning-making and being purposeful. She adds that spirituality expands our consciousness, in which we *feel* and we *think* and we *do* with clarity and intensity. Jay feels that spirituality can raise the awareness in students as learners and their intrinsic values. Anne observes that the current education system has in-built within the structure, constant judgement and fear. There is a need for educators to create a safe space for learning without the fear of failing and building confidence in students' learning abilities.

In Anne's words:

> "*The thing about fear is that, it does not help anybody. From educators' side there is a huge fear of performance. I have seen so much fear and people paralysed from anxiety of teaching. I think we need to have so much of compassion for our students and for our teachers."*

3.3. Relevance to tourism subjects

In relation to relevance to tourism subjects, most educators expressed that it is useful to integrate spirituality in the teaching and learning of sustainable tourism development. Anand provides an example of a reflection activity and debate that he brought into class. "*70,000 birds were killed in New York airport last year, so that the planes can take off. Then you start questioning the class, who has the right to fly?*" These ethical dilemmas require a spiritual perspective to deliberate. Agnes, an educator from Australia who also manages an organic farm business, feels that it is not possible to teach sustainability without a sense of spirituality as "*it would be almost inhumane, robotic and shallow, and it wouldn't have the full-bodiedness of sustainability. So, spirituality helps give a form of understanding to what sustainability means*".

In the module Tourism Impact Assessment, which Erin teaches in a university in Australia, she claims that it is imperative for students to examine impacts that businesses can have on the wider ecological environment and see close inter-relationships and inter-dependencies. Many of the educators hope through viewing tourism's development from a spiritual perspective, learners may be able to deliberate their roles as future practitioners responsibly. Sanjay regards the worldview of spirituality as closely aligned with the perspectives of ecological economics and thus believes that it will prove to be a potentially promising catalyst in the context of the goals and issues of sustainable development.

Spirituality can be integrated in the teaching of cultural tourism which is about transcending from the world in which students exist to another culture. Freida, who has done extensive work with indigenous communities explained that teaching indigenous tourism and community-based tourism requires a sensitivity to and an understanding of the connections and inter-relationships that the people of these communities have with the environment and societies. Erin observes that "*the indigenous community has a stronger spiritual relationship with the land*" and understanding their issues requires a "*spiritual lens*". It also entails the deliberation of ethics and values that a spiritual dimension addresses. Waan feels that even in a module such as 'Strategic Planning and Management', spirituality can be integrated when deliberating the ethics and values behind successful and responsible business operations versus profit maximisation.

3.4. Challenges and barriers to integrating spirituality in THE

Due to the often-evocative nature of the subject of spirituality, integration of this concept in educational practice may be distinctively challenging. The challenges the respondents perceived and experienced were organised along the themes of structural, inter-personal and personal constraints.

3.4.1. Structural constraints

Respondents disclosed that the inherent cultural and structural constraints within their academic institutions provided few, if any, opportunities to integrate spirituality. The Western paradigm of positivistic, objective and value-free knowledge is accentuated in tourism higher education, making it challenging for them to effectively facilitate learners' spiritual development. Yaron, an advocate of critical thinking, voices this:

> "*Rationalism is the basis of our education. Under the regime of rationalism, all this is not real. It is challenging to bring spirituality into the class and curriculum. I think academia is in a big decline, all over the world, especially in business schools because we do not understand and speak about our responsibility. Our role is to educate with social responsibility as intellectuals.*"

Sanjay, an educator who deliberates on the transformative role of tourism questions:

> "*When we are thinking in materialistic ways in tourism, how can we include spirituality? Balancing scientific ways of looking at the world and being spiritual. There are paradoxes in tourism. We are talking about spirituality and doing things that are not sustainable.*"

Almost all the educators voiced that corporatisation and accreditation process of higher education globally has led to an increasing dependence on performance metrics and evaluation systems. Freida laments, "*Materialism, that is the problem. Metrics drive things*", and emphasises that dominant use of metrics to tangibilise and quantify higher education influences knowledge production, creative thinking, human relationships, ethics and morality of academic behaviour within scholarly institutions. Erin probed the challenge of integrating spirituality in a business school:

> "*As long as tourism is tucked under business school, I am afraid, I can't see how this is going to work. Because here, everything is about accreditation. It's about, what can be measured. Because when we talk about spirituality, how do you measure spirituality? Our education system is still very much quantitative. And I just don't see this space for spirituality in the curriculum designed in this way.*"

A few of the respondents were afraid to explore spirituality in the classroom space as those in power often find such a focus immeasurable, irrelevant or inappropriate to consider. George, who teaches in an Australian university, highlights the negative repercussions of the materialistic academic culture: "*At the end of the day, again it's that sort of restrictions we have on us. We get rated on our unit evaluation. We just have to be careful too,*" emphasising that the "*S*" word (spirituality) has to be exercised with caution or silenced in the halls of the secular academy. One of the respondents was more comfortable using the term "*critical thinking*" rather than spirituality in this teaching and learning as this is more "*legitimate".* It was observed that the academics with less than 10 years of experience were more apprehensive to experiment and integrate spirituality in the classroom space. They were afraid of the repercussions on their career and the negative reception of senior colleagues. In the words of Arnold in experimenting new ideas, "*I think for us, the cost of failure is too high. It's too much of a risk.*"

Anne, Jay, Freida, Paula and Kylie who were senior academics with more than 15 years of teaching experience were more confident and comfortable with experimenting with new teaching methods that expressed their spirituality. Jay, an emeritus with 40 years of teaching experience, shares, "*We don't have to change the universities sometimes. I just do what I need to do. I look for opportunities to teach tourism in a particular way that makes students interrogate their positions and what they take for granted.*" Anne, a leading senior academic, voices*, "I think to be a human being, is not to be put into metrics. I rebel against it. I don't fear. I speak openly about it and write about it.*"

Many of the educators' narratives reflect that, within academia, there are dominant colonial discourses that are supported and reinforced through the peer review system and academic capitalism. The respondents observe that, in the tourism academy, there is pressure to publish, to be more research-focused and there is less emphasis on good and value-based teaching. Yaron explains that:

> "*Universities try to encourage us to be innovative about pedagogy but at the end of the day it is important for us to be productive than to be good teachers. That's how we are measured."*

Kate explains:

> "*The way we go through the selection and promotion process, we're pretty much selecting individuals to be research-focused, rather than those who are good in the classroom, who can think outside the box.*"

In the respondents' views, academics' lives have become "*isolated*", "*about taking short cuts to achieve*", "*wrapped up in ambitions and successes*" and "*highly competitive and unethical*". Kylie notes, "*For academics, there is so much of a culture of trapping particular kinds of success and defining your identity in terms of how much you publish. So, I think that's a challenge to being spiritual.*"

Other challenging factors within tourism academy include, large class sizes, cramped curriculum, shorter class contact time and blended and online teaching. George notes that "*probably the number one barrier is time. I think we are all under such incredible time limitations that, we might have these ideas that sound great and I'd love to do that but at the end of the day I don't have the time.*" Freida adds:

> "*We need to find a way to honour each other as beings which I find it very hard to do as an educator. The problem is we are mass producing education and when I am dealing with 90 students and cannot remember*

their names. And you cannot treat people as individuals if you can't remember their names."

3.4.2. Inter-personal constraints

The educators expressed some uncertainty as to whether they should be engaged in spirituality and how this should be approached. One of the biggest barriers mentioned was the lack of support by colleagues. Erin disclosed that there are occasional disagreements in the academy as to whether education should be objective, value-free and disconnected from life, or whether it should be heart-centred and ethically aware. Yaron observes that for his colleagues, "*teaching the models in management is important. They think this is what we should do in academia*."

It was also raised that students may not be receptive to the ideas of spirituality. Carolyn, an academic in Australia, queries if students "*may find it too weird, too hippy, too new age. And that could put them off the class*." Jay and Sanjay narrate that it is epidemic in higher education for students to enter the classroom space with expectations of being taught on how to be successful, to get jobs and better salaries and focused on an outcome-based learning. They are often distracted in the classrooms with their digital devices, short attention spans and expecting fast results. Anand struggles with connecting with students at the spiritual level "as many do not find the purpose in what they are doing."

3.4.3. Personal constraints

The marginalisation of spirituality in tourism education also stemmed from respondents' personal factors and they revealed a common theme of curiosity tempered with caution. Though there were desires to infuse spirituality within the classroom space, the educators experienced relative unease and unpreparedness as they felt that they lack the specialised knowledge. They were unclear about how best to dialogue about spirituality given confusions surrounding the terminology and the indistinct boundaries that separate spirituality and religion. Kate, shares her predicament that:

> "*I don't know if I have the skills or because I haven't done that or I was moulded in the way that would fit the current system. So, there is a little voice within saying that- If I could do that, it'd be great. But I don't know if I can do that*."

Waan describes her hesitation as: "*If I were confident with this approach, and I'm resistant enough to the giggling reactions or comments of the students, I would run it until I see a significant result*." A few preferred to be careful and conservative in their approach with students as they were worried about being perceived as proselytising and "*unprofessional*" and also feared being "*stigmatised*" and "*isolated*" from the rest of the academy situated within a "*rational academic paradigm*".

Interestingly, some respondents experience spirituality as a source of strength and a coping resource. Jomo and Pedro, both educators from Africa, shared that spirituality informs or is their way of dealing with difficulties and challenges both in their personal and professional lives as it provides a sense of trust and faith in challenging situations. Siti, who teaches in Indonesia, confides that *"my spiritual core gives me more solace when confronted with demanding circumstances at work and in my life".*

3.5. Reframing barriers and possibilities

One desired outcome of the research was to ascertain what strategies and interventions might be effective in supporting the integration of spirituality within tourism academy.

3.5.1. Changes in curriculum and assessments

All the academics advocate moving away from the current Western academic regime that privileges certain forms of knowledge production and developing different ways of knowing and understanding the world around us. Anne proposes the need for more flexibility in the curriculum to allow for deep inquiry, curiosity and wonder to happen in the classroom space and in the learners. Most of the academics voiced that it is time to change the metrics system, the way we assess learners and re-focus on what we want them to learn. Kylie recommends that the curriculum emphasise human values and Waan proposes an education that encourages in students a deeper appreciation of life and themselves.

Some of the educators suggested the teaching of philosophy in tourism education. Anand adds, "*We really have to question the ontological-existential future, who are we, and what is going to happen to us, and what kind of life is appropriate for us?*" Paula provides an example of p4c (philosophy for children), a program introduced in many public schools in Hawaii and Japan to encourage curiosity, wonder and meaningful conversation among children. She suggests, "*If we're trying to get students to be mindful and spiritual, then we need to look at what the generic fields have done, or the field of education has done. And then layer tourism on top and as appropriate*."

Paula and Yaron believe that elements of spirituality should be integrated in all tourism modules, but in a subtle manner, without any forms of indoctrination. While Yaron proposed a course in 'Spirituality in Tourism', Paula's feels that would be an artificial separation. Her perspective is that spirituality should be subtly integrated in all subjects. However, prior to that, she suggests more deliberation is required to think deeply about "*the difference between the goal of having some knowledge content about spirituality in tourism, versus the goal of becoming more self-aware, connected, and spiritual as an individual who is a tourism student or person. What is that goal? To make them more spiritual or make them understand the importance of spirituality in tourism?*"

3.5.2. Less emphasis on business perspective

Anne feels that there is a need to shift from the utility of business in tourism to a creative space for the joy of learning and to fulfil curiosity. Sanjay comments, "*When you teach tourism from an economic perspective, spirituality will become a distant goal*." George adds that there is a need for alternative voices from marginal groups in tourism curriculum such as the physically challenged as well as Asian and African voices to bring critical shifts in students' perspectives. Freida expounds that the whole of knowing invites wisdom from a vast array of perspectives and views of reality that includes learning from personal experiences and the wisdom of indigenous and sacred traditions.

3.5.3. Changes in tourism conferences

Respondents discussed the importance of designing strategies for effecting long term transformations within the tourism academy which would address the next generation of academics and students. They proposed that tourism conferences should change their focus and promote new directions and initiatives. Freida observes that most conferences are over-programmed, focusing on the themes, content and publications surrounding these. Anne recommends that conferences could focus more on the scholar and explore the spirit within the scholar rather than the scholarship. Jay notes that some conferences such as the 'Critical Tourism Studies' and 'Tourism Education and Futures Initiative' are paving the way for new ideas and with a larger goal of "*wanting to have that bigger sense of purpose and doing something good for the world through tourism research*".

3.5.4. Institutional and management support

Jonah and Paula identified the key role of administrators and top-level management support to be critical. Higher management needs to provide the trust, motivation and flexibility to experiment and integrate spirituality into the curriculum. Hana believes that "*there is no point if only one or two lecturers do that. Everyone has to bring this vision of bringing spirituality into activities, practices and curriculum."*

4. Discussion and Conclusion

Through the interpretive lens of 22 tourism academics, this study sought to understand their conceptualisation of spirituality and perspectives on the inclusion of spirituality in tourism higher education. The insights and information gained are instrumental to tourism academy and higher education management to reflect on the state of teaching and learning within their own institutions.

While there was some degree of consensus in their interpretation, it was apparent that, for the educators, the concept of spirituality held multi-dimensional meanings that emphasised the elements of interconnectedness, transcendence and personal quest for meaning-making. Their conceptualisations were subjectively constructed and shaped by different worldviews (Mayhew, 2012) that included their cultural upbringing, life experiences, closeness to nature and a close connection to their inner selves. The relational dimension of spirituality, within oneself as well as with other humans and the ecological environment, was emphasised by all educators. As also noted by Zohar & Marshall, 2000study, the interviewed educators' quest for connectedness reflects a need to reach out to students, which demonstrates their regard for human dignity and a desire to forge meaningful relationship. This connection promotes compassion and caring in some of the respondents that influences them to eliminate the fear of failing in the classroom space. Chickering et al. (2006) argue that more than content and pedagogical techniques, it is in the safe space created by teaching faculty where holistic development happens at all levels – intellectually, emotionally and spiritually. Educators with a spiritual orientation can develop students through an intellectual discourse, dialogues and a belief that compassion and love are integral to assuming responsibility for decisions that affect their lives and humanity.

While it is not possible to determine a universal conceptualisation or ascribe language to understand this ambiguous notion, it is critical to explore conceptual clarity in a research process to draw meaningful conclusions (Babbie, 2007) and to further this discourse towards integrating spirituality in tourism higher education. In addition, tourism educators integrating spirituality in their teaching and learning must consider their understanding of spirituality, including any biases, attitudes and behaviours (Barker & Floersch, 2010). An inclusive approach, drawn from a variety of perspectives, is suggested to frame our understanding of spirituality when developing tourism curriculum.

The educators supported the critical role that spirituality can play in tourism higher education. The neoliberalistic addiction to growth in the tourism industry which is killing tourism (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018) and the widespread impacts on the ecological and socio-cultural environment are of major concerns to most of the academics. However, positively, they believe that tourism as a global industry has serious and extensive social purposes to fulfil. Rifkin (2010) states, "*What we really teach, at any given time, is the consciousness of the era*". The integration of spirituality in tourism education has the potential to address the unsustainable approaches in our industry through promoting ethical and socially responsible thinking processes and a biosphere consciousness in our future leaders.

The interviewed faculty did not mention restructuring tourism curriculum but suggested the subtle inclusion of spirituality across tourism curriculum. It is acknowledged that spirituality concepts and practices are suited to some tourism content, such as the teaching of sustainability, culture and tourism, and tourism impact assessments. However, spirituality is a deep phenomenon; its presence and value are independent of specific course content, and its connection to the development and growth of the learner is present in the learning process itself. We can embody and embrace spirituality in our approaches and actions without ever explicitly using the 'S' word. As shared by the respondents, when the learning environment is supportive of self-reflection and critical thinking while eliminating fear within the classroom space, we develop *metonia* in our students, a deep awareness of oneself and realisation of one's meaning and purpose (Vella, 2000, p. 10). Spirituality allows us to experience the world in a new way, allowing us to feel and experience the "soul of the world", what Platonists referred to as *anima mundi*, or what the indigenous refer to as the "spirits" in things (Tacey, 2002). Reckoning with their spiritual lives and worldviews allows tourism educators to be open to imagination, creativity and the willingness to allow students to "color outside the lines", be conscious of the "bigger picture" (p.26) and to live a life of consequence.

The elusive nature of the subject of spirituality and the integration of the notion in tourism education may be distinctively challenging. An academic culture regulated by the language of the neoliberalistic market, increased workloads, time constraints, overcrowded curriculum and a focus on metrics were at the forefront of the discussion on barriers. In addition, the respondents faced dilemmas in integrating spirituality as they feared the lack of acceptance and being judged as unprofessional by colleagues and students. Tourism higher education has to acknowledge that the prevalence of these constraints is changing the moral context in which tourism education takes place, where care, love and authenticity are being sacrificed for overbearing performativity and excellence (Milner, 2006) and concerted efforts must be placed to address these. This often terrorises the inner lives of educators, not experiencing the true calling of their professions and constantly functioning under feelings of stress and burnout (De Klerk-Lutting, 2008).

The tourism academy presents a battlefield for the soul of tourism as stakeholders push for a neoliberalistic and consumerist agenda. There is a need to advocate for the social force of tourism and refocus academic work to address society's *big questions* (Dredge & Schott, 2013). An important strategy for progressing the inclusion of spirituality in tourism higher education, as proposed by respondents, would be for there to be greater discussion, debates and engagement within academic communities and to garner support of higher management within institutions. Higher management needs to acknowledge the importance of the "*being*" functions of teaching and learning instead of solely appraising the "*doing*" and productivity.

Tourism studies has matured as a field of study over the last 50 years (Airey, 2016) and the contemporary tourism educational landscape has embraced changes in curricula, program offerings, pedagogies, and the learning environment (Hsu, 2018) to balance the vocational needs of students and the wider societal goals. There have been commendable moves to incorporate a more humanistic and value-based curricula in tourism education and promote critical thinking in tourism students. However, Airey (2016) cautions that in a world of increasingly complexity and uncertainty, it is not knowledge and skills that are of most importance. There is a need to broaden the tourism curriculum beyond a value-based education to enable students to think deeply about the world that they want to build and live a life in a more conscious and intentional manner.

Barnett (2012, p.66) posit that the new world order in which the rapid and unpredictable changes that are taking place are typically internal. They relate fundamentally to "how individuals understand themselves, with their sense of identity (or the lack of it), with their being in the world'. The primary responsibility of higher education is to foster learning that cultivates ways of thinking and being that are framed around important human qualities and dispositions that are spiritual in nature, [including] authenticity, sense of self, thoughtfulness, humility, criticality, and stillness. Integrating spirituality in tourism education is necessary, but not sufficient for higher academic institutions to develop responsible practitioners who possess the moral and intellectual maturity to address tourism's growing injustice and inequity and contribute towards tourism's sustainable future (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018). It is not suggested that the proposed inclusion of spirituality should dominate teaching and learning of tourism but rather that it should be given adequate consideration to ensure its acceptance along with the current focus. The integration of spirituality will promote students' understanding of the complex and inter connected social and cultural environment on which tourism rests, to critique current problematic tourism practices, and to imagine possibilities of better futures. The integration of spirituality will complement the current tourism educational system by enabling students to function from a spiritual core and move forward with hope, responsibility, practical wisdom, and consequential decision-making capacity.

This paper was inspired by the gracious sharing and passion of the educators who participated in the interviews. It aims to motivate and energise us as tourism academics to recognize our own spiritual journeys that have helped shape and colour our own academic identities. Though this study is limited to a sample of the tourism academy who identify as *spiritual* and focussed on those who demonstrated an interest in the topic, it represents one of the first empirical inquiries into spirituality in tourism educators' lives and their teaching. This study can be treated as an initial exploration of educators' perspectives through which a range of areas for future discussion, research and action can be identified. This includes examining the philosophical and ideological stance of tourism educators that influence their teaching, the pedagogical tools used by educators to integrate spirituality within the classroom spaces, and how tourism curriculum can be designed to provide spaces for its inclusion. Further, the perspectives of tourism educators who do not self-identify as spiritual can be examined to compare the differences in their views and teaching pedagogies used.

Most respondents shared that they had neither considered the notion of spirituality nor been given the opportunity to reflect or discuss spirituality and tourism education. They expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to take an inward journey during the interviews. This study has consequently resulted in an increased awareness and analysis of spirituality among the cohort of respondents and our endeavour has contributed a small step towards a decolonising agenda of the current dominant practices in the tourism academy. Perhaps, many academics who read the narratives shared in this study may "recognize it as congruent with their experiences—their untold stories" (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p. 965) and lean in to make themselves heard in the hallways of the academy. Freire (1994, p.3) advances that "one of the tasks of the progressive educator, through a serious, correct political analysis, is to unveil opportunities for hope, no matter what the obstacles may be." Through this openness, further constructive dialogues and research endeavours can be undertaken to promote the cultivation of space within tourism higher education for the epistemic inclusion of spirituality and for the professoriate to collectively transcend towards a more inclusive, caring, and hopeful academy.

Author contributions

Barkathunnisha Abu Bakar: Conceived and designed the analysis, Contributed data or analysis tools, Performed the analysis, Wrote the paper, Other contribution.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The author declares no potential conflict of interest with respect to the research, authorship and publication of this article.

Acknowledgement

I am grateful to all the authors referenced for their contributions to academia and sharing their knowledge which made this article possible. I would like to thank the reviewers who generously committed their time to provide comprehensive and constructive feedback on our paper. The author would like to thank Dr. Diane Lee, Dr. Anne Price and Dr. Erica Wilson for their comments and feedback on the earlier drafts of this paper.

References

Airey, D. (2016). Tourism education: past, present and future. *Turističko poslovanje, 17*, 9–12.

Astin, A. W. (2004). Why spirituality deserves a central place in Liberal education. *Liberal Education, 90*(2), 34–41.

Astin, A., & Astin, H. (1999). *Meaning and spirituality in the lives of college faculty: A study of values, authenticity, and stress.* Los Angeles: UCLA Higher Education Research Institute.

Atelejevic, I. (2009). Transmodernity: Remaking our (tourism) world? In J. Tribe (Ed.). *Philosophical issues in tourism* (pp. 278–300). Bristol: Channel View.

Babbie, E. R. (2007). *The practice of social research.* Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

Ball, S. J. (2003). The teacher's soul and the terrors of performativity. *Journal of Education Policy, 18*(2), 215–228.

Barkathunnisha, A. B., Diane, L., Price, A., & Wilson, E. (2018). Towards a spirituality-based platform in tourism higher education. *Current Issues in Tourism, 22*(17), 1–17.

Barker, S. L., & Floersch, J. E. (2010). Practitioners' understandings of spirituality: Implications for social work education. *Journal of Social Work Education, 46*(3), 357–370.

Barnett, R. (2012). Learning for an unknown future. *Higher Education Research and Development, 31*(1), 65–77.

Bell, A. S., Rajendran, D., & Theiler, S. (2012). Job stress, wellbeing, work-life balance and work-life conflict among Australian academics. *E-Journal of Applied Psychology, 8*(1).

Bhagwan, R. (2010). Spirituality in social work: A survey of students at south African universities. *Social Work Education, 29*(2), 188–204.

Bhagwan, R. (2011). Spirituality in pedagogy: A qualitative study with educators. *Social Work Education, 47*(4).

Bradley, J., & Kauanui, S. (2003). Comparing spirituality on three southern California college campuses. *Journal of Organizational Change, 16*, 448–462.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77–101.

Canda, E. R., & Furman, L. D. (2010). *Spiritual diversity in social work practice* (2nd ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

Caton, K. (2012). Taking the moral turn in tourism studies. *Annals of Tourism Research, 39*(4), 1906–1928.

Caton, K. (2014). Underdisciplinarity: Where are the humanities in tourism education? *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education, 15*, 24–33.

Caton, K. (2015). On the practical value of a liberal education. In D. Dredge, D. Airey, & M. J. Gross (Eds.). *The Routledge handbook of tourism and hospitality education*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Caton, K., Schott, C., & Daniele, R. (2014). Tourism's imperative for global citizenship. *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism, 14*(2), 123–128.

Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory.* London, UK: SAGE23.

Chickering, A. W., Dalton, J. C., & Stamm, L. (2006). *Encouraging authenticity and spirituality in higher education.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Davis, D. E., Hook, J. N., & Worthington, E. L., Jr. (2008). Relational spirituality and forgiveness: The roles of attachment to god, religious coping, and viewing the transgression as a desecration. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity, 27*(4), 293.

De Klerk-Lutting, J. (2008). Spirituality in the workplace: A reality for south African teachers. *South African Journal, 28*, 505–517.

Denton, D., & Ashton, W. (Eds.). (2004). *Spirituality, action, and pedagogy: Teaching from the heart.* New York: Peter Lang.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Dillard, C. B. (2006). *On spiritual strivings: Transforming an African American woman's academic life.* New York: SUNY Press.

Dillard, C. B., Abdur-Rashid, D. I., & Tyson, C. A. (2000). My soul is a witness: Affirming pedagogies of the spirit. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 13*(5), 447–462.

Dredge, D., & Schott, C. (2013). Academic agency and leadership in tourism higher education. *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism, 13*(2), 105–129.

Dredge, D., Airey, D., & Gross, M. J. (Eds.). (2015). *The Routledge handbook of tourism and hospitality education*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Duerr, J., Zajonc, A., & Dana, D. (2003). Survey of transformative and spiritual dimensions of higher education. *Journal of Transformative Education, 1*(3), 177–211.

Dylan, A., & Coates, J. (2012). The spirituality of justice: Bringing together the eco and the social. *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought, 31*(1–2), 128–149.

English, L., & Gillen, M. (Eds.). (2000). *Addressing the spiritual dimensions of adult learning: What educators can do. New directions for adult and continuing education.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Estanek, S. M. (2006). Redefining spirituality: A new discourse. *College Student Journal, 40*(2), 270.

Fenwick, T., & English, L. (2004). Dimensions of spirituality: A framework for adult educators. *Journal of Adult Theological Education, 1*(1), 49–64.

Fetzer Institute. Survey of transformative and spiritual dimensions of higher education. (2003). Avail- able online at http://www.contemplativemind.org/resources/pubs/fetzer_report.pdf (accessed 23 October 2003).

Freire, P. (1994). *Pedagogy of hope: Reliving pedagogy of the oppressed.* New York, USA: Continuum.

Greenstreet, W. M. (1999). Teaching spirituality in nursing: A literature review. *Nurse Education Today, 19*(8), 649–658.

Groen, J. (2004). The experience and practice of adult educators in addressing the spiritual dimensions of the workplace. *The Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult*

Education, 18(1), 72.
Guillory, W. A. (2000). *The living organization: Spirituality in the workplace.* Salt Lake City, UT: Innovations International Inc.
Harlos, K. P. (2000). Toward a spiritual pedagogy: Meaning, practice, and applications in management education. *Journal of Management Education, 24*(5), 612–627.
Heelas, P., & Woodhead, L. (2005). *The spiritual revolution: Why religion is giving way to spirituality.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
Higgins-Desbiolles, F. (2006). More than an "industry": The forgotten power of tourism as a social force. *Tourism Management, 27*(6), 1192–1208.
Higgins-Desbiolles, F. (2018). Sustainable tourism: Sustaining tourism or something more? *Tourism Management Perspectives, 25*, 157–160.
Higher Education Research Institute (2005). The Spiritual Life of College Students: A National Study of College Students Search for Meaning and Purpose. Retrieved from http://spirituality.ucla.edu/docs/reports/Spiritual_Life_College_Students_Full_Report.pdf.
Hollinshead, K. (2009). The "Worldmaking" prodigy of tourism: The reach and power of tourism in the dynamics of change and transformation. *Tourism Analysis, 14*(1), 139–152.
Hooks, B. (2003). *Teaching community: A pedagogy of Hope.* New York: Routledge.
Hsu, C. H. (2018). Tourism education on and beyond the horizon. *Tourism Management Perspectives, 25*, 181–183.
Jones, L. (2005). What does spirituality in education mean? *Journal of College and Character, 6*(7), 11.
Kapuscinski, A. N., & Masters, K. S. (2010). The current status of measures of spirituality: A critical review of scale development. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality, 2*(4), 191–205. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0020498.
Kazanjian, V., & Laurence, P. (Eds.). (2000). *Education as transformation: Religious pluralism, spirituality and a new vision for higher education in America.* New York: Peter Lang.
Kelly, P. (2008). *Towards globo sapiens: Transforming learners in higher education.* Brill Sense.
Kvarfordt, C. L., Sheridan, M. J., & Taylor, O. (2017). Religion and spirituality in social work curriculum: A survey of Canadian educators. *British Journal of Social Work, 48*(5), 1469–1487.
Lee, H., & Marshall, H. (2003). Divine individualism: Transcending psychology. *International Journal of Critical Psychology, 8*, 13–33.
Astin, A., Astin, H., & Lindholm, J. (2011). *Cultivating the spirit: How colleges can enhance students' lives.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
Lindholm, J. A., & Astin, H. S. (2008). Spirituality and pedagogy: Faculty's spirituality and use of student-centered approaches to undergraduate teaching. *The Review of Higher Education, 31*(2), 185–207.
Lindholm, J. A., Astin, H. S., & Astin, A. W. (2006). *Spirituality and the professoriate.* Los Angeles, CA: Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA.
Malaska, P. (1997). Inventing futures. *Paper presented at the world futures studies federation XV world conference 'Global Conversations – What You and I Can Do for Future Generations*. Brisbane: Australia.
Mayes, C. (2001). Cultivating spiritual reflectivity in teachers. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 28*(2), 5–22.
Mayhew, M. J. (2012). A multi-level examination of college and its influence on ecumenical worldview development. *Research in Higher Education, 53*(3), 282–310.
Merriam, S., & Simpson, E. (2000). *A guide to research for educators and trainers of adults* (2nd ed.). Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing.
Milner, V. (2006). Uncommonly sensible social work practice: Using depths of conventional wisdom and spirituality to match what we know with what we sense. *Social Work Review, 18*(3).
Moscardo, G., & Murphy, L. (2011). Toward values education in tourism: The challenge of measuring the values. *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism, 11*(1), 76–93.
Moss, B. R. (2011). The pedagogic challenge of spirituality: A "co-creative" response. *Journal of Social Work,* 1–19.
Palmer, P. (1998). *The courage to teach: Exploring the inner landscape of a teacher's life.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
Palmer, P., & Zajonc, A. (2010). *The heart of higher education.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
Pandya, S. P. (2015). Including spirituality in the social work curriculum: Perspectives from South Asia. *Social Work Education, 34*(6), 729–746.
Parks, S. D. (2000). *Big questions, worthy dreams: Mentoring young adults in their search for meaning, purpose and faith.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
Philips, F. L. S. (2002). The effects of spirituality on the adjustment to college of African American students who attend a predominantly white institution. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 60*(2), 527A.
Podolny, J. M., & Khurana, R. (2007). *Can we make management a profession? Q1–A Publication of Yale School of Management, (spring), 9–26*.
Pritchard, A., Morgan, N., & Ateljevic, I. (2011). Hopeful tourism: A new transformative perspective. *Annals of Tourism Research, 38*(3), 941–963.
Rendón, L. (2008). *Sentipensante pedagogy: Educating for wholeness, social justice, and liberation.* Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.
Richardson, L., & St. Pierre, E. A. (2005). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N. Denzin, & Y. Lincoln (Eds.). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 959–978). (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
Rifkin, J. (2010). Empathic education: The transformation of learning in an interconnected world. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. http://chronicle.com/article/Empathic-Education-The/65695/ accessed April 9, 2019. (May 30).
Shahjahan, R. A. (2004). Centering spirituality in the academy toward a transformative way of teaching and learning. *Journal of Transformative Education, 2*(4), 294–312.
Shahjahan, R. A. (2005). Spirituality in the academy: Reclaiming from the margins and evoking a transformative way of knowing the world. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 18*(6), 685–711. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518390500298188.
Shahjahan, R. A. (2010). Toward a spiritual praxis: The role of spirituality among faculty of color teaching for social justice. *The Review of Higher Education, 33*(4), 473–512.
Sharma, G. (2017). Pros and cons of different sampling techniques. *International Journal of Applied Research, 3*(7), 749–752.
Sharma-Persaud, R. C. (2006). *Spirituality in education to work transitions: Synergy of mind.* ProQuest: Body and Soul.
Sharpley, R. (2015). On the practical value of a liberal education. In D. Dredge, D. Airey, & M. J. Gross (Eds.). *The Routledge handbook of tourism and hospitality education*. New York, NY: Routledge.
Sheridan, M. J., Wilmer, C. M., & Atcheson, L. (1994). Inclusion of content on religion and spirituality in the social work curriculum: A study of faculty views. *Journal of Social Work Education, 30*(3), 363–376.
Shields, C. M. (2005). Liberating discourses: Spirituality and educational leadership. *Journal of School Leadership, 15*(6), 608–623.
Tacey, D. (2002). Student spirituality and educational authority. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality, 7*(2), 171–182.
Tacey, D. J. (2004). *The spirituality revolution: The emergence of contemporary spirituality.* New York, NY: Brunner-Routledge.
Tisdell, E. J. (2000). Spirituality and emancipatory adult education in women adult educators for social change. *Adult Education Quarterly, 50*, 308–335.
Tisdell, E. J. (2003). *Exploring spirituality and culture in adult and higher education.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
Tolliver, D. E., & Tisdell, E. J. (2006). Engaging spirituality in the transformative higher education classroom. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 109*, 37–47.
Tsiris, G. (2017). Music therapy and spirituality: An international survey of music therapists' perceptions. *Nordic Journal of Music Therapy, 26*(4), 293–319.
Vella, J. (2000). A spirited epistemology: Honoring the adult learner as subject. In L. English, & M. Gillen (Eds.). *Addressing the spiritual dimensions of adult learning: What educators can do* (pp. 7–16). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
Wane, N. N. (2002). African women and spirituality. In E. O'Sullivan, A. Morrell, & M. A. O'Connor (Eds.). *Expanding the boundaries of transformative learning.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
Watson, J., de Souza, M., & Trousdale, A. (2014). *Global perspectives on spirituality and education.* New York, NY: Routledge.
Wolcott, H. F. (1994). *Transforming qualitative data: Description, analysis, and interpretation.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Wright, T. (2004). The evolution of sustainability declarations in higher education. In P. B. Corcoran, & A. E. J. Wals (Eds.). *Higher education and the challenge of sustainability: Problematics, promise, and practice* (pp. 7–19). Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic.
Zajonc, A. (2003). Spirituality in higher education. *Liberal Education, 89*(1), 50–58.
Zapf, M. K. (2005). The spiritual dimension of person and environment: Perspectives from social work and traditional knowledge. *International Social Work, 48*(5), 633–642.
Zine, J. (2004). Creating a critical faith-centered space for antiracist feminism: Reflections of a Muslim scholar-activist. *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion, 20*(2), 167–187.
Zinnbauer, B., Pargament, K., Cole, B., Rye, M., Butter, E., Belavich, T., ... Kadar, J. (1997). Religion and spirituality: Unfuzzying the fuzzy. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 36*(4), 549–564.
Zohar, D., & Marshall, I. (2000). *SQ: Spiritual intelligence.* London: Bloomsbury.

Biarkathunnisha Abu Bakar is a Doctor of Philosophy candidate at The School of Arts at Murdoch University (Western Australia) and an Affiliate lecturer for the Murdoch University Tourism Program (Singapore). She holds a Masters Business Administration (Hospitality and Tourism Management) from Nanyang Business School, Singapore. Her teaching and research interests are in tourism education, sustainable tourism, tourism marketing and Halal tourism. Her research work has been published in Current Issues in Tourism and Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education.