

Review of: "Cruises Italian Tourism: Scenarios and Trends After Global Pandemic — The MSC Case"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Questions and Speculations about the Study 'Cruises Italian Tourism: Scenarios and Trends After Global Pandemic - The MSC Case'

The title of the study made me very happy because I thought that I was really reading a futures case study of the world-famous cruise tourism company MSC. Moreover, the case study promises trends and scenarios.

I was disappointed in this expectation, however, because there are no trends or scenarios in the study. Instead, I was left with an overview that was disjointed in its content and constantly referring to sources.

The sustainability-focused nature of the chosen case study would make it a great topic, as cruise tourism offers exciting tourism programmes, but the way they are currently realised is still quite environmentally damaging. As the demand for such tourism services is growing, the setting and implementation of sustainability targets in the realisation of the programmes on offer can play a significant role in the development of the whole planet towards environmental sustainability. And if we also consider how the MSC cruise tourism company is a global leader in this sector of the tourism industry, it is very important to see in what direction and in what way this company will develop in the coming years.

It is also important to note that if such major tourism companies monitor the various trends and develop scenarios to strengthen their sustainability, social responsibility, and market role, as well as their development impact on other activities they are involved in, then progress in environmental sustainability can itself become part of the market competition between companies in the cruise tourism sector. In turn, market competition could also serve to accelerate improvements in sustainability, i.e., the market and sustainability could function as mutually reinforcing priorities in this area, which also embodies the globalisation of tourism.

However, this major theme is not developed in the study. Even the structure of the study is not clear and focused. The 8 chapters are only loosely connected, and even then, there are overlaps in content. For example, the needs of this cruise tourism activity and the role of environmentally sustainable services in meeting them are mentioned in several chapters, but this study does not present a complex and dynamic relationship between the needs and the services in a way that advances both the experience and sustainability.

However, there are no chapters on the purpose, context, and methodology of the case study in question, the time horizon, the databases used, and the experts or stakeholders involved in the future exploring and / or shaping process. It is also not possible to know the genre of the case study. Is the case study of the forecasting or foresight or integrated foresight genre? It would be important to mention the type of futures case study, because it determines how different the content and methodology of the case study is (Hideg, 2013, Current Design Foresight 2015 and Foresight Manual, 2018). It is also questionable in what capacity the two authors were involved in the preparation of the futures case study presented, as almost all quantitative information or claims mentioned in the paper are cited. However, it is clear from the paper that the authors are very skilled and knowledgeable on cruise tourism. This also raises the question of what is the genre of this paper? Is it intended to be just a review of the MSC case study, or do the authors also intend to report their own new research findings through this paper? In both cases, the contents and messages should have been grouped together in a logical structure in line with the purpose of the publication.

What is also missing from this study is the process of forward-looking activity used in the case study in question (Hines & Bishop, 2013), how many different methods and work sections are used and how they are combined to produce the MSC's future information.

What is completely missing from the study are an evaluation of the case study presented (its effectiveness, feasibility, ability to inform decisions, extent to which it meets the objective set, possible directions for further development) and its positioning in the future visioning of the big tourism companies. However, if this case study is unique in its genre, then it should make some kind of claim as to why other tourism companies would benefit from also addressing the future of their core business in such a form and depth (Hideg, 2021).

In addition to the content problems, the 14 figures also have either content inaccuracies or missing source citations. For example, Figure 1 does not indicate what the columns mean, Figure 2 lacks the time dimension of the distribution ratios, and the other figures are inaccurately referenced. It is not sufficient to include a number referring to a literature item in the title of the figure because it is not known whether the publication in question is only a source of data and the authors only produced the figures, or whether the figure itself is taken in its entirety from the study referred to and on which page of the study the figure in question can be found. If the latter is the case, republication of the figure in its unaltered form is only possible with the author's permission of the primary source. The same is true for Table 1.

In conclusion, I suggest a reconsideration of the paper and a clarification of what the authors' purpose is with this paper and what their own research findings are in the paper. Then, the further questions raised can be systematically answered, and the draft thoroughly revised.

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