

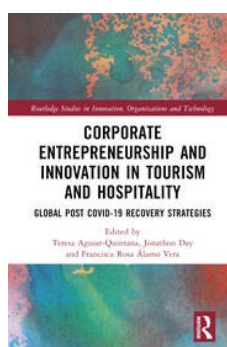
BOOK REVIEW

Corporate Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Tourism and Hospitality Global Post Covid-19 Recovery Strategies. Aguiar Quintana, A., Day, J., & Álamo Vera, F.R. (Eds.). Routledge, New York. 2024. ISBN: 978-1-032-59373-9

Oskar Villareal-Larrinaga¹

University of the Basque Country, Spain

<https://doi.org/10.20420/eni.2024.740>



In the year 2024, a book is scheduled for publication that is worthy of attention. It is *Corporate Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Tourism and Hospitality: Global Post Covid-19 Recovery Strategies*, published by Routledge. As the title indicates, the work comprises a collection of academic cases of corporate entrepreneurship in the tourism industry. Particularly, it features twenty-five success stories from across the globe, with the participation of sixty authors from twenty-three universities (including those in Europe, America, Asia, Africa, and Oceania). This publication resulted from international collaboration and coordination. The editors Teresa Aguiar-Quintana and Francisca Rosa Álamo-Vera (both from the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria in Spain) and Jonathon Day (from Purdue University in the United States), were instrumental in its production. In addition, both universities are established institutions in tourism research.

Having been raised as a grandson of schoolteachers, son of a pedagogue, and university professor, I have long been invested in enhancing the pedagogical process and the educational experience of university students. In order for our lessons to be considered transcendent by our students, we must first undertake the preparation and delivery of a masterclass on any subject on which we can consider ourselves experts and specialists. However, this preparation alone is insufficient. The acquisition of knowledge is not solely dependent on passive receptivity to information, whether in the form of listening or reading. Rather, human beings learn by engaging in practical activities. It is necessary that students experience, feel, lead, empathise, decide and resign; that they work in teams; that they assume professional roles without the inherent risks of these positions. As children, we learned to walk, jump, ride a bike or swim without the aid of an academic manual, not even an instruction manual. We learned by observing those who knew how to do it and, above all, by experimenting with our balance, acceleration and the correct position of our body. We acquired our knowledge through hands-on experience, and by

¹ Corresponding author: oskar.villareal@ehu.eus.

repeating the processes that enabled us to gain that knowledge, we improved further. This approach was advocated by the ancient Chinese Taoist philosopher Laozi, who is credited with the saying "If you tell me, I will listen. If you show me, I will see. If you let me experience, I will learn." These words encapsulate a profound wisdom about the process of learning. In today's globalized world, where knowledge is increasingly being shaped by artificial intelligence, it is clear that knowledge must be imparted and learned in an applied way.

In my own experience, I have found that teaching cases can be an effective method for facilitating learning in students. I have also found the case study to be a suitable research methodology for addressing my own scientific curiosity. The case method has been a mainstay of teaching at Harvard University since the early 20th century, yet it has been regarded as an innovative approach in most educational innovation programmes in recent decades.

In my view, the key to developing the academic case as a learning tool is to understand and comprehend the dual role of teachers in its development and in its use in the classroom. In this review, I will focus on the first of these roles, as it is not always given the attention it deserves. I would like to propose the analogy of a bridge to illustrate the necessity of connecting the professional and academic spheres. The coordination, editing and authoring of cases can be likened to road engineering, which ensures the bridge is robust and adequately connects the two shores (the academic and the professional). Theoretical and conceptual knowledge is held by university teachers, while experiential knowledge is possessed by professionals. It is our intention that students should receive both types of knowledge in an orderly, applied and cohesive manner. Professionals are unable to devote their valuable time to teaching and lecturing (perhaps the occasional conference in the context of congresses or postgraduate courses), nor do they

usually have the time to write about their business experience in an organised way. It is therefore evident that the role of the teacher (coordinator, editor or author) is of paramount importance in the design of a unified structure, which is typically based on theoretical and conceptual frameworks. This structure serves to homogenise the various cases pertaining to the object of study or a particular perspective on it. Expert teachers are able to design such a structure with the necessary academic knowledge, thereby connecting the experiences and successes of companies with the learning needs of students. It is this quality that renders a collection of cases, such as the one under consideration here, exemplary.

The exceptional quality of this work can be attributed to its thematic specialisation (corporate entrepreneurship), the unit of analysis selected as the object of study (the tourism company), and the volume and geographical scope of the project (twenty-five success stories from the five continents). The editors have performed an admirable task of coordination by providing the collection of cases with an intentional variety (four sections) and by ensuring that each case has a homogeneous internal structure (four sections). This has resulted in the creation of a robust and reliable bridge, as described in the above analogy. In this context, the collection of cases pertaining to tourism companies is divided into four sections. The first section (1) encompasses accommodation companies that are dedicated to intrapreneurship and innovation. The second section (2) comprises cases from the catering sector and innovative training in tourism studies. A third section (3) presents cases of distribution, including travel agencies and airlines, which have developed corporate entrepreneurship and innovation strategies, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The final section (4) includes destination management organisation companies that have also implemented entrepreneurship strategies.

With regard to the internal organisation of the case studies, the structure of each of them is as follows. In the section (1) of introduction, the authors provide an overview of the context of the organisation, including an analysis of the people, the problems and the key elements to be carried out in the case. The second section (2) focuses upon the context, with an overview of the sector in terms of competitors, markets, trends, etc. Furthermore, the geographical area in which the organisation operates is considered, with a discussion of the main political aspects and the legal, economic, technological or social conditions that characterise it. The third section (3) concerns the intrapreneurship or corporate entrepreneurship actions themselves. Finally, the fourth section (4) presents the general conclusions by the authors of each case.

In conclusion, this book adds value to the existing literature in two ways. Firstly, it provides a theoretical exploration of the definitions, processes and implementation of corporate entrepreneurship. Secondly, it relates to real and global case studies related to the hospitality and tourism industry. The industry,

according to data from the Spanish Ministry of Industry and Tourism, in 2023 accommodated and provided services to more than 84 million international tourists in Spain (an increase of 1% compared to 2019), who spent a total of 108 billion euros in the country (17.4% more than in 2019), resulting in the highest number of employees in the sector in the data history, with over 2.5 million affiliates, representing 12.5% of the total number of Social Security affiliates in the economy. The data presented by Exceltur, the employers' association for the tourism sector, serves to amplify the effect of the sector. This is achieved by taking into account that its calculations correspond to total tourism, not just international tourism. As a result, the sector's income in 2023 is estimated to be 187 billion euros, reaching 12.8% of GDP, an all-time record.

It is therefore evident that this sector merits further study, with the objective of practical learning. *Corporate Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Tourism and Hospitality: Global Post Covid-19 Recovery Strategies* is an exemplary work that facilitates this approach.