

Article

Embedding Sustainability in Tourism Education: Bridging Curriculum Gaps for a Sustainable Future

Asunción Fernández-Villarán ^{1,*} , Basagaitz Guereño-Omil ²  and Nagore Ageitos ²¹ Faculty of Social and Human Sciences, University of Deusto, 48007 Bilbao, Spain² Faculty of Social and Human Sciences, University of Deusto, Mundaiz, 50, 20012 Donostia-San Sebastián, Spain; b.guereño@deusto.es (B.G.-O.); nagore.ageitos@deusto.es (N.A.)

* Correspondence: asun.fvillarán@deusto.es

Abstract: The evolving challenges in the tourism industry, particularly those related to sustainability, demand significant revisions to current degree programs. This paper presents the design of a higher education curriculum for tourism studies at a Spanish university, responding to industry needs for broader, high-level knowledge and skills, with a strong emphasis on sustainability, digital transformation, and socially responsible practices. The curriculum prioritizes critical and strategic thinking alongside liberal reflection to empower students to lead in sustainable tourism development. Developed collaboratively with the entire tourism faculty, the curriculum design was informed by an extensive analysis of 105 international university courses, 204 job offers, feedback from 195 alumni, and ongoing consultations with professionals and community partners. Grounded in the concept of curriculum space and the philosophic practitioner framework, the curriculum integrates knowledge, soft skills, and attitudes to foster an innovative, sustainable learning ecosystem that prepares graduates to tackle the complexities of modern tourism with a focus on long-term environmental and social impacts.

Keywords: curriculum design; tourism education; higher education; sustainability in tourism; digital transformation; curriculum space; philosophic practitioner framework



Citation: Fernández-Villarán, A.; Guereño-Omil, B.; Ageitos, N. Embedding Sustainability in Tourism Education: Bridging Curriculum Gaps for a Sustainable Future. *Sustainability* **2024**, *16*, 9286. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su16219286>

Academic Editors: Eduardo Parra-López, Almudena Barrientos-Báez and David Caldevilla Domínguez

Received: 12 September 2024

Revised: 21 October 2024

Accepted: 22 October 2024

Published: 25 October 2024



Copyright: © 2024 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

The tourism sector is a key employer in Europe, with over 11.2 million jobs in the EU in 2021 [1], including 2.72 million in Spain [2]. However, the impact of COVID-19 [3] and the growing need for resilience [3,4] have exposed significant skill gaps in tourism and hospitality sectors. One of the main challenges the industry faces is the shortage of skilled workers [5], which threatens the capacity to meet the projected increase in visitor numbers [6]. Consequently, the role of educational curricula tailored to these industry demands has become more critical than ever [7]. Higher education institutions are increasingly expected to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and competencies that will render them employable, adaptable, and capable of addressing the constantly evolving needs of the tourism sector [8,9]. Redefining the content of undergraduate tourism programs is, therefore, essential to meeting these challenges.

Moreover, while contributing significantly to global economic growth, the tourism industry also poses serious environmental and social sustainability challenges. Concerns over climate change, environmental degradation, and social inequality have heightened the urgency for a more sustainable approach to tourism. As agents of societal transformation, education systems play a critical role in equipping individuals with the skills necessary to address these pressing issues [7]. Integrating sustainability into tourism education is, thus, crucial, ensuring that future leaders are prepared to manage these challenges effectively [8,10]. By embedding sustainability principles within educational programs, institutions can foster critical thinking, responsible decision making, and long-term problem-solving skills, helping to ensure the wellbeing of both the planet and its inhabitants.

Previous research has demonstrated a growing recognition of sustainability within tourism studies [11–14], with various frameworks and pedagogical approaches explored to foster sustainable tourism practices [14]. Studies show that students exposed to sustainability concepts develop a deeper understanding of tourism’s environmental, economic, and social impacts, leading to more responsible decision making in their future careers [15]. However, there is still a gap in systematically integrating sustainability across tourism curricula and preparing students effectively for real-world challenges [16].

This article aims to address this gap by examining the role of sustainability in tourism education and proposing a comprehensive approach for embedding sustainability principles into the curriculum. By analyzing existing research and providing practical strategies, this study seeks to advance the discourse on sustainability in tourism education and offer actionable insights for developing future professionals capable of leading the industry toward a more sustainable future.

The paper is structured into four main sections. First, it presents a thorough literature review focused on core concepts such as curriculum space, the philosophic practitioner, and stakeholder collaborative engagement [17]. Next, the methodological framework for the case study is outlined, examining the disconnection between higher education in tourism and industry demands [18,19]. Finally, this study discusses empirical findings and concludes, elucidating the theoretical and managerial implications of a more integrated, sustainability-focused tourism education.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Curriculum Design

Extensive research has explored various curriculum design approaches in tourism studies globally, including the American, British, Australian, and other European contexts [7,11–14,18,20–23]. These studies have primarily focused on hospitality, events, and management perspectives [11,20,24]. However, there is a growing recognition that the tourism industry and educators require a new educational paradigm [7], innovative methodologies [25,26], and learning experiences [15].

In response to these changes, recent literature highlights the importance of balancing vocational training with liberal reflection in tourism curricula [16]. This paper advocates for a curriculum model that addresses industry needs and fosters broader critical and strategic thinking skills, integrating both liberal and professional reflection. Tribe’s [17] concept of “curriculum space” is particularly relevant in achieving this balance, offering a framework that encompasses both objectives—preparing students for the practical demands of the tourism sector while encouraging reflective, transformative thinking.

Tribe’s concept of “curriculum space” remains highly relevant in tourism education, offering a comprehensive framework for developing both practical skills and critical, reflective thinking. Tribe’s framework [17,27,28] emphasizes equipping students with critical tools for both professional practice and reflective thinking. He argues that tourism curricula should achieve a balance between meeting the immediate practical demands of the tourism industry and fostering broader intellectual development. This dual focus is essential for preparing students to navigate the sector’s complexities and contribute meaningfully to its ongoing evolution.

Building on Tribe’s model, this study recognizes the shift from content-heavy tourism curricula, traditionally designed to meet sectoral demands [10], to a competence-based approach, as highlighted by Paricio et al. [29]. This new model reorients the curriculum to focus on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that graduates need to successfully confront and overcome the evolving challenges within the tourism sector. Sustainability, in particular, is now emphasized as a critical competency for future tourism professionals.

In aligning with Tribe’s notion of “curriculum space”, this paper also addresses how more recent studies have expanded on his work. Scholars such as [8,30–32] have explored the integration of “philosophical professionalism” in tourism education, blending liberal and vocational training to equip students with both reflective and practical skills.

Notably, Farsari [8] applied this framework in the context of sustainable tourism education, emphasizing its importance in cultivating ethical and analytical thinking alongside technical competencies. However, research in non-English-speaking contexts remains limited, with Minguez et al. [32] noting the lack of critical introspection in tourism higher education, especially in countries like Spain.

Moreover, Dredge et al. [31] further elaborated on the curriculum space by discussing its application in balancing diverse educational outcomes that are deemed essential by various stakeholders. The sustainable tourism pedagogy framework used by [32] in Spanish tourism programs illustrates how Tribe's concept can be adapted to emphasize not only professional readiness but also a critical understanding of tourism's broader social, ecological, and political impacts.

This paper contributes to the ongoing discussion by exploring how recent studies have built upon Tribe's work, particularly in the context of competence-based and sustainability-focused education, and how these approaches can address the evolving needs of the tourism sector. This study applies Tribe's [27,28] framework, further developed by [8] in the context of a master's degree in sustainable tourism. The framework is applied to reflect on and analyze tourism degree programs in Spain, with a focus on four key components: professional reflection (rethinking business practices), professional action (improving business practices), liberal reflection (rethinking the broader world of tourism), and liberal action (improving the world of tourism) [28].

2.2. Stakeholders' Collaboration

Higher education confronts the imperative of deepening interactions and co-creating value with key stakeholders [33]. Benckendorf et al. [34] underlined that "tourism, hospitality and events curricula and pedagogies are socially constructed due to the interactions, trade-offs and choices made by a range of stakeholders including academic educators, university managers, students and industry employers" (p. 8). However, most authors have focused their research on collaborative work as an innovative methodology (e.g., [35,36]) rather than as a strategy for creating new curricula.

McGill et al. [37] underline that terms prefixed with "co-" denote a process of engaging with the target audience of end-users, and there are no substantive meaning distinctions between co-design and co-create. It is crucial to acknowledge that, as observed in the study and reflected in this paper, co-creation encompasses any act of collective creativity [38], including co-design. According to Bovil et al. [39], curriculum co-creation involves co-designing a programme or course, usually before its implementation. Within this context, co-design denotes a process wherein end-users contribute to curriculum design, with the anticipated outcome being more meaningful and innovative [40]. Nigg and Peters [41] differentiate between cooperation and collaboration to underscore the significance of partnership in co-design. Collaboration denotes shared decision making wherein all involved parties collaborate towards a common objective, whereas cooperation implies individuals aiding one another by sharing information.

Viewed through this lens, the term "co-design" has been consistently employed within this text to refer to the active engagement of all stakeholders in curriculum design processes. In curriculum co-design, the collaborative involvement of stakeholders renders the process person-centered, as all participants contribute their perspectives. Botterill and Tribe [42] delineated four primary stakeholder groups—academics, students, institutions, and employers/industry. Casado [43] expanded the list of stakeholders in curriculum space development previously identified by [42] to include alumni.

Several authors have explored the influence exerted by stakeholders within the realm of curricular space. For example, Sonnenschein et al. [44] examined the perceptions and reflections of Chinese international students enrolled in a tourism and hospitality programme at a particular Australian university concerning the attributes needed for entry-level positions in the Chinese hotel industry, where findings showed students found it challenging to transfer the developed attributes to the labor market. Forristal [25] analyzed how students

co-created classroom content to enhance their self-directed learning, research skills, multi-dimensional knowledge, and global competence. The results verify the potential of this pedagogical method, which can be easily adopted and adapted to refocus students' efforts to reveal niche tourism services in any country or culture. Barron et al. [45] analyzed the job experiences and career expectations of Generation Y undergraduates about to embark on their full-time careers. Bovill [46] demonstrated that students and academic staff working in partnerships co-create curricula, stressing the importance of students' views being taken seriously. Voogt et al. [47] regarded teacher involvement in the collaborative design of curricula as a form of professional development, and in a subsequent publication, Voogt et al. [48] included the positive effects of collaborative work in the implementation of curricular changes. Severance et al. [49] applied collaborative or co-design as a strategy to leverage teachers' expertise in designing, implementing, and testing educational innovations, thus broadening their participation in reform efforts. Ladkin [50] stressed the importance of dialogue between students and industry. Renfors et al. [51] presented an example of developing tourism curriculum content through regional cooperation in the Central Baltic Area. The necessary skills and knowledge are identified through cooperation between higher education institutions offering tourism education and training and various tourism industry stakeholders [51]. Business companies and university collaboration about curriculum design has received little attention from researchers [52] despite its widespread practice [53] and ability to enrich education [54]. In developing an educational program for tourism, Güden et al. [7] suggested that industry is the primary data source; however, the authors have not found examples in tourism studies.

Despite the abovementioned studies involving actors in participatory and collaborative practices, there remains a gap in the literature involving all stakeholders. This study examines the interests and perspectives of all stakeholders, including students, professors, industry, and alumni, and how they can influence the development of the curriculum space.

3. Materials and Methods

The research methodology consists of several interrelated phases designed to update the competencies required in a tourism degree program. Each phase integrates reflection, data analysis, and curriculum development to ensure that the program meets the evolving demands of the tourism sector. The methodologic framework is graphically presented in Figure 1 and explained below.

The first phase, Initial Faculty Reflection, involved faculty members and students critically reflecting on various elements of the current program. This reflection addressed the key goals of the degree, including defining the target audience and determining the desired graduate profile. Faculty members and students also reviewed the essential knowledge and skills that students need to acquire, ensuring alignment with global trends and the growing internationalization of the tourism industry [55]. Additionally, this phase involved evaluating different training modalities, such as online, hybrid, and in-person formats, to determine the most effective program delivery methods. The culmination of this reflective process was the creation of an Updated Degree framework, serving as the foundation for future curriculum updates.

The second phase focused on Data Collection and Analysis. Various data sources were used to inform the curriculum development process, including the analysis of tourism programs offered by leading international universities, surveys and interviews with alumni, reviews of job offers in the tourism sector, and consultations with experts. University websites provided insights into the structure and content of globally recognized tourism programs, while alumni contributed valuable feedback on the relevance of their educational experiences in the workforce. Job offers analysis helped identify the current skills and qualifications sought by employers, and interviews with professionals revealed emerging trends and challenges in the industry. The data collected from these sources were synthesized into Medium-Term Scenarios, identifying key competencies such as academic and practical

knowledge, soft skills (e.g., communication, teamwork), professional attitudes, and the sector's challenges, such as sustainability and technological changes.

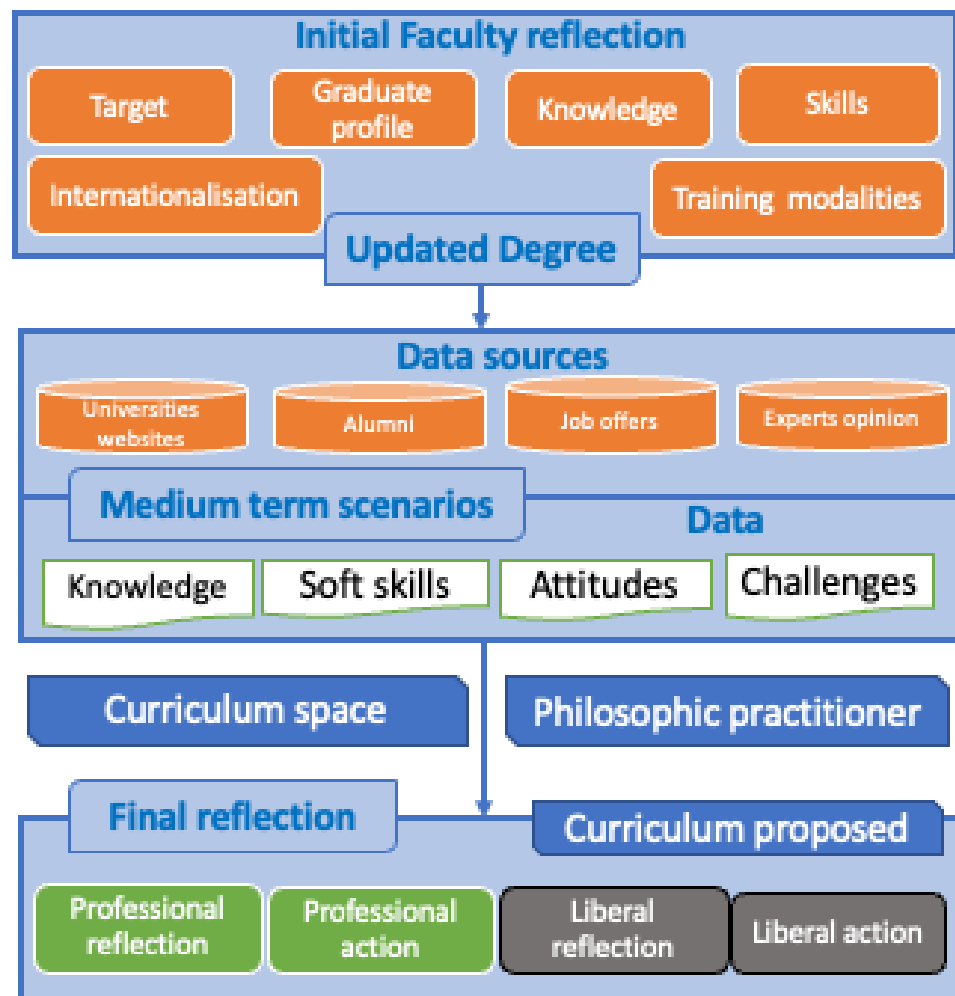


Figure 1. Methodological framework. Source: own elaboration.

In the third phase, the focus shifted to designing the Curriculum Space and developing the concept of the philosophic practitioner. This phase involved translating the data-driven insights into a curriculum that imparted necessary competencies and emphasized critical thinking and ethical reflection. The philosophic practitioner approach encouraged educators to guide students in applying theoretical knowledge to practical scenarios while maintaining an ethical perspective. This phase was crucial in ensuring that graduates are not only equipped with professional skills but also the capacity for thoughtful reflection, enabling them to navigate the complex challenges of the tourism sector.

The final phase involved Final Reflection and the creation of the Proposed Curriculum. This phase balanced two critical perspectives: professional and liberal education. On the one hand, the curriculum was refined to reflect industry needs, ensuring that students are prepared for immediate professional action. On the other hand, it also emphasized broader liberal education goals, such as fostering critical thinking, adaptability, and ethical reasoning. This dual focus on Professional Reflection and Action and Liberal Reflection and Action ensures that graduates are well-rounded professionals, capable of meeting both the immediate demands of the tourism industry and engaging in lifelong learning and development.

This methodology provides a structured, evidence-based approach to curriculum development, ensuring that tourism programs are both relevant and forward-thinking.

It incorporates insights from various stakeholders and emphasizes the importance of balancing professional preparation with broader educational objectives.

3.1. Data Collection

3.1.1. Undergraduate Programs Analysis

A comparative analysis of tourism programs from leading international universities was conducted. Several key elements were evaluated to assess the overall quality and relevance of the academic offerings. The degree title indicates the qualification students earn, such as a Bachelor of Science or Arts, and the analysis explores its recognition in the job market and alignment with industry demands. Similarly, the field of knowledge refers to the academic discipline, such as management or social sciences, and its relevance is assessed based on professional demand and industry trends. Soft skills, such as communication, teamwork, leadership, and adaptability, are increasingly important in today's workforce. The analysis examines whether the program fosters these abilities through curriculum design, extracurricular activities, and teaching methods. Additionally, the program's core courses are reviewed to ensure they provide the essential knowledge of the field and prepare students for professional challenges, often including practical projects to apply theoretical concepts. The curriculum structure is another important factor, focusing on the balance between foundational, core, and elective courses, as well as opportunities for interdisciplinary study and practical application. Finally, the analysis looks at the credits dedicated to internships, practical experiences, and projects.

The universities were selected based on rankings (QS Top Universities, Academic Ranking of World Universities, Shanghai Rankings, and Europe CEOWORLD Magazine Ranking), accreditations, and their relevance to the global tourism industry. The data gathered helped understand how educational institutions adapt their programs to prepare students for the evolving tourism landscape.

The final sample size, see Table 1, included 105 degrees from 42 universities: 30 in Spain, 52 in Europe, and 23 in other countries. The analysis was conducted in February 2021. A qualitative approach was applied, using documentary analysis [56] to review publicly available data from 42 worldwide universities. The goal was to pinpoint the significant trends in courses and modules, assess the structure of the offered curricula, and present possible considerations aligned with the university's requirements and regulations. A series of analyses were conducted to determine the most commonly used words among the top universities offering undergraduate tourism, studies programs.

Table 1. University profile.

Country	Universities	Degrees
Spain	16	30
Europe	16	52
Non-European	10	23
TOTAL	42	105

Source: own elaboration.

3.1.2. Job Offers Analysis

A comprehensive analysis of current job offers in the tourism sector was conducted. This involved collecting data from online job portals, Turijobs, and LinkedIn (Spain), Simply Hired and Eures (Europe), and HP careers, a portal specializing in hospitality (USA), which encompasses the world's foremost hotel chains and international cruise companies. The analysis focused on identifying key skills, qualifications, and experience required for various positions within tourism, including management, customer service, digital marketing, sustainability, and other emerging trends.

The analysis was conducted between 17 February and 23 February 2021 (inclusive dates). The data were categorized and analyzed to identify patterns and trends in the competencies demanded by employers, focusing on how these demands have evolved in

response to technological advancements, sustainability, and changing consumer behavior. The details of the analyzed offers are listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Offers analyzed.

Portal	Offers Analysis	Hospitality/Spa	Rest	Intermediation	Consulting/ITC	Destination	Other
Turijobs	25	17	2	2	4		
LinkedIn	31	19		7	4		1
Simply Hired	23	7		6	1	9	
HP careers	67	67					
Eures	58	32	5	8	3	10	
TOTAL	204	142	7	23	12	19	1

Source: own elaboration.

3.1.3. Alumni Surveys

A survey was distributed to alumni of a tourism degree to gather insights into the competencies they consider most valuable in their professional careers. The survey included both closed and open-ended questions aimed at understanding the skills they have found most useful, the gaps in their education, and how well their university training has prepared them for their current roles. It is segmented into two main sections: (1) age, gender, current employment status, job position, and sector; and (2) questions about skills, content, subjects, and other factors that have helped alumni in their professional development. The analysis focuses on the second section to determine the strengths and weaknesses of their studied curriculum and the factors they consider most important for accessing the labor market. This section used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, where [1] = never and [5] = always.

The survey was conducted using Google Forms (GF) and was disseminated through alumni networks, social media, and email lists. Data were collected between 3 March and 14 March 2021.

The responses were analyzed using statistical methods to identify common trends and differences based on geographic location, years of experience, and sector within the tourism industry.

3.1.4. Professionals' Opinion—The Delphi Method

In-depth, semistructured interviews were conducted with professionals and key stakeholders in the tourism industry, including hotel managers, travel agents, event coordinators, sustainability managers, and government tourism officials. Interviewees were selected based on their expertise and their role in the tourism sector, ensuring a diverse representation of perspectives. These interviews sought to capture qualitative data on the most in-demand skills and competencies and emerging trends that require new areas of expertise. Thematic analysis was used to identify recurring themes related to competency requirements, challenges faced by the industry, and future demands.

The Delphi technique was used, a widely utilized and recognized method for gathering data from respondents within their expertise areas. It was employed to solicit the opinions of industry professionals [57,58] in December 2021. A panel of 21 participants was selected to ensure a balanced representation. Participants represent the intermediation sector ($n = 5$), marketing or management consultancies ($n = 4$), accommodation ($n = 3$), destination management ($n = 3$), technology consultancies ($n = 2$), adventure tourism ($n = 2$), and transport ($n = 1$).

The first round commenced on 2 December with an open questionnaire about (1) the challenges facing tourism in the coming years, (2) the emerging profiles or skills required in tourism, and (3) the aspects of tourism that should be differentiated. In the second round, each Delphi participant collated responses from the initial round, which were organized and formulated into questions to ascertain the depth and robustness of opinions on each issue [59]. The aim of this round was for each participant to reconsider and modify, if

necessary, a previous answer, considering the answers of other group members. The second round had a 100% response rate, and this research did not show any significant movement in the professionals' opinions; therefore, no further interactions were considered necessary.

4. Results

4.1. Analysis of Undergraduate Programs

An analysis of the degree titles in undergraduate tourism programs from top universities revealed that the terms "Management" (32.54%) and "Tourism" (25.79%) were the most used. Although these terms are broad, further analysis indicated that the programs often specialize in areas such as Hospitality (9.92%), International (9.92%), and Events (8.33%).

Additionally, alternative combinations were explored, including terms such as leisure/recreation, sports, and sustainability. "Leisure" and "Recreation" were predominantly associated with tourism in French programs, while North American programs linked "Recreation" to tourism. Sports were primarily connected to recreation and events, a trend more common in North America. However, it was also observed to a lesser extent in Europe (e.g., in the Netherlands, Poland, and Spain). The term "Sustainability" was more frequently associated with postgraduate programs.

Tourism degrees vary significantly across different countries and universities, reflecting a lack of standardized structures from an epistemological perspective. This variation underscores the broader challenge within social sciences to define a consistent theoretical framework for tourism research. However, the degrees generally emphasize employability, focusing on developing relevant skills for the workforce. Key terms for defining new degrees included "tourism", "international management", and "hospitality".

The analysis identified five key modules across degree programs: (1) Hospitality Tourism Management, including event, culture, or sports management; (2) Economics and Business Administration, covering general business management, marketing, statistics, and financial management; (3) Social Sciences, including anthropology, psychology, law, and research methods; (4) Languages and Communication, emphasizing communication skills beyond language proficiency; and (5) Computer Science, focusing on tourism-related software (e.g., Amadeus), office automation, and business intelligence platforms (e.g., Power BI).

4.2. Job Offers

The analysis of job offers revealed a broad and often unclear understanding of what constitutes a tourism job, with many positions unrelated to traditional tourism roles (e.g., security guards). Common skills required included proficiency in English (in non-English-speaking countries), Microsoft Office, and sector-specific technology skills, such as tourism software (e.g., Amadeus, Sabre) or CRM systems.

Most job listings required at least a degree in tourism degree in tourism, hotel management, or business administration, with culinary degrees also becoming more common in hospitality roles. For higher-responsibility roles, a master's degree in tourism, human resources, or business administration was often preferred. Core competencies sought by employers included familiarity with sector-specific processes, destinations, and operations, advanced English proficiency, and technical skills related to software and marketing.

The five most in-demand soft skills were customer orientation and attention to detail, proactivity, passion for work, communication skills (interpersonal, oral, and written), and teamwork and problem-solving abilities.

4.3. Alumni

Out of 243 alumni respondents, over 90% ($n = 228$) were employed in the tourism sector, and more than 70% ($n = 180$) had worked in the field for over a year. Nearly half of the respondents (46.1%, $n = 83$) were still working in the tourism industry. Most alumni had worked in areas such as accommodations, museums, hotels, events, products, destinations, and planning.

The most important skills identified by alumni, in order of importance, were problem solving, verbal communication, teamwork, decision making, critical thinking, and interpersonal communication. The alumni emphasized the practical aspects of their education as being particularly valuable in their careers.

4.4. Professionals

Professionals identified several major challenges for the tourism industry, particularly those related to soft skills. These included digitalization, marketing, talent management, innovation, data management, security, and governance. Sustainability was also highlighted as crucial for ensuring long-term resilience in tourism, focusing on minimizing environmental and social impacts while maximizing benefits for stakeholders.

Regarding the new profiles or skills needed in tourism, professionals underscored the importance of soft skills such as digital literacy, data management, sustainability, adaptability, and creative thinking. Hard skills like language proficiency and hospitality management were not as frequently mentioned.

When asked about curriculum design, nine professionals suggested incorporating more practical and innovative teaching methods, with a stronger involvement from companies and sector professionals. Additionally, they stressed the need to strengthen digital skills, sustainability, and innovation management. Some interviewees also called for a more holistic view of tourism and its value chain. Other areas highlighted included tourism experience design, information management, governance, and security.

5. Discussion and Proposed Curriculum

The results of this study are structured around [28] framework, focusing on professional reflection, professional action, liberal reflection, and liberal action, as shown in Table 3. These components are integrated with a strong emphasis on sustainability, consistent with the recommendations of [29]. The study highlights areas where findings align with existing research while identifying new insights that differentiate this study from prior work.

Table 3. Integrated curriculum space for tourism philosophic practitioner.

<p>Liberal reflection for Tourism Holistic understanding of the tourism industry and the value chain. Multidisciplinarity. Integrating multiple perspectives and seeing issues from divergent sides. Self-reflectivity of both students and teachers extending beyond the practice of tourism. Nuances of multicultural, policy, and political and ethical literacy.</p>	<p>Liberal actions for tourism Territory dimension. Entrepreneurship and leadership. Community-based service learning. Work placements and projects within ethical groups and lobbying for pressure and political groups.</p>
<p>Professional reflections for tourism More practical and innovative teaching and learning strategies. Transferable skills as problem solving and critical analysis and reflectivity, linking theory to practice. Capacity to deal with novelty, change and uncertainty. Sustainable literacy. Study visits and work placements which allow reflectivity dynamic, evolutionary character of learning (self-reflectivity over own learning, life/continuous learning).</p>	<p>Professional actions for tourism Involvement of companies or professionals in the sector, including dual training. Transferable skills to contribute to work effectiveness (writing skills, communication skills, computer literacy, self-standing work, ability to work in groups, etc.). Aspects of technical literacy (e.g., courses on sustainable tourism marketing and management).</p>

Source: adjusted from [8,28].

Regarding professional reflection, the results highlight the importance of practical and innovative teaching and learning strategies, which is in line with previous studies, particularly those on hotel management and sustainable tourism programs ([60], p. 9). The need for innovative teaching methods and a focus on transferable skills like problem solving, critical thinking, and adaptability mirrors the skills highlighted in the job offers and alumni surveys. Employers increasingly seek graduates with these competencies, particularly teamwork, communication, and the capacity to handle change and uncertainty. The integration of transferable skills—problem solving, critical analysis, and reflective thinking—reflects what the authors of [3] identified as crucial for graduate success. Additionally, the capacity to deal with novelty, change, and uncertainty, as well as sustainable literacy, is supported by findings from [61], which emphasized the growing importance of these skills, especially post-COVID-19. The focus on sustainable literacy aligns with professionals' views on the importance of sustainability for the industry's long-term success. Moreover, professionals recommend that companies and sector experts become more involved in education, supporting the idea of study visits and practical experiences that enable students to actively reflect on their learning. However, this study highlights that study visits and work placements designed to promote reflective learning are particularly important, suggesting a more dynamic approach to reflective practice than what previous research has indicated.

In terms of professional action, this study reinforces prior conclusions about the involvement of companies and sector professionals in education programs [62]. This idea directly links to the professionals' feedback about the need for more practical involvement from the industry in tourism education. The emphasis on dual training programs, supported by both job offers and alumni responses, aligns with earlier research by [63], which stressed the need for stronger industry–academic links. Additionally, the role of skills such as communication, teamwork, and technical literacy, expected by employers, echoes findings from [64,65], who noted their increasing importance in tourism curricula. However, this study places a heavier emphasis on sustainable tourism marketing and management, reflecting a shift in industry priorities towards sustainability and digital transformation, which was less prominent in earlier works.

Regarding liberal reflection, the results also align with previous studies advocating for a multidisciplinary approach to tourism education [17,31]. The emphasis on a holistic understanding of the tourism industry aligns with the professionals' call for a broader perspective on tourism, focusing on the entire value chain and how tourism affects various stakeholders. This reflects the desire for programs to move beyond traditional frameworks and engage with the multidisciplinary and ethical aspects of tourism, including sustainability and political literacy. Professionals highlighted sustainability and data management as crucial new skills, which are key components of the holistic reflection encouraged by the table. The inclusion of self-reflection and awareness of cultural, political, and ethical nuances prepares students to handle these emerging challenges in tourism. This study supports the need for students to engage with multiple perspectives and issues from diverse cultural, political, and ethical viewpoints, as also suggested by [65]. However, this study adds nuance by emphasizing self-reflectivity of both students and teachers, extending beyond the practice of tourism itself. This deeper level of reflection is a new contribution, suggesting that tourism education must foster a more profound understanding of sustainability and the ethical dimensions of tourism practices.

For liberal action, this study reinforces prior calls for entrepreneurship and leadership training in tourism education [27]. The territory dimension, entrepreneurship, and community-based service learning resonate with the job market demand for proactive problem solving, leadership, and decision-making skills. Both job offers and alumni feedback emphasize the importance of practical experience, such as work placements and community projects. Alumni also identified practical education as one of the most valuable aspects of their academic experience, which closely ties to the community-based service learning and work placements mentioned in the table. The focus on community-based

service learning and engaging with ethical groups and political advocacy aligns with [27], who emphasized the need for tourism programs to address broader societal challenges. However, this study places a stronger emphasis on fostering community engagement and collaborative governance systems, reflecting the growing importance of inclusivity and social responsibility in the tourism industry. This area has gained prominence only in recent years [8].

Sustainability is a unifying theme across all four components, consistent with the recommendations of [29] and other contemporary studies [8]. This study finds that sustainability, along with digital transformation and inclusivity, should be core competencies in tourism education, a finding that aligns with recent research trends [63]. However, this study further advocates for territorial perspectives and preventive measures in tourism project planning, suggesting a deeper integration of local stakeholder involvement and environmental stewardship. This represents a shift from earlier studies that primarily focused on sustainability at a more general, strategic level.

In terms of curriculum structure, this study proposes a model based on five key blocks—interpreting, creating, managing, interacting, and acting with a critical sense—with a sixth block added for labor market integration. This design is consistent with the strategic management process proposed by [29], emphasizing the transformation of students' thinking into that of tourism professionals. The structure reflects the need for balance between liberal education and professional training, a concept already discussed by [27] and later by [28]. However, the inclusion of a critical sense and explicit labor market integration is a more pronounced feature of this study, indicating a stronger focus on preparing students for immediate employment challenges while encouraging reflective, transformative learning.

A key differentiation in this study lies in its emphasis on soft skills within tourism education. While many studies, such as those by [66], have noted the importance of soft skills, this study reveals a growing trend in their explicit inclusion in job descriptions. The study suggests that undergraduate tourism programs must integrate these skills more systematically, aligning with recent findings by [61,67].

Moreover, while the focus on real-world problem solving and community-based projects is present in previous research, it is more robustly integrated into this curriculum proposal. The results call for stronger industry–academic collaboration, particularly through technical visits and the involvement of public and private sector managers, creating new alliances that could impact the social transfer of the degree.

In conclusion, this study both reinforces and extends previous research findings on tourism education. It advocates for a competence-based curriculum that integrates knowledge, soft skills, and professional practices, strongly focusing on sustainability, digital transformation, and inclusivity. While aligning with established frameworks, it also offers new insights, particularly in community engagement, soft skills integration, and sustainability planning at the territorial level. The curriculum aims to produce world-changing graduates equipped to lead and innovate in a complex, rapidly evolving tourism sector, driving positive change locally and globally.

6. Conclusions

6.1. Theoretical Implications

This study's theoretical implications are anchored in three major contributions, all of which revolve around the innovative use of the curriculum space concept and the philosophic practitioner education framework in tourism education.

The first significant contribution is applying the curriculum space concept, originally introduced by [17], as a model for designing tourism curricula. This model emphasizes a holistic approach to tourism education beyond merely meeting industry demands. It aligns with the view of [18] that liberal education should “free the mind” and prepare students to make ethical decisions and contribute to society. By adopting this perspective, this study reinforces the need for a broader, more integrated approach to tourism education

that focuses on critical and strategic thinking and liberal reflection. The emphasis on philosophical professionalism [28,30] positions tourism graduates as skilled professionals and reflective thinkers capable of transforming the industry. This approach supports earlier findings by [8,28], who advocate for integrating multiple perspectives and higher-level knowledge into tourism curricula.

The second contribution is the orientation of curriculum design toward fostering students' ability to deal with complexity and uncertainty, rather than simply listing the skills required for industry roles. This reflects [29] emphasis on designing curricula that develop experts' ways of thinking and acting. The study builds on [63] holistic approach, proposing that tourism graduates should be trained to view the industry as a fully integrated system. This theoretical shift addresses a gap in the literature, which has traditionally focused on functional skills such as accounting and marketing ([64], p. 22). By adopting a more holistic approach, this study contributes to the growing body of research that calls for tourism education to include sustainability, resilience, and smart tourism as central themes [7]. The proposed curriculum seeks to produce leaders who can apply sustainable and innovative strategies to improve destination competitiveness, thus contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of tourism's role in global systems.

The third theoretical contribution lies in the curriculum's design based on expected learning outcomes rather than content, in line with constructive alignment principles [68]. By diagnosing the professional profiles, knowledge, attitudes, and soft skills required by future graduates, the curriculum facilitates the identification of clear learning outcomes [29]. This shift from content-driven to outcome-driven design offers a more coherent and integrated framework, aligning the curriculum's objectives with the needs of the tourism industry. This study's approach also echoes [69] findings on the importance of aligning learning trajectories with graduate profiles and market demands. The constructive alignment ensures that the curriculum's elements—subjects, skills, and learning outcomes—are interrelated and reinforce one another, creating a cohesive educational experience.

In summary, this study advances the theoretical understanding of tourism education by advocating for a curriculum that integrates liberal reflection and professionalism, focuses on complexity and expertise development, and is grounded in learning outcomes. These contributions enrich the broader discourse on tourism education, providing a model that can help shape future curricula worldwide.

6.2. Practical Contributions

As highlighted by industry professionals, integrating sustainability into tourism curricula has become a pressing need. There is a growing demand for graduates who possess the technical skills related to tourism and the knowledge and capabilities to address environmental challenges, such as climate change and the circular economy. The findings emphasize the importance of sustainability in ensuring the long-term viability of tourism activities, particularly by minimizing negative environmental and social impacts and maximizing positive contributions to destinations and communities.

Moreover, the traditional focus of tourism education on content delivery must shift towards a more competency-based model that emphasizes the practical application of knowledge. This entails aligning learning outcomes with industry needs, especially regarding sustainability and digitalization. Graduates must be equipped with the skills to manage emerging challenges in tourism, including environmental stewardship, digital transformation, and innovation. These competencies are increasingly critical for fostering a more resilient and sustainable tourism sector.

This study also highlights the importance of adopting more practical and innovative teaching methods. These include more significant involvement of companies and professionals in the education process, and dual training programs that combine theoretical knowledge with hands-on industry experience. In this context, sustainability should be a theoretical concept and a core practical skill embedded within the curriculum, preparing students to lead the tourism industry toward a more sustainable future.

In conclusion, tourism education requires a holistic approach that embeds sustainability throughout the curriculum. The future of tourism depends on incorporating sustainable practices, diversifying local economies, creating decent jobs, fostering cohesive communities, and conserving natural and cultural heritage sites. By preparing future tourism professionals to address environmental issues and manage complex social, economic, and technological challenges, this approach would help develop well-rounded graduates ready to contribute meaningfully to a rapidly evolving industry.

6.3. Limitation and Future Research

While this study makes significant theoretical and practical contributions to the field of tourism education, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the data used in this study were collected in 2021 and 2022, which presents a potential limitation in terms of their relevance to the current landscape in 2024.

Second, this study is limited by its focus on a specific geographical context and educational framework. While the application of the curriculum space concept and the philosophic practitioner education framework has been insightful, it may not fully account for cultural, economic, or policy differences in other regions. Future research could explore how these models perform in different cultural or regional settings, as well as how they might be adapted to local industry needs.

Another limitation lies in the reliance on qualitative analysis of curriculum design and industry needs, without a comprehensive quantitative evaluation of student outcomes post-graduation. While the proposed curriculum emphasizes holistic education, complexity management, and sustainability, future studies should incorporate empirical data on how graduates perform in the tourism industry, particularly in terms of their ability to address sustainability challenges, innovate, and lead.

Several avenues for future research emerge from this study. First, more extensive longitudinal research is needed to examine the long-term impacts of a tourism curriculum that integrates liberal reflection, sustainability, and digitalization. Such research could provide insights into how well graduates adapt to changes in the industry and how effectively they apply the skills and knowledge gained during their education.

Another area of future investigation is the integration of dual education programs and stronger partnerships between universities and industry professionals. Research could explore the effectiveness of these collaborations in producing graduates who are better prepared to meet industry challenges, particularly in areas like sustainability, digital transformation, and circular economy practices.

Lastly, future studies could explore the role of digital technologies and artificial intelligence in tourism education. As the industry becomes increasingly digitalized, it is crucial to assess how tourism curricula can integrate new technologies and prepare students to navigate the digital transformation of tourism. This could include investigating the inclusion of AI, big data, and smart tourism concepts as core components of future curricula.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, A.F.-V., B.G.-O. and N.A.; methodology, A.F.-V. and B.G.-O.; writing—original draft preparation, A.F.-V. and B.G.-O.; writing—review and editing, A.F.-V., B.G.-O. and N.A. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

References

- European Commission. Eurostat. Statistics Explained. Available online: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Tourism_industries_-_employment&oldid=445425 (accessed on 20 October 2024).
- Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE). INEbase. Available online: https://www.ine.es/dyngs/INEbase/es/operacion.htm?c=estadistica_Candcid=125284736169169&menu=ultiDatos&idp=1254735576863 (accessed on 10 June 2020).
- Tiwari, P.; Séraphin, H.; Chowdhary, N.R. Impacts of COVID-19 on tourism education: Analysis and perspectives. *J. Teach. Travel Tour.* **2021**, *21*, 313–338. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Carlisle, S.; Ivanov, S.; Dijkmans, C. The digital skills divide evidence from the European tourism industry. *J. Tour. Futures* **2020**, *9*, 240–266. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Tourism Industry Aotearoa. *Careers in Tourism: A Business Case*; Tourism Industry Aotearoa: Wellington, New Zealand, 2019.
- Roberts, M.D. Secondary School Students Views of Tourism Education and Tourism Careers. *J. Hosp. Tour. Educ.* **2022**, *36*, 13–24. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Güden, N.; Akyildiz, A.; Cobanoglu, C. Can advanced apprenticeship programs in higher education be the key for developing skills in the tourism sector? Evidence from North Cyprus. *J. Hosp. Tour. Educ.* **2022**, *36*, 99–112. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Farsari, I. Pedagogy for sustainable tourism: Reflections on the curriculum space of a master programme in Sweden. *J. Teach. Travel Tour.* **2022**, *22*, 6–35. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Wakelin-Theron, N.; Ukpere, W.I.; Spowart, J. Perception of tourism graduates and the tourism industry on the critical knowledge and skills required in the tourism industry. *Afr. J. Hosp.* **2018**, *7*, 1–18. Available online: https://www.ajhtl.com/uploads/7/1/6/3/7163688/article_26_vol_7_4_2018.pdf (accessed on 23 February 2023).
- Şimşek, E.K.; Kalıpçı, M.B. A bibliometric study on higher tourism education and curriculum. *J. Hosp. Leis. Sport Tour. Educ.* **2023**, *33*, 100442. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Arcodia, C.; Dickson, C. ITHAS: An experiential education case study in tourism education. *J. Hosp. Tour. Educ.* **2009**, *21*, 37–43. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Arcodia, C.; Dickson, C. Tourism field studies: Experiencing the carnival of Venice. *J. Hosp. Tour. Educ.* **2013**, *25*, 146–155. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Breakey, N.; Robinson, R.N.; Brenner, M.L. Approaches in the design and delivery of hotel/hospitality management undergraduate degree programmes within Australia. In *The Routledge Handbook of Tourism and Hospitality Education*; Dredge, D., Airey, D., Gross, M., Eds.; Routledge: New York, NY, USA, 2014; pp. 305–321.
- Inui, Y.; Wheeler, D.; Lankford, S. Rethinking tourism education: What should schools teach? *J. Hosp. Leisure Sport Tour. Educ.* **2006**, *5*, 26–36. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Deale, C.S. Making Memories: An Example of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Hospitality and Tourism Education. *J. Hosp. Tour. Educ.* **2019**, *31*, 221–234. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Wrathall, J.; Richardson, L. Better Together: Negotiating the Tension Between Liberal and Practical Knowledge in Event Management Curriculum Design. In *The Study of Food, Tourism, Hospitality and Events: 21st-Century Approaches*; Springer: Singapore, 2019; pp. 107–119.
- Tribe, J.D.A. *The Philosophic Practitioner: Tourism, Knowledge and the Curriculum*. Ph.D. Thesis, Institute of Education, University of London, London, UK, 1999.
- Fraser, B. From hospitality classrooms to successful careers: A current appraisal of Australian international hotel requirements. *J. Hosp. Tour. Educ.* **2020**, *32*, 234–254. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Tsai, Y.H. Travel agency managers' perceptions of tourism industry employability. *J. Hosp. Leisure Sport Tour. Educ.* **2017**, *20*, 122–133. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Cheung, C.; Law, R.; He, K. Essential hotel managerial competencies for graduate students. *J. Hosp. Tour. Educ.* **2010**, *22*, 25–32. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Dopson, L.; Tas, R. A practical approach to curriculum development: A case study. *J. Hosp. Tour. Educ.* **2004**, *16*, 39–46. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Oktadiana, H.; Chon, K. Vocational Versus Academic Debate on Undergraduate Education in Hospitality and Tourism: The Case of Indonesia. *J. Hosp. Tour. Educ.* **2017**, *29*, 13–24. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Robinson, R.; Breakey, N.; Craig-Smith, S.J. Food for thought: Investigating food and beverage curricula in Australian hospitality degree programs. *J. Hosp. Tour. Educ.* **2010**, *22*, 32–43. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Goh, E.; King, B. Four Decades (1980–2020) of Hospitality and Tourism Higher Education in Australia: Developments and Future Prospects. *J. Hosp. Tour. Educ.* **2020**, *32*, 266–272. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Forristal, L.J. Students as Co-Creators of Interdisciplinary Tourism Content: A Strategy to Help Prepare Creative, Problem-solving, Research Savvy, and Globally-Competent Hospitality Employees. *J. Hosp. Tour. Educ.* **2023**, *35*, 237–250. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Siow, M.L.; Lockstone-Binney, L.; Fraser, B.; Cheung, C.; Shin, J.; Lam, R.; Baum, T. Re-building students' post-COVID-19 confidence in courses, curriculum and careers for tourism, hospitality, and events. *J. Hosp. Tour. Educ.* **2021**, *33*, 270–287. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Tribe, J. The philosophic practitioner. *Ann. Tour. Res.* **2002**, *29*, 338–357. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Tribe, J.; Paddison, B. Degrees of change: Activating philosophic practitioners. *Ann. Tour. Res.* **2021**, *91*, 103290. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Paricio, J.; Fernández, A.; Fernández, I. *Cartografía de la Buena Docencia Universitaria: Un Marco Para el Desarrollo del Profesorado Basado en la Investigación*; Narcea Ediciones: Madrid, Spain, 2019; Volume 52, pp. 27–40.

30. Airey, D. 40 years of tourism studies—A remarkable story. *Tour. Recreat. Res.* **2015**, *40*, 6–15. [[CrossRef](#)]
31. Dredge, D.; Benckendorff, P.; Day, M.; Gross, M.J.; Walo, M.; Weeks, P.; Whitelaw, P.A. The Philosophic practitioner and curriculum space. *Ann. Tour. Res.* **2012**, *39*, 2154–2176. [[CrossRef](#)]
32. Mínguez, C.; Martínez-Hernández, C.; Yubero, C. Higher education and the sustainable tourism pedagogy: Are tourism students ready to lead change in the post-pandemic era? *J. Hosp. Leisure Sport Tour. Educ.* **2021**, *29*, 100329. [[CrossRef](#)]
33. Pucciarelli, F.; Kaplan, A. Competition and strategy in higher education: Managing complexity and uncertainty. *Bus. Horiz.* **2016**, *59*, 311–320. [[CrossRef](#)]
34. Benckendorff, P.; Whitelaw, P.A.; Dredge, D.; Day, M.; Gross, M.; Walo, M.; Weeks, P. *A Stakeholder Approach to Curriculum Development in Tourism, Hospitality and Events (THandE) Education*; Office for Learning and Teaching: Glasgow, UK, 2012.
35. Kolm, A.; de Nooijer, J.; Vanherle, K.; Werkman, A.; Wewerka-Kreimel, D.; Rachman-Elbaum, S.; van Merriënboer, J.J. International online collaboration competencies in higher education students: A systematic review. *J. Stud. Int. Educ.* **2022**, *26*, 183–201. [[CrossRef](#)]
36. Peterson, A.; Dumont, H.; Lafuente, M.; Law, N. Understanding innovative pedagogies: Key themes to analyse new approaches to teaching and learning. *OECD Educ. Work. Pap.* **2018**, *172*, 1–135. [[CrossRef](#)]
37. McGill, B.; Corbett, L.; Grunseit, A.C.; Irving, M.; O'Hara, B.J. Co-Produce, Co-Design, Co-Create, or Co-Construct—Who Does It and How Is It Done in Chronic Disease Prevention? A Scoping Review. *Health Care* **2022**, *10*, 647. [[CrossRef](#)]
38. Predan, B. A Discussion of Processes to Create a Curriculum and Handbook for Co-Creation and Active Implementation of Co-Design with the Aim of Stimulating Collective Creativity. *Des. J.* **2021**, *24*, 589–609. [[CrossRef](#)]
39. Bovill, C.; Cook-Sather, A.; Felten, P.; Millard, L.; Moore-Cherry, N. Addressing potential challenges in co-creating learning and teaching: Overcoming resistance, navigating institutional norms and ensuring inclusivity in student-staff partnerships. *High. Educ.* **2016**, *71*, 195–208. [[CrossRef](#)]
40. Roxo, G.S. Studying Serious Games for the Therapy of Children with Disabilities Following a Co-Design Process. Master's Thesis, Nova University, Lisbon, Portugal, 2023.
41. Nigg, J.J.; Peters, M. The evolution of ICTs in accessible tourism: A stakeholder collaboration analysis. *J. Hosp. Tour. Manag.* **2022**, *52*, 287–294. [[CrossRef](#)]
42. Botterill, D.; Tribe, J. Social scientific ways of knowing hospitality. In *In Search of Hospitality: Theoretical Perspectives and Debates*; Lashley, C., Morrison, A., Eds.; Butterworth Heinemann: Oxford, UK, 2000; pp. 177–197.
43. Casado, M.A. Hospitality education: Prevalent perceptions. *FIU Hosp. Rev.* **2003**, *21*, 83–92.
44. Sonnenschein, K.; Barker, M.; Hibbins, R. Chinese international students' perceptions of and reflections on graduate attributes needed in entry-level positions in the Chinese hotel industry. *J. Hosp. Tour. Manag.* **2017**, *30*, 39–46. [[CrossRef](#)]
45. Barron, P.; Maxwell, G.; Broadbridge, A.; Ogden, S. Careers in hospitality management: Gen Y's experiences and perceptions. *J. Hosp. Tour. Manag.* **2007**, *14*, 119–128. [[CrossRef](#)]
46. Bovill, C. An investigation of co-created curricula within higher education in the UK, Ireland and the USA. *Innov. Educ. Teach. Int.* **2014**, *51*, 15–25. [[CrossRef](#)]
47. Voogt, J.M.; Pieters, J.M.; Handelzalts, A. Teacher collaboration in curriculum design teams: Effects, mechanisms, and conditions. In *Teacher Learning Through Teacher Teams*; Routledge: London, UK, 2018; pp. 7–26.
48. Voogt, J.; Laferrière, T.; Breuleux, A.; Itow, R.C.; Hickey, D.T.; McKenney, S. Collaborative design as a form of professional development. *Instr. Sci.* **2015**, *43*, 259–282. [[CrossRef](#)]
49. Severance, S.; Penuel, W.R.; Sumner, T.; Leary, H. Organizing for Teacher Agency in Curricular Co-Design. *J. Learn. Sci.* **2016**, *25*, 531–564. [[CrossRef](#)]
50. Ladkin, A. Careers and employment. In *An International Handbook of Tourism Education*; Airey, D., Tribe, J., Eds.; Routledge: London, UK, 2005; pp. 437–450.
51. Renfors, S.M.; Veliveronena, L.; Grinfelde, I. Developing Tourism Curriculum Content to Support International Tourism Growth and Competitiveness: An Example from the Central Baltic Area. *J. Hosp. Tour. Educ.* **2020**, *32*, 124–132. [[CrossRef](#)]
52. Plewa, C.; Galán-Muros, V.; Davey, T. Engaging business in curriculum design and delivery: A higher education institution perspective. *High Educ.* **2015**, *70*, 35–53. [[CrossRef](#)]
53. Davey, T.; Baaken, T.; Galán-Muros, V.; Meerman, A. *Study on the Cooperation Between Higher Education Institutions and Public and Private Organisations in Europe*; DG Education and Culture; European Commission: Brussels, Belgium, 2011.
54. Siegel, D.J. Building a pipeline for diversity through intersectoral collaboration. *High Educ.* **2007**, *55*, 519–535. [[CrossRef](#)]
55. Villa, A. Fases para la implantación de la innovación pedagógica europea. In *Proceedings of the International Seminar: Pedagogical Guidelines for the European Convergence of Higher Education*, Bilbao, Spain, 9–11 July 2003.
56. Hammer, S.; Ayriss, P.; McCubbin, A. Style or substance: How Australian universities contextualise their graduate attributes for the curriculum quality space. *High. Educ. Res. Dev.* **2021**, *40*, 508–523. [[CrossRef](#)]
57. Hsu, C.C.; Sandford, B.A. The Delphi technique: Making sense of consensus. *Pract. Assess. Res. Eval.* **2019**, *12*, 10. [[CrossRef](#)]
58. Mayburry, T.; Swanger, N. Identification of Industry Needs for Baccalaureate Hospitality Graduates: A Delphi Study. *J. Hosp. Tour. Educ.* **2013**, *23*, 33–45. [[CrossRef](#)]
59. Uysal, M.; Crompton, J.L. An overview of approaches used to forecast tourism demand. *J. Travel Res.* **1985**, *23*, 7–15. [[CrossRef](#)]
60. Marinakou, E.; Giousmpasoglou, C. Stakeholders' Views on the Development of a Higher Education Hospitality Program in Bahrain: Challenges and Opportunities. *J. Hosp. Tour. Educ.* **2015**, *27*, 85–92. [[CrossRef](#)]

61. Carlisle, S.; Ivanov, S.; Espeso-Molinero, P. Delivering the European Skills Agenda: The importance of social skills for a sustainable tourism and hospitality industry. *Tour. Manag. Stud.* **2023**, *19*, 23–40. [[CrossRef](#)]
62. Zegwaard, K.E.; Lucas, P.; Hay, K.; Fleming, J. Threads of the past informing the future: Alumni perspectives. In Proceedings of the Work-Integrated Learning New Zealand 2023 Refereed Conference Proceedings, Christchurch, New Zealand, 20–21 April 2023.
63. Wattanacharoensil, W. Tourism curriculum in a global perspective: Past, present, and future. *Int. Educ. Stud.* **2014**, *7*, 9–20. [[CrossRef](#)]
64. Carpenter, J.; Dopson, L.R.; Kim, Y.H.; Kniatt, N. Curriculum assessment through a capstone course: A case study in hospitality and tourism programmes. *J. Teach. Travel Tour.* **2016**, *16*, 40–59. [[CrossRef](#)]
65. Min, H.; Swanger, N.; Gursoy, D. A longitudinal investigation of the importance of course subjects in the hospitality curriculum: An industry perspective. *J. Hosp. Tour. Educ.* **2016**, *28*, 10–20. [[CrossRef](#)]
66. Tsalikova, I.K.; Pakhotina, S.V. Scientific research on the Issue of Soft Skills Development (Review of the Data in International Databases of Scopus, Web of Science). *Educ. Sci.* **2019**, *21*, 187–207. [[CrossRef](#)]
67. Malik, A.; Ahmad, W. Antecedents of Soft-Skills in Higher Education Institutions of Saudi Arabia Study under COVID-19 Pandemic. *Creat. Educ.* **2020**, *11*, 1152–1161. [[CrossRef](#)]
68. Biggs, J. Constructive alignment in university teaching. *HERDSA Rev. High. Educ.* **2014**, *1*, 5–22.
69. Ferreras-Garcia, R.; Sales-Zaguirre, J.; Ribas-Marí, C.; Serradell-López, E. Competences achievement in face-to-face and online learning. In Proceedings of the 12th International Conference on Education and New Learning Technologies, Online, 6–7 July 2020; pp. 4409–4413. [[CrossRef](#)]

Disclaimer/Publisher’s Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.