

# GREEN EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF FACULTIES OF TOURISM AND MANAGEMENT OF HOTELS IN EGYPT

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## ABSTRACT

According to UNESCO's documents, sustainable development is the 'ultimate goal of the Man-environment relationship', thus, the whole educational process should be reshaped for sustainable development (Lucie, 1996). So, Green Education is a key tool for sustainable development. It also considers the path through which the community is empowered to engage in effective ecological action. The ignorance of Green Education is one of the problems that face sustainable development. It is a common understanding that the Green Education is vital for ensuring a future for generations ahead, so that this study examines the importance of Green Education for the sustainable development and discusses its role in sustainable development and how the effectiveness of Green Education for sustainable development based on active teaching and learning. This paper discusses the impacts of Green Education in tourism faculty that are responsible to prepare students for entry in the field of work.

This study is based on theoretical desk research method and field study. This study further aims at investigating the challenges and opportunities of Green Education as a key driver for sustainable development in Egypt and giving number of recommendations on how to enhance Green Education in the Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management in Egypt.

**Keywords:** *Green Education, Sustainable Development, Environmental, Tourism, Green Education for Sustainable Development GESD*

## INTRODUCTION

Recently, climate-changes, energy crisis and increasing environmental pollution have drawn great attention to sustainable development. Tourism has a big impact on the environment, Energy consumption, Water pollution, Waste generation and CO<sub>2</sub> emission are some of the negative effects on environment. The act of reducing the negative effects on environment is called 'Going Green'. Green Education is a process that allows individuals to explore environmental issues related to environment, as a result, individuals develop deeper understanding of environmental issues and have the skills to make information based and responsible decisions. Green Education is defined as a transformative learning process that equips teachers, students and faculty with new knowledge and ways of thinking needed in order to achieve economic prosperity and responsible citizenship while restoring the health of the living system upon which our lives depend. According to UNESCO's documents, sustainable development is the 'Ultimate Goal of the Man-environment Relationship', thus, the whole educational process should be 'Reshaped for

Sustainable Development' (Luci, 1996). Therefore, Green Education is a key tool for sustainable development, it also considers the path through which the community is empowered to engage in effective ecological action.

Green Education is a process aimed at developing environmentally responsible citizens, by fostering clear awareness of and concern about economic, social, political, and ecological interdependence, by providing every person with opportunities to acquire the knowledge, values, attitudes, commitment, and anticipatory skills in the decision making process, needed to protect and improve the environment and by creating new patterns of behavior of individuals, groups and society as a whole towards the environment. Green Education is an integral part of tourism at heritage sites, ecological sites and in ecotourism (Gough and Scott, 1999; Newsome *et al.*, 2002).

Here it is worth-mentioning the ignorance of Green Education as one of the problems that faces sustainable development, in other words Green Education is

considered as a prerequisite for communities to obtain stronger understanding of the impacts of the actual tourism environment. (Byrd, 2007; Byrd *et al.*, 2009).

Sustainable Development seeks to meet the needs of the present without compromising those of the future generations. Therefore, it is a vision of development that encompasses respect for all life-human and non-human and natural resources, as well as integrating concerns such as poverty reduction, gender equality, human rights, education for all, health, human security and intercultural dialogue (UNESCO, 2011). So, Green Education for Sustainable Development (GESD) aims to help people to develop the attitudes, skills, perspectives and knowledge to make information-based decisions and act upon them for the benefit of themselves and others, now and in the future.

Education plays an important role in disseminating knowledge and information about GESD to the public and society. Knowledge on GESD allows individuals to deal with and find ways to tackle problems that threaten the sustainability of the planet. Education serves in the broadest sense in promoting public awareness on GESD and for moving towards a sustainable future (UNESCO, 2011).

In recent years, education has gained higher prominence as a vital cross-cutting factor in the promotion of sustainable development. Whether or not 'sustainable development' is accepted as a scientific concept, decision-makers and ordinary citizens would benefit greatly from learning more about it and from understanding its various facets and inter-connections (United Nation, 2007).

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Research problem**

The absence of Green Education in all study programs of the Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management in Egypt deprives the students from having the right tools to the needs of the business market. Also, the absence of Green Education means that the students are unable to deal properly with environment which affects negatively on the sustainable development.

### **Research Importance**

The research aims at providing a new form of tourism by offering a solution of clean environment through education. Green Education System is recognized internationally as a measure of high-performance in

thinking and carry out environmental action, also Green Education can reduce local environmental impacts of tourism properties, reduce health risks to employees and visitors, lower operational costs of tourism properties and make our community more sustainable.

### **Research Objectives**

Highlight the importance of Green Education as a solution of clean environment, shed light on new Green Education Systems and its importance for students, provide innovative solutions for the environmental problems to achieve sustainability, evaluate the application of Green Education System to set recommendations to fulfill its effective application and offer recommendations for a successful implementation of Green Education System in the Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management in Egypt.

### **Research Limitations**

The research focuses on a sample of students, the interview sessions with the professors of that faculty, the ways to evaluate their awareness and knowledge about Green Education and investigating the availability for applying Green Education in the curricula of Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management in Egypt.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The Research depends on both theoretical and field study:

### **A- Theoretical Research:**

Arabic and foreign references, reports, scientific research (published and unpublished), periodicals and scientific articles, essays and websites.

### **B- Field Research:**

Designing and distributing survey forms on a random sample from 9 faculty members representing the research framework in the Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management in Egypt.

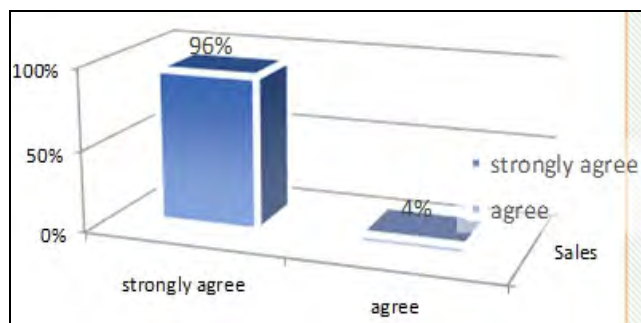
## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

It is a common understanding that Green Education is vital for ensuring a solid future for generations ahead, so that this study examines the importance of Green Education for the sustainable development and discusses its role in sustainable development and how its effectiveness to sustainable development is based on active teaching and learning.

Discuss the Green Education in the Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management as a tool to prepare students to enter work field.

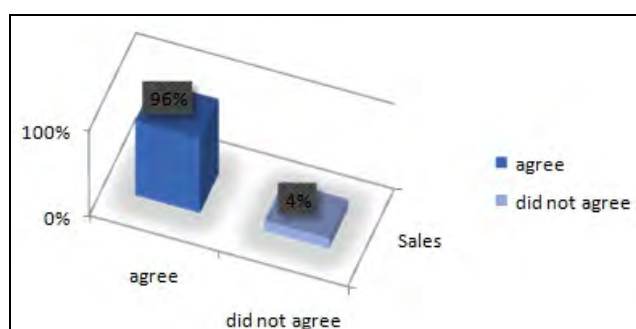
**Analysis of the survey and the results of the field study:**

**Figure 1: The Concern about Environmental Issues**



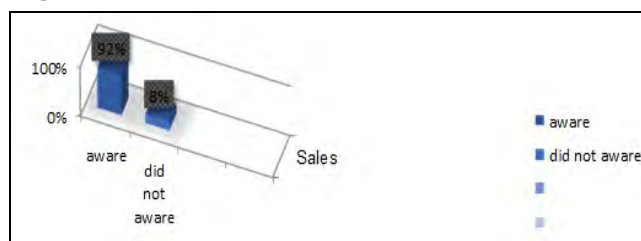
According to the results of the survey which was directed to students in the Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management in Egypt, most of the respondents were concerned about the environmental issues and this means that there is generally a high public awareness and interest about environmental issues.

**Figure 2: The Effect of Environmental Issues on Daily Operations**



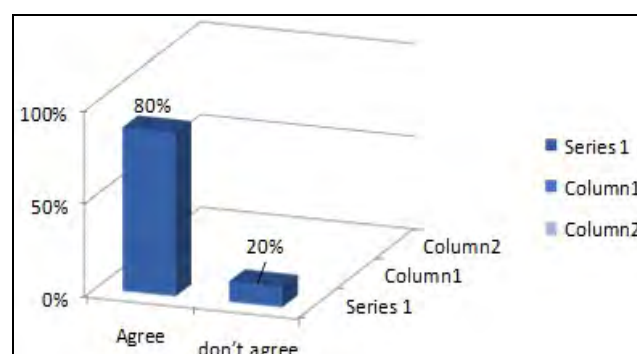
Generally, a vast majority of the respondents have agreed that the environmental issues have direct effect on daily operations of the properties.

**Figure 3: The Awareness about Green Education**



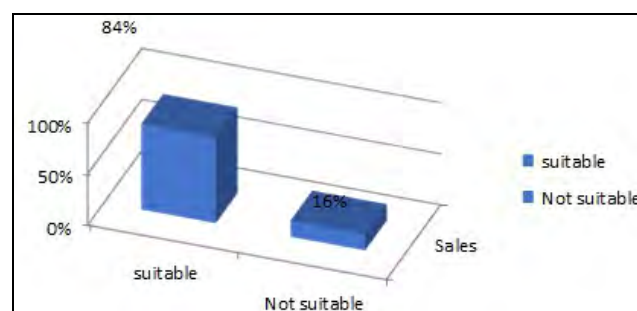
Field study results indicated that most students are not aware about Green Education in general which means lack of public awareness which is considered as an obstacle by a higher percentage. This finding suggests that there is a need for greater awareness on Green Education in Egypt, and that those with less familiarity with Green Education System may also not be aware of the great need for Green Education.

**Figure 4: The Importance of Green Education for Tourism**



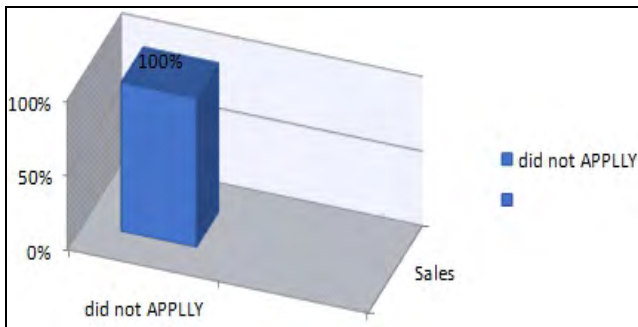
According to the survey analysis, over three quarters of the respondents were aware about the importance of Green Education for Tourism and see that Green Education could provide healthier and more comfortable environment, improve economic performance, incorporate energy and water efficiency, reduce the pollution and waste from tourism properties and encourage investment in tourism sector.

**Figure 5: The suitability of Green Education for Egyptian students**



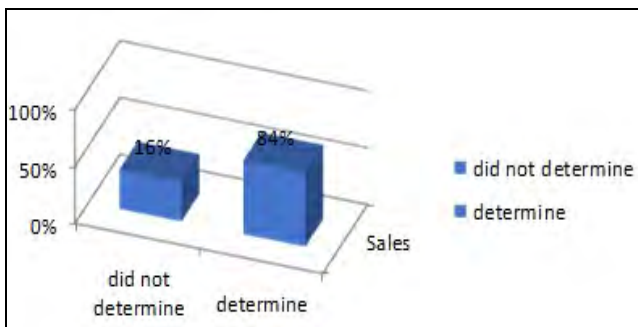
There is a high level of agreement among respondents who consider that Green Education help students to cope up with the current market status, but some of them believe that Green Education is not suitable.

**Figure 6: Application of GESD in Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management**



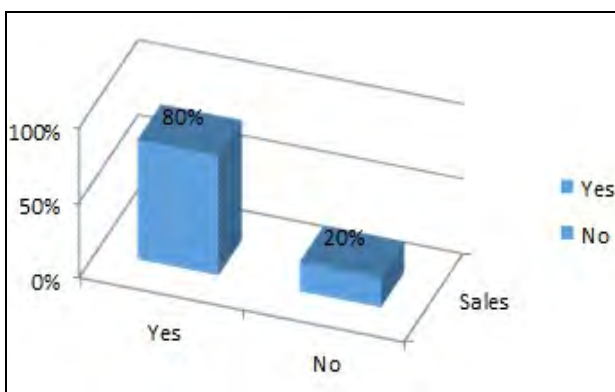
According to the survey results not even a single respondent applied the Green Education Program in the Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management in Egypt.

**Figure 7: Green Education activities in Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management**



The graph indicates how the faculty is concerned about allocating green activities, over three quarters of respondents did not make any activities about environment, but only less than a quarter said that they make some activities like World Environment Day.

**Figure 8: Obstacles in implementing Green Education**



Respondents were facing obstacles to implement Green Education. A vast majority of the respondents mentioned that they have to face many obstacles in implementing Green Education Programs, only less than a quarter of the respondents shared that they did not face any obstacle in implementing Green Education Programs. Some of the obstacles in implementing Green Education Programs are:

- Lack of awareness for the concept of Green Education and its importance.
- Lack of budget that is needed for green activities.
- Not enough experts in the field of Green Education.
- Absence of governmental support to adopt Green Education Rating Systems Programs.

**Research Results**

Although the concept of Green Education is considered as the path to sustainable development, Green Education is not a part of education process in the faculty. The lack of awareness, experience, and absence of governmental support are considered as the barriers to introduce Green Education in Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management in Egypt.

Based on the idea of sustainability in the community, Green Education is a prerequisite to obtain a stronger understanding of the real impacts of the environmental tourism.

Ensure that for each implemented program money will be considered 'economic growth', the better overall good for society will be considered 'social progress', and the natural habitat will be considered 'environmental stewardship' which means the triple bottom line.

Green Education covers two aspects:

- 1- Inform people about environmental system.
- 2-Educate them that they adopt more responsible attitude towards the environment.

It is a common understanding that Green Education is vital for ensuring a future for the generations ahead.

Green Education does not aim only at balancing economic development and environmental issues, but also is concerned with the changes in the political structures and promotions of social welfare.

Finally, while talking seriously about saving money, conserving energy, reducing water consumption, improving indoor air quality, making better building material choices, and driving innovation. Thus, Green Education is the best choice.

## Research Recommendations

From the Ministry of Environment and Higher Education a strong support has been provided to introduce Green Education in Egypt. Tourism policy planners must focus their educational efforts on the Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management by following new strategies in tourism curricula:

- Increase awareness about the importance of Green Education especially in the Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management.
- Establish an institute for Green Education for sustainable development researches.
- Train the teaching staff to be able to teach the curricula of Green Education.
- Modify the curricula to correspond to the requirements of Green Education.

Governments should provide an environment that enables and encourages the private sector, tourists and other stakeholders to respond to sustainability issues. This can be best achieved by establishing and implementing a set of policies for tourism development and management, drawn up in concert with others that place sustainability at its center.

Focus on changing the behavior of our students in tourism faculty –

Create a strategy for Green Education programs and make it clear and available explaining how Green Education can provide the most effective behavior and action to meet the environmental goals.

## CONCLUSION

Although the Green Education is the path to sustainable development, but unfortunately it isn't a part of the educational process, the lack of awareness, experience, and absence of governmental support are considered the barriers to the engagement of Green Education in the Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management in Egypt. Therefore, more attention should be given to education strategies in the Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management to promote Green Education as important part from the following educational process:

- GESD should be a part of an agenda for change towards a more sustainable society, education itself must be subject to change. Research that might contribute to GESD should be encouraged.
- GESD should consider diverse local, national and

regional circumstances as well as the global context, seeking a balance between global and local interests.

- GESD should be contributed for developing rural and urban areas by increasing access for education and improving its quality. This would be particularly beneficial to people living in rural areas. So, it has been concluded that Green Education is the best program for sustainable development.

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