Toward Decolonial Tourism Education in Ghana: A Critical Ethnography

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract (English)

Tourism education, especially in institutions of higher learning has grown to become an important area in tourism literature since the 1980s (Fidgeon, 2010; Liburd, Hjalager, & Christensen, 2011; Sheldon, Fesenmaier, & Tribe, 2013). This development, especially in the Global South, has been largely due to the growth in the tourism industry, and the consequent need to develop a philosophical and pedagogical understanding into tourism. In Ghana, tourism education has remained deeply embedded in colonial frameworks, consequently influencing both pedagogical approaches and knowledge production. In this critical ethnographic study, I examine the relationship between tourism education and colonization in the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management (DHTM) at the University of Cape Coast (UCC). Through this methodological approach, I unpacked how tourism education either reinforces and / or resists colonial knowledge structures while exploring decolonial alternatives that center Ghanaian and African epistemologies.

I drew on epistemic decolonization theories (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015; Grosfoguel, 2007) to challenge dominant Western and Eurocentric paradigms and to offer alternative possibilities of tourism educational practices that unsettle colonialist thought, organization, and infrastructure of current tourism education, trends, policies, and practices that have existed in the DHTM, UCC. Through in-depth interviews with faculty, students, and staff, as well as participant observations, I found that while some faculty members actively resist colonial dominance by incorporating Ghanaian and African perspectives into their teaching, structural barriers hinder the full decolonization of tourism education in the department.

The study therefore highlights the importance of participatory curriculum development, storytelling, and oral histories as legitimate knowledge transmission methods, aligning with broader calls for decolonial pedagogical practices (Mbembe, 2016). Additionally, the study critiques the Eurocentric organization of knowledge in academic libraries and the marginalization of African-authored works. It advocates for a restructured classification system that prioritizes Ghanaian and African scholarship to foster epistemic decolonization. The research suggests that decolonizing tourism education requires more than superficial curriculum changes. Instead, structural transformation of knowledge production, educational infrastructure, and pedagogical approaches are required for any effective decolonial transformation to happen. This dissertation contributes to ongoing discussions on Africanization and decolonization in higher education, urging educators and policymakers to reimagine tourism education in a way that is responsive to local histories, cultures, and aspirations.

Abstract (Ewe)

Tsaɖiɖi ŋuti hehenana, vevietɔ le suku kɔkɔwo me va zu akpa vevi aɖe le tsaɖiɖi ŋuti agbalẽwo me tso ƒe 1980-awo me (Fidgeon, 2010; Liburd, Hjalager, & Christensen, 2011; Sheldon, Fesenmaier, & Tribe, 2013). Ŋgɔyiyi sia, vevietɔ le Xexeame Katã ƒe Anyiehe la, tso tsaɖiɖi ƒe dɔwɔƒewo ƒe dzidziɖedzi gbɔ koŋ, kple alesi wòhiã be woatu xexemenunya kple nufiafia gomesese ɖo ɖe tsaɖiɖi me tso esia ta. Le Ghana la, tsaɖiɖi ŋuti hehenana gakpɔtɔ ƒo ke ɖe to ɖe dutanyigbadziɖuɖu ƒe ɖoɖowo me vevie, si wɔe be ekpɔ ŋusẽ ɖe nufiafiamɔnu kple sidzedze wɔwɔ siaa dzi. Le ameƒomeviwo ŋuti numekuku vevi sia me la, medzro ƒomedodo si le tsaɖiɖi ŋuti hehenana kple dutanyigbadzinɔlawo dome le Department si woyana be Hospitality kple Tourism Management (DHTM) le Cape Coast Yunivɛsiti (UCC) me. To mɔnu sia dzi la, meɖe alesi tsaɖiɖi ŋuti hehenana doa ŋusẽ kple / alo tsi tre ɖe dutanyigbadzinɔlawo ƒe sidzedze ƒe ɖoɖowo ŋu esime mele dutanyigbadziɖuɖu ƒe mɔnu bubu siwo le titina na Ghana kple Afrika ƒe sidzedzeŋutinunyawo me dzrom.

Me za epistemic decolonization nusɔsrɔwo (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015; Grosfoguel, 2007) tsɔ tsi tre ɖe Eurocentric paradigms siwo xɔ aƒe ɖe amewo me ŋu eye matsɔ tsaɖiɖi ƒe hehenana nuwɔna bubu siwo ate ŋu adzɔ siwo tɔtɔa dutanyigbadziɖuɖu ƒe susu siwo nɔ anyi le DHTM, UCC me la ana. To gbebiame deto siwo wowɔ kple nufialawo, sukuviwo, kple dɔwɔlawo, kpakple gomekpɔlawo ƒe ŋkuléleɖenuŋu me la, mekpɔe be togbɔ be nufialawo dometɔ aɖewo tsia tre ɖe dutanyigbadziɖuɖu ƒe ŋusẽkpɔɖeamedzi ŋu vevie to Ghanatɔwo kple Afrikatɔwo ƒe nukpɔsusuwo dede woƒe nufiafia me hã la, xɔtuɖoɖo ƒe mɔxenuwo xea mɔ na tsaɖiɖi ŋuti hehenana ƒe dutanyigbadziɖuɖu bliboe ɖeɖeɖa le dɔwɔƒea.

Eyata numekukua te gbe ɖe gomekpɔkpɔ le nusɔsrɔ̃ɖoɖowo wɔwɔ, ŋutinya gbɔgblɔ, kple ŋutinya siwo wogblɔ kple nu ƒe vevienyenye dzi abe sidzedze ƒe kakamɔnu siwo le se nu ene, si wɔ ɖeka kple yɔyɔ siwo keke ta wu be woawɔ nufiafiamɔnu siwo me woɖea dutanyigbawo ɖa le (Mbembe, 2016). Tsɔ kpe ɖe eŋu la, numekukua ɖe ɖeklemi sidzedze ƒe ɖoɖowɔwɔ si wotu ɖe Europa dzi le agbalẽdzraɖoƒe siwo me wosrɔ̃a nu le kple agbalẽ siwo Afrikatɔwo ŋlɔ la ɖeɖe ɖe aga. Eʋlia hatsotsowo me toto ƒe ɖoɖo si wogbugbɔ trɔ asi le si tsɔa Ghana kple Afrika ƒe agbalẽnyalagãwo ɖoa nɔƒe gbãtɔ be woatsɔ ado sidzedze ƒe dutanyigbawo ɖeɖeɖa ɖe ŋgɔ. Numekukua ɖee fia be tsaɖiɖi ŋuti hehenana ɖeɖeɖa bia nu geɖe wu nusɔsrɔ̃ɖoɖowo ƒe tɔtrɔ gotagometɔwo ko. Ke boŋ, ehiã be woatrɔ asi le sidzedze wɔwɔ, sukudede ƒe xɔtuɖoɖowo, kple nufiafiamɔnu ŋu le ɖoɖo nu hafi tɔtrɔ ɖesiaɖe si awɔ dɔ nyuie le dutanyigbawo ɖeɖeɖa me nate ŋu adzɔ. Nusɔsrɔ̃ sia kpena ɖe numedzodzro siwo yia edzi le Afrikatɔwo ƒe tɔtrɔ kple dutanyigbawo ɖeɖeɖa ŋu le suku kɔkɔwo me ŋu, eye wòƒoe ɖe nufialawo kple ɖoɖowɔlawo nu be woagbugbɔ akpɔ tsaɖiɖi ŋuti hehenana le susu me le mɔ si awɔ ɖeka kple nutoa me ŋutinyawo, dekɔnuwo, kple didiwo nu.

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[*English*] This dissertation is the culmination of years of inquiry, perseverance, and growth, AND it is not for me alone. This piece has been shaped and sustained by the love, guidance, and support of many amazing humans, and it is with the deepest gratitude that I acknowledge, in no particular order, those who have stood beside me on this journey.

[*Ewe*] Agbalẽ sia nye *ƒ*e geɖe *ƒ*e numekuku, kutrikuku, kple dzidziɖedzi *ƒ*e ta*ƒ*o*ƒ*o, EYE menye nye ɖeɖeko tae o. Lɔlɔ̃, mɔfiame, kple kpekpeɖeŋu si ame wɔnuku geɖewo wɔ la trɔ asi le akpa sia ŋu eye wòlée ɖe te, eye akpedada goglotɔ kekeakee metsɔ de dzesi amesiwo tsi tre ɖe ŋunye le mɔzɔzɔ sia dzi.

Territorial acknowledgement: Since arriving in Canada in the Fall of 2017, I have lived, studied, and worked in Waterloo. Both my home and school, *University of Waterloo*, are situated on the Haldimand Tract - the land promised to the Six Nations people in 1784 which includes ten kilometers on each side of the Grand River. My existence as a settler, student, and worker has taken place on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishinaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples. I am therefore thankful to have been given the chance to share the land with all.

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AKPE (*meaning 'THANK YOU' in my mother tongue – Ewe*).

Dedication

To all those striving to decolonize knowledge - this is for you.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.0 Situating Myself

My name is Victor Mawutor Agbo, an African male from Ghana. I grew up in a small town called Hohoe, located in the Volta Region of Ghana. Much of my elementary education, that is from kindergarten to Senior High School, took place in the Volta Region of Ghana. After my Senior High School education in Mawuli School, Ho, I proceeded to pursue my college and undergraduate education in the then Cape Coast Polytechnic (now Cape Coast Technical University) and University of Cape Coast respectively. I pursued a three-year Higher National Diploma in Tourism at Cape Coast Technical University, and a two-year bachelor's degree (post-diploma) in Tourism Management at the University of Cape Coast. At the time of this research, I am studying for my doctoral degree in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, in the Faculty of Health at the University of Waterloo. Since arriving in Canada in September 2017, I have lived in Waterloo, Ontario, a city located on Indigenous lands. Much of my work as a student has taken place on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishinaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo campus, where I am a student, is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land granted to the Six Nations that includes six miles on each side of the Grand River. I am fortunate to have had the opportunity to experience the beauty of the land and am grateful to those who have been its caretakers.

As a Ghanaian, my positionality deeply informs this research around the intersections between colonization and tourism education. My Ghanaian upbringing, enriched by the cultural heritage and postcolonial dynamics of West Africa, provides a unique vantage point from which I interrogate the present-day ways in which colonization is either reinforced and/or resisted by tourism education in the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management (DHTM), University of Cape Coast (UCC) where I studied for my bachelors. This dissertation, which focuses on the complexly intertwined relationships between colonization and tourism education, is shaped by my personal and academic journey. My upbringing in Ghana, a country deeply marked by its colonial history, provides me with a unique perspective on the present-day impacts of colonization on contemporary societal structures and educational systems. My experiences in

Ghana, particularly my exposure to the rich cultural heritage and the ongoing struggles with postcolonial identity, have influenced my understanding of tourism as both a cultural exchange and a legacy of colonialism. As I went through the polytechnic, and then to university for my Higher National Diploma and bachelor's respectively, I observed how colonial narratives were heavily embedded, not only in the educational cultures of these institutions, but also in the tourism industry, often portraying African cultures through a Eurocentric lens. These observations sparked my interest in how tourism education can either perpetuate or challenge these colonial legacies.

My academic journey, which involved transitioning from Ghanaian educational institutions to pursuing both a master's and doctoral degree at the University of Waterloo, Canada, has equipped me with both an insider's perspective on Ghana's socio-cultural context and a critical academic lens shaped by global discourses. My identity as a Ghanaian male also plays a significant role in my research orientation. As someone who has navigated both Ghanaian and Canadian education systems, I am aware of the gendered dimensions of education and the broader societal structures that influence access and engagement in the academic terrain. I am also aware of the culture, power, and socializations that form the foundation of education in both contexts. This awareness informs my analysis of how colonial legacies perpetuate certain educational paradigms in tourism studies, often marginalizing Indigenous knowledge systems on the one hand, and on the other, how tourism education reinforces and/or resists colonization.

In examining the relationship between colonization and tourism education, I am driven by a commitment to decolonizing academic frameworks and promoting more inclusive, and contextually relevant educational practices. My positionality allows me to critically assess how historical narratives are constructed and conveyed in tourism curricula, and to advocate for educational reforms that honor the diverse cultural histories of African nations like Ghana.

Through my dissertation, I aim to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how colonial histories shape contemporary tourism education, and to propose pathways for integrating Indigenous perspectives that reflect the rich cultural legacies of postcolonial societies like Ghana. I aim to critically analyze how tourism education at the DHTM, UCC addresses, or fails to address,

the colonial underpinnings of tourism education in Ghana. I seek to understand how educational programs can be reimagined and restructured to foster a more nuanced and equitable understanding of Ghana's cultural heritage. My research is not only an academic endeavor but also a personal mission to unpack these relations, and to bridge the gap between historical consciousness and educational practice in the field of tourism education. In a nutshell, my positionality as an African, male, doctoral student from Ghana provides me with a deeply personal connection to my research topic. It has allowed me to approach my dissertation with a blend of lived experience and scholarly inquiry, aiming to bridge the gap between historical analysis and contemporary educational practice within the cultural context of tourism education at the DHTM, UCC.

1.1 Background of the Study

Tourism education plays a crucial role in shaping the tourism and hospitality industry's future professionals (Dredge *et al.*, 2015; Philips, 2023; Sheldon & Hsu, 2015). As a sub-field it has seen massive growth over the years, with universities and many other institutions of higher learning worldwide offering specialized tourism programs to meet the demand for skilled professionals in the tourism and hospitality industry (Hsu, 2014; Moura *et al.*, 2024; Tomasi *et al.*, 2020; Zagonari, 2009). As a formalized system of knowledge transmission, tourism education serves not only as a means of training tourism professionals but also as a cultural site where dominant narratives and ideologies about tourism are constructed, maintained, and disseminated (Hall & Tucker, 2004). As such, it becomes a critical space for both the reproduction of colonial knowledge systems and the potential for decolonial praxis. The foundations of tourism education are rooted in a historical context that cannot be ignored. The structured curricula, pedagogical practices, and institutional frameworks often reflect and perpetuate Eurocentric paradigms that marginalize or erase Indigenous and local ways of knowing (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015).

Colonization and its legacies have shaped not only the tourism industry, but also educational systems, including tourism education, and have perpetuated power imbalances and inequalities. In her book *A Small Place*, Kincaid (1988) provides evidence to show that the tourism industry is part of a global system that does not always benefit the destination communities. Through her observations and personal reflections, Kincaid (1988) critiques the tourism industry's role in

economic exploitation and the cultural commodification of the people of her native Antigua. She also addresses the industry's activities that contribute significantly to environmental degradation and social inequalities. Consequently, these communities are subjected to the subservient position and recolonized by the industry which mostly does not serve them. Kincaid's (1988) work urges readers and stakeholders of tourism to reconsider the true costs of tourism and to recognize the underlying inequalities that the industry perpetuates. Britton (1982) also argued that tourism development, as a vehicle for achieving economic independence, is inextricably linked to the historical process of colonialism.

Till today, colonialism is implicated in social, economic, political, and cultural formations, many of which influence the material and discursive workings of tourism (Veracini, 2015; Wolfe, 2006). Grimwood, Stinson and King (2019) speak to tourism's complex and deep roots of entanglement with colonial power. They discussed how tourism production and consumption reproduce colonial relations, narratives, systems, and structures across time and space. These colonial relations manifest in many aspects of tourism such as planning, education, development, and partnerships. These relations also manifest in curriculum design, pedagogical approaches, and the selection of educational resources (Kaomea, 2015). According to Freire (2020), education is never neutral; it either functions to domesticate and reproduce existing power structures or to liberate and transform society. In the context of tourism education, the prevailing epistemological frameworks have historically privileged Western constructs of tourism, leisure, and hospitality, sidelining Indigenous knowledges systems and cultural perspectives (Bunten & Graburn, 2018). Hall and Tucker (2004) assert that tourism, as both an industry and an academic discipline, is deeply entangled with colonial histories and the politics of representation. The cultural narratives produced within tourism education often legitimize settler-colonial perspectives, normalizing exploitative relationships between tourists and host communities (Bunten, 2010).

On the other hand, tourism invites oppositional narratives of resistance to colonial narratives and representations (Tucker, 2019), and it is within this domain of possibility that my doctoral research advances the discussion. What this means is that tourism, as both a cultural and educational platform, has the capacity to challenge entrenched colonial perspectives. In tourism education

contexts, it does so by unveiling and validating voices that have been marginalized or excluded (Hollinshead, 2020). By amplifying the experiences and narratives of local and Indigenous communities, tourism becomes a site of critical engagement where learning can involve grappling with historical injustices and neo-colonial power imbalances. As this happens, oppositional narratives encourage students, educators, and practitioners alike to question dominant discourses and representations of places and people (Frenzel *et al.,* 2015, Pritchard, 2018). It is precisely within this realm of possibility - where long-standing colonial structures are confronted - that my doctoral research seeks to deepen the conversation and promote transformative practices. The terms "*local*" and "*Indigenous*", while related, have distinct semantic and legal–policy implications (UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, 2010). Similarly in Ghanaian scholarship and policy discussions, these two concepts are related but carry distinct connotations. "Local" is used to refer broadly to people, practices, or resources that originate or operate within a specific, often smaller, geographic area (Legislative Instrument, LI 2204), while "Indigenous" specifically represents ethnic groups whose ancestral roots and cultural lineage in a territory pre-date colonial or state boundaries, and who possess distinct languages, customs, and social structures (Legislative Instrument, LI 2204).

In this study I focused on unpacking tourism education's relationship with colonization, particularly in the University of Cape Coast's Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management (DHTM), and to critically examined *decolonial futures*. I adopted epistemic decolonization, drawn upon by Grosfoguel (2007) and Chambers and Buzinde (2015, p. 5) in tourism studies as a philosophical orientation that "seeks to change both the terms and content of the conversation [in this case, tourism discourse in educational institutions], and to develop a different 'epistemic grounding' rather than pursuing change within the context of prevalent Eurocentric paradigms". This orientation allows for the rejection of the superiority of not only Eurocentric, but Western knowledge in general, and makes way for Indigenous and local knowledges to help in the co-construction of tourism knowledge.

Because I will be using the terms 'Eurocentric' and 'Western' to explain colonial understandings, and to ensure that readers understand the full scope of colonial perspectives as I use them in this

study, I hereby introduce a third category: “Anglophonic”. It is important to mention that in this dissertation, I conceptualize colonial perspectives in three interrelated yet different dimensions. This idea is to make it clear for readers to put into context meanings that are conveyed in this study. While Eurocentrism specifically represents the privileging of European epistemologies and cultural frameworks that have historically justified colonial conquest and domination (Blaut, 1993; Grosfoguel, 2013), Western perspectives encompass, more broadly the sociocultural frameworks of Europe and settler societies that have been shaped by European colonization, such as United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand (Smith, 2012; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). The Anglophonic dimension to colonialism represents the power structures and epistemic hierarchies that English language enforces which continues to marginalize Indigenous and local knowledges in Ghanaian higher educational contexts (Brock-Utne, 2000; Makoni & Makoni, 2009; Phillipson, 1992). This three-part framework shows that in the context of Ghana, coloniality is not only a legacy of Western and European rule but is also actively maintained through Anglophonic mechanisms. This includes the use of English language as the official medium of instruction and Anglophone textbooks to academic assessments that prioritize ‘standard’ English writing styles and modules over Indigenous and local representations. For this reason, I also name Anglophonic coloniality alongside Eurocentric and Western, demonstrating how language itself becomes a site of epistemic struggle and a medium through which colonial legacies are reinforced and / or resisted within academic spaces.

Epistemic decolonization places emphasis on Indigeneity as the central point of discussion, instead of treating it as the inferior ‘other’. It also involves the recognition of prevalent ‘dominant Eurocentric and Western’ knowledges and their direct and indirect influence on tourism education, and the openness to the possibilities of disrupting these knowledges by centering Indigenous and local knowledges in tourism education (Heidebrecht, 2021; Mellor, 2021). Explained differently, epistemic decolonization exposes and challenges the privileging of Eurocentric and Western knowledge systems by questioning the assumed neutrality, objectivity, and universality of these Eurocentric and Western epistemologies. In addition to that, it legitimizes multiple epistemologies, thereby creating space for knowledge systems that are grounded in local contexts, experiences, and cultures. For my dissertation, epistemic decolonization can be helpful in critiquing how

tourism knowledge is framed and taught. It will also help me in proposing ways in which local and Indigenous knowledges systems are integrated into curricula, research methodologies, and pedagogical practices. Examining tourism education and colonization relationships using epistemic decolonization as a philosophical lens in Cape Coast carries much significance to the tourism landscape in Ghana. Reimagining tourism education as a cultural site for decolonization involves challenging embedded Eurocentric and Western narratives and creating space for Indigenous knowledges systems to flourish and guide new ways of thinking about and practicing tourism (Smith, 2012).

Cape Coast, on account of its historic relevance to the transatlantic slave trade, colonial administration, and cultural heritage, has drawn considerable academic and scholarly attention (*see* Amoah, 1972; Dickson, 1965; Gocking, 1981; Gocking, 1999; Hinderink & Sterkenburg, 1975; William, 2006). Within tourism contexts also, tourism scholars such as Adu-Frimpong, (2010), Hinson, Okoe and Boateng (2018), and Adam, Hiamey and Afenyo (2014) have given their accounts on tourism's relationship with the culture, ecology, and history of Cape Coast and these studies have gained much recognition and aided in tourism education, planning and development in Cape Coast. Some of these include visitor experiences at sensitive heritage sites (Adu-Frimpong, 2010), tourists' experience of "dark tourism" (Hinson, Okoe & Boateng, 2018), tourists' view on safety and vulnerability (Boakye, 2021), leisure constraints in university settings (Adam, Hiamey & Afenyo, 2014), and community-based ecotourism in park-fringe communities (Mensah, 2017). Also, despite some scholarly work done on tourism education in Ghana (see Adu-Ampong & Mensah, 2021, Owusu-Mintah, 2014, Commey *et al.*, 2020), there is almost no study interrogating colonization and its relationships with tourism education in Cape Coast.

It is against this backdrop that I join Grimwood, Stinson and King (2019, p. 1) to ask how can scholars take responsibility within colonial terrains of tourism; to subvert tourism's colonial complexion; and critically and constructively participate in decolonizing tourism and tourism studies"? This study is more or less a response to the question above. This question carries the potential to initiate research directions that can help dismantle existing colonial relations that

manifest in tourism education. It also can help us identify and dismantle tourism knowledges that perpetuate the subversion of Indigenous and local knowledge in tourism.

I advance *decolonization*, an unsettling endeavour, in two dimensions. *First*, to critique the ways in which tourism education in the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management (DHTM), University of Cape Coast (UCC), Ghana encourages, supports, furthers, or is implicated in ongoing colonization and disenfranchising of Indigenous and local knowledges; and *second*, to take up the constructive project of fostering alternative, generative ways of being in relation to land, culture, knowledges, people, and place (Mackey, 2015) in higher educational spaces. This is not to suggest that decolonization is a new term. Rather, its usage within tourism and tourism education contexts takes on a radical approach to understanding tourism education in academic institutional contexts. In agreement with Mignolo and Walsh (2018), I recognize that decolonization is not a static condition or a lineal point of arrival or enlightenment. Instead "decoloniality, as is being used here seeks to make visible, open up, and advance radically distinct perspectives and positionalities that displace Western rationality as the only framework and possibility of existence, analysis, and thought" (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 17).

While I use this dissertation to advocate for epistemic decolonization in tourism education in Ghana, I do not take the concept for granted. I recognize that decolonization encompasses different agendas - revolutionary rupture for political-psychological liberation (Fanon, 1963), exposing the enduring nature of coloniality of power beyond formal decolonization (Quijano, 2000), actively delinking from Western epistemologies and recovering pluriversal knowledges that were hitherto oppressed by colonial matrix (Mignolo, 2007), the interrogating post-colony power, necropolitics, and new political imaginaries (Mbembe, 2001, 2019), among many others. At the same time, the concept is shaped by actors who hold institutional power (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018; Spivak, 1988). In the context of the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management (DHTM), questions arise about who defines "Indigenous knowledges," how competing visions of decolonial reform are negotiated, and whether the very process of selecting certain knowledges risks reproducing new exclusions. Against this backdrop, a critical stance toward "decolonization" is essential - not

simply to replace Western, Eurocentric and Anglophonic canons, but to democratize the very terms on which tourism educational authority is built.

In this study, my interest in decolonization is based on the dual political mandate it assumes against colonial power. First, it represents resistance (to colonial power), in this case, against power structures that may have existed in DHTM's operations. Second, it represents resurgence (of Indigenous culture), in so far as it may inform local knowledge to influence DHTM's academic operations (Strega & Brown, 2015). The necessity of decolonizing the culture of tourism education arises from the recognition that knowledge production and dissemination within the field have been dominated by Eurocentric and Western paradigms that marginalize non-Western perspectives (Mignolo, 2011). These paradigms often reinforce structures of power and privilege, thereby perpetuating epistemic violence against Indigenous and marginalized communities whose worldviews and cultural practices are either ignored or commodified (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018).

Within tourism studies, several scholars have engaged decolonization discourse, enlightening a world that resonates for many Indigenous Peoples and offering insights into how to think about and do tourism and tourism research differently (see Chambers & Buzinde, 2015; Gonzalez & Aikau, 2019; Hollinshead, Suleman & Nair, 2021; Martínez Chancay, 2024; Pan & Park, 2024; Smith, 2012; Stinson, Grimwood & Caton, 2021; Tuck & Yang, 2012; Tucker, 2003). For example, Chambers and Buzinde (2015) call for "tourism's epistemic de-linking", a notion they describe as a rejection of Western epistemologies about tourism as representing the 'God-eye' view thus enabling spaces for other ways of thinking, being and knowing about tourism. They argue that such critical theorizing provides an epistemological perspective of tourism which legitimizes the cosmologies of and actively empowers traditionally marginalized groupings. Their viewpoint suggests that decolonization involves a move away from colonial dominance and its manifestations in tourism production, towards perspectives and worldviews that represent individuals, communities, and peoples, as a way of amplifying other ways of knowing and being.

Considering the massive potential of decolonization's commitment to embracing different worldviews and perspectives (Hudson & Vodden, 2020), its adoption within the tourism educational context could be the starting point for tourism institutions to be more practical in their policies, systems, educations, and relationships in a way that resists colonialism. Furthermore, tourism education plays a pivotal role in shaping how future tourism practitioners, policymakers, and researchers conceptualize and engage with cultural diversity. If left unexamined, curricula that perpetuate colonial assumptions about tourism can contribute to the ongoing exploitation and marginalization of Indigenous Peoples and their lands (Bunten & Graburn, 2018). Therefore, decolonizing tourism education involves not only revising curricula to include diverse epistemologies but also rethinking pedagogical approaches and institutional policies to foster genuine intercultural dialogue and collaboration (Kovach, 2009). By embracing decolonization as a fundamental aspect of tourism education, institutions can better prepare students to engage ethically and respectfully with Indigenous communities and cultural landscapes. This approach requires a commitment to unsettling established knowledge systems and creating space for Indigenous voices and perspectives to actively shape the future of tourism education and research (Smith, 2012; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018).

1.2 Research Questions

The purpose of this decolonial, critical ethnographic study is to describe and interrogate relationships between colonization and tourism education within the cultural contexts of the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management (DHTM), University of Cape Coast (UCC). I adopted Chambers and Buzinde's (2015) definition of decolonization to interrogate colonization and its prevalence in the *culture* of tourism education in the DHTM, UCC, Ghana. My adoption of "tourism's epistemic de-linking" enabled me to walk into the field, "…rejecting Eurocentric and Western epistemologies about tourism as representing superior notions and viewpoints" (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015), while enabling the space for different voices to be heard about what constitutes tourism. To achieve the purpose of this study, I set out to answer the following research questions:

1. What constitutes the educational culture of UCC's Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management?

2. How is colonization reinforced and/or resisted by, and within the *educational cultural context* of UCC's Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management?
3. How are Indigenous knowledges about tourism in Cape Coast shaping tourism education in the UCC's Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management?
4. What is the role of educators in UCC's Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management in decolonizing tourism education in Ghana and beyond?

1.3 Scope of the Study

This study primarily focused on describing and interrogating the relationships between tourism education and colonization within the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management at the University of Cape Coast (UCC). I delved into how colonial legacies manifest and continue to persist in the pedagogical structures, curricula, and practices of tourism education in the department using critical ethnography as the chosen methodology for the study. I conducted an immersive fieldwork experience at the DHTM, UCC from 20th September 2022 to 11th January 2023, during which I engaged in field observations, and conducted semi-structured interviews with students, faculty, and staff of the department. The interviews provided insights into the lived experiences, perspectives, and reflections of the members of the department as they relate to tourism education and colonization relationships. I used participant observations to gain some understanding of the dynamics within the department's culture, including classroom interactions, institutional practices, and informal exchanges. I chose these two methods mainly for the study to offer a holistic view of how colonial influences are embedded within the educational culture of the DHTM and how they are perpetuated or challenged within the DHTM, UCC.

While the study's primary focus is on the DHTM at UCC, the findings contribute to broader discussions about the decolonization of tourism education in Ghana and other postcolonial contexts in several ways. First, my findings reveal structural and epistemological biases in the curricula, pedagogical approaches, and institutional policies within the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management at UCC, common in tourism education frameworks across Ghana and other postcolonial nations (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015). Secondly, findings also speak to decolonial pedagogies, calling for the inclusion of Indigenous knowledges systems (Kovach,

2009; Battiste, 2000). The findings also provide a model for decolonial research, offering a framework for other researchers interested in decolonizing tourism education (Chiu *et al.*, 2021). Finally, the results provide actionable recommendations for curriculum reformation and policy changes with implications for other institutions in Ghana and further. By arguing for epistemic freedom and the reclamation of Indigenous voices, the study speaks to greater decolonial movements in education (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018), while providing a localized yet globally relevant contribution to the discourse on decolonization and tourism education reform.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study contributes new insights to the expanding body of scholarship around the decolonization of education, with a particular focus on tourism education in Ghana. It uncovers how tourism education remains permeated by Eurocentric knowledge systems, curricular structures, and institutional hierarchies by exploring manifestations of colonial legacies in DHTM's educational culture at the University of Cape Coast (UCC). Simultaneously, the study casts light on faculty and student efforts to resist these structures, revealing potential avenues to rethink a more contextually embedded and epistemically just form of tourism education.

Methodologically, my reliance on critical ethnography, and contextualization within a Ghanaian university environment, is an important contribution to the field of tourism and education. It privileges the lived experiences, perspectives, and practices of faculty and students, allowing for a deeper understanding of the complex negotiations between colonial inheritances and decolonial aspirations. My study also contributes to the scant but expanding literature that seeks to understand African higher education institutions from within as opposed to external or prescriptive approaches.

Theoretically, my dissertation engages with global conversations around epistemic justice, knowledge decolonization, and critical pedagogy (Andreotti, 2011; Grosfoguel, 2007; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018) while centering African epistemologies (Mbembe, 2016; Biko, 2013; Abdi, 2019). By situating tourism education within the broader politics of knowledge production, the study challenges dominant paradigms that privilege Western epistemologies and calls attention to the

systemic exclusions faced by African scholars and institutions. It underscores the urgency of reimagining not just what is taught but *how*, *by whom*, and *for whose benefit*.

Practically, my study offers specific areas for institutional transformation. These include making curricular content more responsive to local and Indigenous knowledges; rethinking academic library collections so they privilege African scholarship; and developing departmental cultures that are critically reflexive and situated within particular local contexts. In addition, the study calls for the creation of independent knowledge production spaces within African institutions to combat reliance on Western-dominated publishing systems. Through this research, I pave the way for a form of tourism education that disrupts existing paradigms and fosters narratives, advancements, and educational approaches that are more just, liberating, inclusive, and culturally resonant at a local level.

Another significance of this study is its relevance extending beyond the academy. By linking educational culture to broader questions of community-based tourism development, the study suggests that decolonizing tourism education can have ripple effects on how tourism is practiced in Ghana. A more locally anchored and inclusive educational model could enable students to engage with local communities, develop cultural sustainability and resist extractive or homogenizing narratives around African tourism. Overall, the study provides an urgent and necessary contribution to the fields of tourism education, African higher education, and decolonial studies. It invites scholars, educators, and policymakers to critically reflect on the colonial foundations of academic institutions and to imagine new possibilities for education that honors diverse knowledges, affirms local realities, and fosters transformative change.

1.5 Structure of the Dissertation

I have organized this dissertation into six distinct chapters. In the first chapter, I introduce the broad context from which the research questions are formulated. I briefly discuss the concepts of tourism education, colonization, decolonization, and their entanglements with one another, and what this might mean for tourism education in institutions of higher learning. The chapter wraps up with the study's scope, significance, and structure of the dissertation.

In the next two chapters, I synthesize the body of literature within which the study is situated. Chapter two begins with a review of scholarly materials on the nature and scope of the tourism industry and its relationships with historical processes of colonization. It also reviews the body of scholarly works on tourism education, colonization (as it speaks to differently specific aspects of North-South relations), power, decolonial theory (what it represents and what that means for the study), and the theory of epistemic decolonization within the context of tourism education. Chapter three furthers the discussion on tourism education, with particular focus on the case of Ghana. In this chapter I examine formal education in Ghana by examining its historical perspective with a focus on colonial legacy, historical background to educational policies and legislative instruments, and the current state of tourism education in Ghana. In the final part of chapter three, I provide a background on the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management, University of Cape Coast, and its educational culture, highlighting how current policies on education are influenced by historical policies and legislative instruments.

In chapter four, I provide a detailed description of my chosen methodology – *critical ethnography*. I explain the rationale behind the choice, and my approach to critical ethnography in conducting this study. I also explain how my epistemological perspective and positionality shaped the use of critical ethnography for this study. I outline the data generation and data analysis approaches that I adopted and how they are congruent with critical ethnography. In effect, the chapter provides a detailed account of how I used critical ethnography to describe and unpack tourism education and colonization relationships within the cultural context of tourism education at the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management, University of Cape Coast.

In the next chapter, *chapter five*, I present the findings from the fieldwork for the study and the discussion of emergent themes and findings. In this same chapter, I weave my findings and the analysis with literature to show how my findings and analysis advance understandings of tourism education and colonization relationships as they manifest in education institutional contexts. In the discussion, I interpret, contextualize and discuss the findings of the research and connect them to broader theoretical, pedagogical, and socio-political conversations. Using the data based on

ethnographic observations, interviews and document analysis, I also reflect on the major patterns that emerged and engage them in dialogue with the research questions and existing literature. The discussion did not only summarize the findings but also interrogate the significance of these findings so as to situate them within the context of decolonial thought and tourism education. It also advances the understanding of how the educational culture of the DHTM both reproduces and resists colonial legacies, and what the duality between reproduction and resistance reveals about the tensions and possibilities of decolonizing higher education in postcolonial African contexts. This chapter also brings forward the voices of participants - students, faculty, and staff - as knowledge producers, analyzing their perspectives through a decolonial and reflexive lens. Rooted in critical scholarship, the discussion underlines systemic obstacles for decolonial transformation and foregrounds emergent practices of counteraction and innovation within the department itself.

In the final chapter, *chapter six*, I present the summary, conclusions, and recommendations for the study on tourism education and its relationships with colonization. Future research directions are also highlighted in this chapter.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I map the onto-epistemological and theoretical foundations that underpin my study's interrogation of colonization and tourism education in the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management (DHTM) at the University of Cape Coast (UCC). I discus four interrelated bodies of scholarship: the historical entanglements of tourism with colonialism; the evolution of tourism education as a site of knowledge production; decolonial and critical pedagogy theories; and the specific framework of epistemic decolonization (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015; Grosfoguel, 2007). These different dimensions situate my research within a critical, reflexive stance that privileges multiple ways of knowing and being. The chapter clarifies why and how tourism education at the DHTM, UCC can be read simultaneously as an instrument of colonial reinforcement and a potential site for decolonial praxis.

2.1 The Concept of Tourism

Tourism has been ingrained in human history for centuries. Smith (2004: 25) emphasized this by stating that "tourism and travel have been part of the human experience for millennia". This, Smith describes as a form of nomadism inherent to *Homo sapiens*, often bringing joy under favorable conditions. However, with the advent of jet aircraft, tourism has transcended into a global phenomenon, significantly impacting various environments, and attracting diverse markets due to expanded travel opportunities (Page & Connell, 2006). This evolution reflects the broader process of globalization, extending beyond traditionally developed nations to encompass a more global spectrum of demand for travel. Consequently, comprehending the dynamics of tourism's evolution has become increasingly intricate, given the diverse and non-uniform forces of change (Page & Connell, 2006).

Understanding the intricacies of tourism requires contextualizing the complex interplay of factors at local, national, and international levels that drive dynamic processes. Consequently, analyzing why and how tourism patterns change and their impact on destinations and local communities

poses pervasive challenges for tourism organizations, researchers, and students (Page & Connell, 2006). Several scholars have offered definitions of tourism. Mathieson and Wall (1982:1) define it as:

> "…the temporary movement to destinations outside the normal home and workplace, the activities undertaken during the stay, and the facilities created to cater for the needs of tourists".

The World Tourism Organization International Conference of Travel and Tourism in Ottawa in 1991 further reviewed, expanded, and developed technical definitions and stated that tourism involves "the activities of a person traveling outside his or her usual environment for less than a specified period of time and whose main purpose of travel is other than (the) exercise of an activity remunerated from the place visited" (WTO, 1991). These definitions underscore that tourism involves a change in place and pace (Gartner, 1990). Also, they represent industry-related notions of tourism only, consequently decentering host communities and people who enable tourism. Several other definitions of tourism have been put forward, placing emphasis on aspects that go beyond the industry. Higgins-Desbiolles (2006) argued that tourism should not just be seen as a commercial activity; hence defining it as "a social force with significant political, cultural and economic implications". Her argument is on the premise that we must all endeavor to understand tourism beyond its economic contributions, as seen in most supply-side definitions. This is because tourism has the power to affect social justice, human rights, and sustainability (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006). As a social force, she argues that tourism possesses the power to shape relationships, influence identities, and reinforce or challenge power structures. Practically, she notes that tourism is not just an economic activity, but it is also deeply a political and cultural force that influences how societies are organized, how people relate to one another, and how power is distributed or contested (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006).

Burns and Holden's (1995) definition of tourism is similar to Higgins-Desbiolles' (2006) perspective on what tourism definitions must entail. They define tourism as "the processes, activities, and outcomes arising from the relationships and interactions among tourists, tourism suppliers, host governments, host communities, and the surrounding environments that are

involved in attracting and hosting visitors. This definition supports a more critical approach to tourism particularly because it focuses on the role host communities and environments play in the broader tourism ecosystem. It is clear that while some definitions are more industry-focused (e.g. Mathieson & Wall, 1982), several others, including Scheyvens *et al.* (2021), Burns and Holden (1995), Scheyvens (2002), and Higgins-Desbiolles (2006) emphasize the need for definitions of tourism to shift the focus from a purely capitalist venture approach to one that prioritizes social justice, empowerment of local communities, and cultural and environmental preservation. These definitions encourage a rethinking of tourism definitions to align with principles of equity and ethical responsibility.

Today, the tourism industry stands as the largest global industry, serving as a major driver of economic and business activities in destination countries. The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) (2023) has estimated that travel and tourism accounted for 1 in 5 new jobs created (approximately 21.6 million new jobs) and 10.4% of global GDP. Over the past six decades, it has experienced remarkable growth, particularly in developing nations, where it has emerged as a significant sector, contributing substantially to national income. It has been an economic lifeline for cities, islands, and villages alike, supporting 334 million jobs globally (WTTC, 2023). Consequently, many countries have invested in tourism infrastructure and facilities to cater to tourists, aiming to maximize the benefits derived from tourism activities.

2.2 Framing Tourism Education

Tourism education has traditionally been conceptualized as a process of training students for roles in industry in areas of hospitality, travel management and destination marketing (Holloway & Humphreys, 2022). Tourism education was birthed in response to the growth in global tourism activities in the mid-20th century, with a sharp focus on employability, economic development and service-and-market priorities (Airey, 2005; Tribe, 2002). The dominant epistemological underpinnings of tourism education, especially in the Global South, have been shaped by neoliberal imperatives and Eurocentric curricula, resulting in a predominantly Western framing of what constitutes legitimate tourism knowledge (Farsari, Butler, & Szivas, 2010; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006).

As famously suggested by Tribe (2002), the dilemma of tourism education is a "philosophy of knowledge" logic. That is, should tourism education serve as vocational training or a liberal education space? This tension, that is between "instrumental" and "critical" knowledge continues to define tourism pedagogy globally. For many postcolonial contexts, this tension is exacerbated by deep historical inequalities that reflect colonial legacies embedded in curriculum content, pedagogical practices, and institutional structures (Pritchard & Morgan, 2007). These debates are critical to understanding tourism education in Ghana, where curriculum content often mirrors foreign paradigms with limited integration of African realities, Indigenous knowledges systems, or critical thought (Mensah, 2020).

2.3 Origin of Tourism Education

Since World War II, the tourism industry has experienced significant growth, particularly with the emergence of mass tourism (Britton, 1982; Fang, 2020; Sezgin & Yolal, 2012; Telfer & Sharpley, 2015). This growth presented opportunities for tourism to contribute to the development of various sectors in both developed and developing destinations. Tourism has been predominantly promoted as a development strategy due to its potential for generating employment, earning foreign exchange, and attracting investment (Fang, 2020; Kweka *et al.,* 2003; Li *et al.,* 2018), as well as for fostering lifestyles aligned with Western values (Mathieson & Wall, 1982; Harrison, 1992; Semwal *et al.,* 2024), and facilitating the transformation of traditional rural societies (Pi-Sunyer & Brooke, 2005). Since the rise of mass tourism, the industry has served as a driver for socio-economic development and poverty alleviation in many developing economies (Musavengane, 2018; Spenceley & Meyer, 2013). Furthermore, it has been suggested that tourism contributes to the redistribution of wealth and power in these countries (Agbo & Grimwood, 2024; Bianchi, 2002; Mathieson & Wall, 1982; Telfer & Sharpley, 2015). Sharpley (2002) observed that tourism is not only seen as a catalyst for development but also as a facilitator of various economic and socio-political transformations.

Understanding the nature, history, and present day influences of tourism development carries the potential of helping policy makers and educators to craft tourism development strategies and

tourism education policies to not perpetuate colonial outcomes but instead resist colonialisms and foster empowerment, cultural preservation and justice. In the 1950s and 1960s, development was the primary driver for tourism, aligned with a modernization paradigm (Telfer, 2002). Travel and tourism were considered integral to modern society (Hall & Lew, 2009; Sharpley, 2002). Consequently, many developments in the industry occurred with little regard for potential social and environmental impacts, driven primarily by economic considerations (Butler, 1993; Sharpley, 2009; Telfer & Sharpley, 2015). Britton (1982) noted that literature on the contribution tourism makes to development is mostly devoted to narrowly defined cost-benefit analyses, imprecise comments on the social and cultural impacts of tourism, or more technical issues such as tourist flow predictions, factors that determine the location of hotels, and the impacts tourism has on regional expenditures. He buttressed de Kadt's (1979) argument that the discussion on tourism is mostly done, separate from political and historical processes that form the basis of development.

This is why tourism's actual agenda, particularly in developing countries, needs to be questioned. For this reason, also, Jamal and Camargo (2013) suggested that tourism development, which has been long dominated by perspectives from the industry, need to be philosophically re-thought and re-imagined rigorously enough to attend to the ethical and moral imperatives that have long been neglected. Though tourism appears to be bringing many benefits to many countries, it mostly also perpetuates class and regional inequalities, economic problems, and social tensions (Bianchi, 2004; Britton, 2013; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2022). As time progressed, criticism of the tourism concept and industry intensified due to concerns regarding environmental and cultural exploitation. Scholars like Gunn (1972) and Kaiser and Helber (1978) proposed novel planning approaches for sustainable tourism development in destinations. Baud-Bovy and Lawson (1977), as well as Kaiser and Helber (1978), argued for the integration of tourism planning into national economic policies. De Kadt (1979) advocated for comprehensive social planning for tourism, emphasizing the importance of assessing the non-economic costs and benefits. Additionally, Gunn (1979) emphasized the imperative of involving multiple stakeholders actively in the tourism planning and development process. Murphy (2013) endorsed a community-centric approach to tourism education, planning, and development, stressing the involvement of residents from the outset of the planning process.

This led to the campaign against conventional tourism and a call for more 'responsible' and 'inclusive' forms of tourism. One key campaign was the Cape Town Declaration on Responsible Tourism (2002) – a campaign that gathered 280 tourism stakeholders from 20 countries to call for "tourism that minimizes negative economic, environmental, and social impacts", "generates greater economic benefits for local people", and "involves local people in decisions that affect their lives". This campaign included responsibility and inclusiveness in tourism education, planning, and development in such a way that results in equitable, reasonable, just, and decolonial, ways of being and doing tourism. Many of these initiatives such as the Awamaki Sustainable Tourism Program, Peru (Leavens, 2025; Loo, 2024), the Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE), Zimbabwe (Taylor, 2009; Tichaawa & Mhlanga, 2015), the Gorilla Tourism Revenue-Sharing, Rwanda (Snyman *et al.*, 2023; Spenceley *et al.*, 2010), and the Kakum National Park Canopy Walkway, Ghana (Akyeampong, 2011; Mensah, 2017; Obour *et al.*, 2017) came into being as models and viable instruments for poverty reduction, offering opportunities for conservation and rural economic development. However, despite the potential of these seemingly promising initiatives to generate welfare for communities, many of them have failed to deliver on their promises. Higgins-Desbiolles (2008) argued that many analysts and academics, since the rise of anti-globalization movements, have anticipated and recommended alternative and more just forms of globalization, including tourism education and development, than the current model which is built on capitalism.

With the escalating demand for tourism spanning various geographical locations and historical periods came a corresponding surge in calls for educational initiatives to adequately prepare students for the tourism industry (Christie-Mill, 1979; Fidgeon, 2010; Ritchie, 2003). This heightened awareness of the breadth and significance of tourism has caused increased advocacy for the expansion and enhancement of tourism education. Nonetheless, there remains a lack of consensus regarding the definition of "tourism education". Over several decades, European universities have offered tourism research and study programs emphasizing scientific and theoretical exploration of the subject rather than vocational training (Airey, 2018; Tribe, 2002). Institutions of higher learning, particularly colleges and universities, have recognized tourism education and training as a rapidly flourishing sector, especially as many destinations strive to adapt to the evolving demands of tourism. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

has highlighted the immense potential of tourism education, emphasizing its role in enhancing the competitiveness of tourism enterprises and regions, as well as in achieving customer satisfaction (Fayos Solà, 1997; Perdomo, 2016; Ravishankar & Christopher, 2020).

Even though formal tourism education improves competitiveness and satisfaction (Fayos Sola, 1997; Maureen *et al.*, 2008) and carries the transformative power of tourism education to create just and sustainable tourism societies (Pritchard, Morgan & Ateljevic, 2011), there is still a lack of agreement over what tourism education should entail, and the direction it should take. Christie-Mill (1979) stressed that this lack of agreement is mainly due to two main reasons: first, tourism being a multi-disciplinary discipline, involving the disciplines of Economics, Geography, Psychology, Sociology, Politics, Management, among others, resulting in the difficulty to even define tourism; and secondly, the content and focus of tourism studies having varying scopes depending the needs of the geographical context in which it is studied (Cooper & Shepherd, 1997). Tribe (2016) described the nature of tourism as complex, interdisciplinary, and shaped by various epistemological and ontological forces. Like Christie-Mill (1979), Tribe (2016) argued that the disagreements over tourism definitions come from its multi-faceted nature, the variety of disciplinary perspectives applied to its study, and the ideological and institutional influences that shape knowledge production. In short, Tribe (2016) conceptualizes tourism as a knowledge system that includes multiple academic disciplines, practical knowledge, and socio-political influences.

Tourism is indeed a multidisciplinary discipline, encompassing many fields of study and expertise, thereby making it difficult, first and foremost, to define its scope, and also difficult to define tourism education. As a multi-faceted discipline, it also involves the interaction of several disciplines to understand and analyze the complexity of the industry and the impacts it has on individuals, societies, and the other human and non-human environments. These several disciplines, and many others, collectively contribute to a holistic understanding of tourism, its impacts, and its potentials for positive development (Hall, 2013; Tribe, 2016). As the field continues to evolve, the interdisciplinary nature of tourism studies becomes even more relevant for addressing emerging challenges and opportunities (Xiao & Smith, 2006). Today, these interdisciplinary collaborations allow for the study of tourism to be enriched with plurality of orientations, allowing researchers and practitioners to adopt holistic approaches and develop

strategies for environmentally sustainable, culturally sensitive, and economically viable tourism practices (Liburd & Edwards, 2010; Bramwell & Lane, 2013).

Two of the leading voices in tourism education, Jafari and Ritchie (1981) observed that the tourism industry at the time had a weak relationship with the resulted curricula development that emerged to address tourism education needs. According to them, policymakers need to identify and understand the different relationships that exist between all tourism stakeholders and the complex relationships that exist among them. Jafari and Ritchie (1981) therefore called for a structured, intentional development of tourism education as an academic field, rather than leaving it to be an ad hoc or purely vocational area. Specifically, their argument was that tourism programs needed to have courses, educational goals, and academic content that would prepare students both intellectually and professionally to be thoughtfully and intentionally constructed. In other words, they advocated that instead of just offering isolated tourism-related courses or only training students for immediate jobs, tourism education needed to be systematic, coherent, and scholarly, including both theoretical foundations and practical applications Jafari & Ritchie, 1981).

2.4 Traditions in Tourism Education

Tribe (2002) taught that tourism education, as a field of academic inquiry and professional training, has developed along three broad traditions - the vocational, liberal, and critical. Each one of these traditions represents different epistemologies, pedagogies, and ideologies (Tribe, 2002). Regarding how tourism knowledge is constructed, disseminated, and contested, each of these traditions plays a significant role. The next sections briefly examine the boundaries of these traditions and how they contribute to, or resist, broader discourses of power, coloniality, and epistemic dominance in tourism education.

2.4.1 The Vocational Tradition

The vocational tradition in tourism education is rooted in the utilitarian orientation, suggesting that students need to be trained for the workforce (Airey, 2005; Tribe, 2002). In this tradition, practical skills, managerial competencies, and operational knowledge necessary for functioning within the tourism and hospitality industries are prioritized (Airey, 2005; Cooper & Shepherd, 1997). This

tradition is also influenced by market needs and employer expectations, thereby making vocational programs instrumental and competency-based, aligning closely with neoliberal educational goals of employability and economic productivity (Dredge *et al.*, 2012). The vocational tradition has been valuable in developing technical expertise; however, it has also been critiqued for reinforcing status quo industry practices and has not interrogated the structural inequalities embedded in global tourism systems (Morgan, 2004). Higgins-Desbiolles (2006) argued that the vocational orientation to tourism education, in its narrow instrumentalism, risks ignoring the wider social and ethical concerns that shape cultural identities and political relations embedded in tourism.

The vocational tradition also focuses on preparing students for direct entry into the tourism and hospitality workforce by equipping them with operational competencies and technical skills rather than critical or theoretical abilities (Baum, 2002; Tribe, 2002). Under the vocational tradition in tourism education, the curriculum is designed to meet the needs of the tourism and hospitality industry which are often shaped by current market trends and employer expectations (Airey, 2005; Cooper & Shepherd, 1997). Particularly, practical skills such as customer service, tour operations, food and beverage management, and hotel operations are all key focus areas under the vocational tradition (Ladkin, 2005; Tribe, 2002). Also under the vocational tradition, programs that prepare students to be ready for the workplace are priorities. Some of these programs include internships, placements, or industry simulations (Ladkin, 2005).

2.4.2 The Liberal Tradition

The liberal tradition represents the next tourism education model. It conceptualizes tourism education as a means for broad intellectual development, fostering critical thinking, interdisciplinary inquiry, and ethical reflection (Tribe, 2002). It is the tradition in tourism education which has its roots in broader liberal education philosophies that prioritize the cultivation of critical thinking, broad intellectual development, and civic responsibility over narrow vocational training (Ingram *et al.*, 2020; Morgan & Pritchard, 2005). Drawing from the humanities and social sciences, this tradition in tourism education promotes tourism as a cultural and historical phenomenon. This tradition advocates for reflexivity and pluralism, aiming to produce not only skillful practitioners but also critically reflective citizens able to confront the

social and cultural dimensions of tourism (Botterill, 2001). Within the context of tourism studies, the liberal tradition emphasizes understanding the social, cultural, political, and ethical dimensions of tourism, encouraging students to engage with the world critically and reflectively rather than being solely oriented toward employment in the tourism industry.

Botterill (2001) noted that within tourism education contexts, the liberal tradition often manifests through curricula that include cultural studies, history, and political economy, aiming to disseminate a more holistic and contextual understanding of tourism. However, while this tradition is more open to critique than the vocational tradition, it still has the tendencies to operate within Eurocentric knowledge paradigms that marginalize Indigenous epistemologies and perspectives (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015). The liberal tradition is rooted in liberal arts education, which aims to produce well-rounded individuals capable of critical reflection and engaged citizenship. This tradition values education as a means for personal growth, ethical development, and societal contribution (Barnett, 1990). In tourism education, this translates into curricula that engage students. Barnett (1990) described this tradition as having its roots in the liberal arts, which is mostly concerned with producing individuals as reflective and civic minded human beings. He continued that the liberal tradition values education as inherently beneficial for personal growth and development of ethical principles (Barnett, 1990).

In tourism educational contexts, liberal tradition orients the curricula towards inviting students to approach tourism concerns beyond the operational and managerial, but to also consider contemporary issues such as sustainability, ethics, equity, and cultural understanding. Tribe (2002) describes the liberal tradition as seeking to "liberate the mind" through tourism education by emphasizing philosophical and reflective learning rather than technocratic skill acquisition. "The liberal tradition in tourism education fosters questioning minds, capable of contributing to a more reflective and responsible tourism industry", he continued (Tribe, 2002, p. 343).

In summary, the liberal tradition in tourism education focuses on the development of critical, ethical, and reflective individuals who are able to question dominant paradigms and contribute meaningfully to society. We know that this tradition has been critiqued for lacking direct vocational applicability, however, its role in cultivating deeper intellectual and civic capacities

remains crucial, especially in a world where tourism is increasingly recognized as a complex social and cultural force.

2.4.3 The Critical Tradition

Unlike the vocational or liberal traditions, which mostly focus on the development of technical skill or on broader societal knowledge, the critical tradition emphasizes power relations, social justice, equity, and the deconstruction of dominant paradigms, by examining how they each shape the tourism field (Ateljevic, Pritchard, & Morgan, 2007). By its nature, it is referred to as the most politically and philosophically engaged. This tradition draws from critical theory, postcolonial studies, feminism, and decolonial thought, seeking not only to understand the world but to change it (Zuccoli & Korstanje, 2023).

Tourism education that adopts the critical tradition challenges dominant capitalist and colonial narratives in tourism and critiques the complicity of education systems in reproducing hegemonic knowledge. Scholars such as Higgins-Desbiolles (2006), Pritchard and Morgan (2007), and Tucker (2016, 2019) have advanced the argument that tourism education must be carried out much beyond managerialism, and to be situated within notions of ethics, equity, and alternative epistemologies. For example, the critical tradition unpacks how tourism is complexly connected with neocolonial, patriarchal, and capitalist systems. It critiques the taken-for-granted assumptions about the tourism industry (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006; Reid, 2003). This tradition aligns with calls for the decolonization of tourism education, particularly in African and postcolonial contexts, where the legacies of Eurocentric curricula remain pervasive (Ndlovu & Nyathi, 2020). When it is balanced with the incorporation of perspectives, the critical tradition supports Africanization, Indigenous methodologies, and the recognition of local knowledge systems in curriculum design and pedagogical practices (Bianchi, 2009; Mbembe, 2016).

It moves beyond critique to promote transformation, seeking to reimagine tourism education as a site of resistance, relevance, and relationality. Another dimension to this tradition is its advocacy for transformative learning, one that prepares students with the tools to respond to contemporary issues such as environmental degradation, economic inequality, and cultural commodification in tourism (Reid, 2003). Tribe (2006) also argues that the critical tradition has a mandate of

promoting epistemic justice. It does so by acknowledging Eurocentric knowledge systems and their dominance in tourism education, thereby calling for the integration of Indigenous and local knowledges. From a pedagogical standpoint, Caton (2012) teaches that educators who are located within this tradition utilize critical pedagogy to foster reflective and participatory learning environments. According to her, "critical pedagogy in tourism education challenges students to critically reflect on their role in the perpetuation or dismantling of injustices in tourism" (Caton, 2012, p. 203).

In a nutshell, the critical tradition in the study of tourism education is committed to interrogating tourism's deeper social, cultural, and political dimensions. It centers its discussions around power relations, historical inequalities, and questions whose knowledges and voices are legitimized (Hollinshead, 2004). It challenges the status quo, and creates room for counter-narratives, particularly from post-colonial, feminist, Indigenous and the Global South perspectives.

2.5 Intersections and Contestations

Though each of these traditions is foundationally different in orientation, Tribe (2005) points out that in practice, tourism education programs often exhibit hybridity, combining elements from each of the traditions. The truth, however, is that there are also tensions. The dominance of vocational and liberal approaches, especially in institutions shaped by colonial and neoliberal logics, often marginalizes critical perspectives. As a result, the transformative potential of tourism education is reduced unless deliberate efforts are made to center critical and decolonial pedagogies. There is therefore the need to reframe tourism education as a cultural site where struggles over knowledge, identity, and power are enacted (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015). Within this frame, the critical tradition provides an avenue for resistance to epistemic injustice and offers a platform for rethinking what tourism education can and should do, particularly in African contexts (Akama, 2004; Ndlovu, 2022).

2.6 Culture/Educational Culture

Linstead (2001, p. 1) defines the culture of any given organizations as "their beliefs, values, behaviour patterns, and understandings that are shared by members of that organization and which

are distinctive of it". In educational contexts however, Hofstede (2001) describes *culture* as the whole framework within which educational activities take place. Within an academic institution such as a university, the cultural fabric of academic departments embodies the values and convictions held by stakeholders, rooted in tradition, and communicated through verbal and nonverbal means (Bartell, 2003; Gunsalus *et al.,* 2019). This is what Hofstede (2001) emphasized by highlighting cultural values and their influence on learning environments, teaching styles, and educational interactions.

Educational stakeholders encompass faculty, students, board members, administrators, and support staff. The values and beliefs prevalent in academic departments significantly influence decision-making processes within universities and shape both individual and organizational behaviors (Gunsalus *et al.,* 2019). These behaviors typically stem from underlying assumptions and convictions, expressed through narratives, specialized terminology, and institutional norms (Bartell, 2003; Sporn, 1996). In simple terms, a university or academic departmental culture can be seen as the 'personality' of that department.

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terms, a university or academic departmental culture can be seen as the 'personality' of that department.

The educational culture defined in the context of academic institutions is multifaceted and dynamic. It is a construct that shapes the experiences of students, faculty, and administrators. Barnett (2020) argued that the educational culture influences not only learning processes, but also pedagogical approaches, and institutional policies. The educational culture of institutions is also rooted in historical traditions, socio-political contexts, and institutional values. It also provides the parameters regarding how knowledge is constructed, transmitted, and contested within academic spaces (Barnett, 2020). It is important to point out that while academic institutions, particularly universities, serve as sites of knowledge production and dissemination, they also function as places where power, ideology, and identity intersect, and these altogether reinforce or challenge dominant epistemologies (Apple, 2019). In postcolonial societies where Eurocentric curricula has been persistent in higher education, several critiques have been levelled, and calls made to decolonize education to prioritize Indigenous epistemologies and diverse ways of knowing (Mbembe, 2016).

We must also note that institutional norms surrounding assessment, faculty-student dynamics, and pedagogical methodologies all shape educational culture, either encouraging or impeding the possibilities of critical engagement and reflexivity (Freire, 2018). A key issue in recent developments is that the implementation of neoliberal policies in higher education has ushered in market-driven logics that privilege efficiency, competition and the commodification of knowledge instead of an invitation to understand education as a space where inclusivity and transformation can happen, particularly from local and Indigenous perspectives (Giroux, 2014). This development has implications for academic freedom, research priorities, and student engagement, as institutions increasingly align their objectives with economic imperatives rather than educational equity and Indigenous viewpoints (Shahjahan, 2021). Technological advancements and digital learning environments have also reconfigured traditional educational cultures, presenting new possibilities for accessibility and innovation but also raising serious concerns about surveillance, data control, and digital divides (Selwyn, 2016).

Due to the complex nature of educational cultures, there is an ongoing debate to unpack how academic institutions uphold or dismantle systems of exclusion. Hooks (1994) charges educators therefore to continue to play their role in shaping environments that encourage critical inquiry, epistemic diversity, and social justice oriented scholarship.

2.7 Culture of Tourism Education

The discussion of culture and educational culture, within the context of tourism education is important as it contributes an understanding to how institutional traditions, values, and pedagogical frameworks influence the teaching and learning of tourism. As discussed in the works of Linstead (2001), Hofstede (2001), Bartell (2003), and Gunsalus *et al.* (2019), we see how cultural norms influence curriculum design, faculty perspectives, student engagement, and knowledge production in tourism studies. Hofstede's (2001) concept of culture as the overarching framework within which education takes place is particularly useful in understanding how tourism education is structured and delivered in universities. Additionally, curriculum design, pedagogical approaches, and the overall student experience in tourism studies within academic departments is heavily influenced by the cultural dynamics of that department. When we recognize the role of educational culture in academic departments, it provides us a critical lens for analyzing how traditional and contemporary educational values intersect within tourism education, especially in the context of decolonizing curricula and fostering inclusive learning environments.

In Ghana where the colonial legacies persist in higher education, the study of cultural influence in tourism education is especially useful in a postcolonial discussion. Cultural influences are dominant in Ghanaian tourism education in the content of Western-centric tourism models and curriculum design and instructional methodologies that prioritize Euro-American perspectives over Indigenous knowledges systems (Acheampong, 2022; Boakye, 2021). In addition, power asymmetries in knowledge production are perpetuated by, for example, cultural representations that tourism marketing and education reinforce. Pritchard and Morgan (1998) explain that tourism promotional imagery frequently reproduces Eurocentric notions, framing non-Western cultures as "exotic" or "other." Not only does this process reinforce stereotypes, but it also shapes the

structure of tourism education by largely prioritizing Western tourism theories and practices, while failing to include Indigenous knowledges and perspectives.

It is critical to mention that tourism education does not occur in a vacuum. Both tourism and culture are shaped by educational cultures, defined as the group beliefs and attitudes, institutional values, pedagogical norms and epistemological structures that underpin how tourism is taught and learned. Bartell (2003) makes it clear that the culture of academic departments also reflect the result of long-standing habits and customs. Literature reveals that the Ghanaian culture of tourism education is susceptible to the coloniality of educational structures, prioritizing Western epistemologies over local and Indigenous ones (Acheampong, 2022; Boakye, 2021). This Eurocentric approach has heavily shaped curriculum design, pedagogies and research agendas that further perpetuate the global hegemony of Western tourism theorists' narratives. Sadly, this neglects African-centered perspectives on tourism as a phenomenon. Tribe (2016) taught that tourism education has traditionally been approached as an industry subject, privileging technical training over critical and decolonial positions. This has led to tourism education programs prioritizing the preparation of students for employment in globalized tourism resorts and agency industries and failing to address socio-cultural and political dimensions of tourism development.

Tourism education in academic institutions must be reimagined with decolonization in mind. Institutions where tourism education takes place must begin to integrate Indigenous knowledges systems, rethink pedagogical approaches, and adopt curricula that appropriately reflects the lived experiences and perspectives of the locals. Basically, this means that Academic institutions must begin to undergo "epistemic de-linking", a process of rejecting Western-centric knowledge systems and accepting alternative, locally relevant ways of knowing (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015).

2.8 Conceptualization of Power

There are many difficulties in conceptualizing power, hence the idea that it is a contested concept. According to Reed (1997, p. 567), power is seen as an "ability to impose one's will or advance one's own interest". It exists in "a relationship among social actors in which one social actor can get another social actor to do something that the other would not otherwise have done" (Pfeffer,

1981, p. 3). It is important to clarify and acknowledge the explicit and hidden power influences amongst stakeholders (Kennedy & Augustyn, 2014; Tiew *et al.*, 2015). This is important for understanding the power differences between different actors, such as host communities, tourists and other stakeholders involved in tourism.

Michel Foucault is widely acknowledged as one of the most influential thinkers in the Western intellectual tradition (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982; McNay, 1994; Sheridan, 1980). To date, some scholars in postmodernism and cultural studies (Hollinshead, 1994; Labone, 1996; Rojek, 1992; Urry, 1990) have employed Foucault's concepts in the study of tourism and power relations. They have interpreted power in very generalized terms and have utilized Foucault's particular concept of power in many ways. Given that my dissertation critically examines the intersections of tourism education, colonial legacies, and knowledge production, Foucault's theoretical contributions provide a valuable framework for interrogating how discourses shape academic institutions and the epistemologies they prioritize. His work on power/knowledge and governmentality is particularly relevant in understanding how colonial ideologies persist in educational settings and influence the structuring of tourism curricula, making this discussion a crucial element of the broader analysis of my dissertation.

2.8.1 Foucauldian Notions of Power

The key features of Foucauldian power, relevant to the study tourism education, include two fundamental points. First, Foucault (1978, p. 93) challenges what he sees to be a mainstream conceptualization of power as 'a certain strength' with which people are endowed. He elaborated on his idea by explaining that power is a group of institutions and mechanisms that ensure the subservience of the citizens of a given state. Second, Foucault reconsiders power in a more fluid way than that suggested by an inventory of formal laws and rules, or a vision of an exercise of power by one dominant group over another. As Foucault was concerned, power is a "complex strategical situation" (Foucault, 1978, p. 93), consisting of "multiple and mobile field of force relations" (Foucault, 1978, p. 102) that are never completely stable. He therefore viewed power as a relationship rather than an entity, and in seeing power flow in multiple directions.

Foucault (1978) considers to features of power as necessary for consideration in tourism education contexts. These are: the *omnipresence* of power, and power as *relationships*. In explaining power in all human affairs, Foucault describes power as being everywhere, hence, what he calls the Omnipresence of Power. This idea carries the idea that power is produced from one moment to the next, at the very point, or rather in every relation from one point to another (Foucault, 1978, p. 93). He therefore suggested that there is the need to interpret all situations as embedding power relationships. In tourism education contexts within academic institutions, power exists in the day-to-day relations of members of that institution. Given such an orientation, power is to be expected to be present in institutions of all kinds (Cheong & Miller, 2000). Power is present in academic departments and the institutions as a whole.

The next feature of Foucauldian power is the idea that power is in a network of relations. Foucault (1978) argues that power is not a commodity, or a possession tied to a particular individual or collective entity. Here, Foucault's (1978, p. 99) idea is that it is not about who has the power, or who is deprived of it; rather, the pattern of the modifications which the relationships of force imply by the very nature of their process. Instead of stressing the role of the individual per *se*, Foucault emphasizes one's place or position within a network of relations (Cheong & Miller, 2000). He does not disregard the role of human agency and its power to transform society. He believed that individuals are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. By this elusive character of power which is "circulating and never localized here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth" (Foucault, 1980b, p. 98), a variety of people can possess and dispossess power in varying circumstances, and at different points in time and place. This description of power, by Foucault is key in understanding tourism education and colonization relationships. For example, if power operates through institutions, disciplines, and discourses, then tourism education is not just a neutral space for learning but a site where power is exercised, shaping how knowledge about tourism is produced, taught, and internalized.

Cheong and Miller (2000) point out that this idea of power relations also defies the binary social structure of "dominators" on one side and "dominated" on the other. Instead, the specific and

multiple production of relations of power manifests itself in different localized settings with their own rationalities, histories, and mechanisms (Foucault, 1988b, pp. 37 - 38).

2.9 Power and Knowledge Production

Foucault (1980) continues to explain that power and knowledge are inextricably linked. That is, knowledge is not neutral at any point; rather, it is always shaped by power structures, and power is exercised through the production, organization, and dissemination of knowledge. In the educational cultural contexts of academic institutions, this means that tourism education is not just about teaching tourism philosophies and/or facts but also about reinforcing or resisting worldviews, values, and hierarchies. By this, Foucault (1980) challenges traditional notions of power as something imposed from above, for example, by the state or a ruling class, and instead highlights how power operates diffusely through discourses, institutions, and practices. When we bring this within academic institutional contexts, this means that curricula, research agenda, and pedagogical methods are not merely about transmitting objective knowledge but are embedded in broader power relations that determine which perspectives are legitimized and which are marginalized (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015). In the context of tourism education, this concept is useful for analyzing how colonial and Eurocentric frameworks continue to shape understandings of tourism development, heritage, and cultural representation in local contexts.

Again, Foucault (1991) in his later work introduced the idea of governmentality. This is a term he developed to refer to the ways in which modern states exercise power not just through laws and force but through the shaping of behaviors, self-regulation, and institutions. Foucault (1991) argues here that this form of governance extends beyond direct political control to include subtle mechanisms that influence individuals' actions, norms, and ways of thinking. A major example he uses in the key role educational institutions play in governmentality by regulating knowledge, shaping professional identities, and normalizing particular discourses. In tourism education for instance, governmentality can be seen in how students are trained to view tourism primarily through economic and managerial lenses, often neglecting critical perspectives on sustainability, social justice, and decolonization.

2.10 Power in Tourism Education

From the above discussion on power, it is clear that it is an important factor in education, as it affects the production and licensing of knowledge. By power, I refer to Foucault's (1977) argument that power is inscribed within institutions, discourses, and practices, thereby reinforcing and reproducing hegemonic systems. It runs through curricula, pedagogical approaches, accreditation systems, and research funding, while also favoring Western epistemologies over localized and Indigenous knowledges systems in tourism education. As a result, frameworks in tourism education in Ghana, for example, have been dominated by Western theories and frameworks. Again, we see power at play in tourism education through language and representation (wa Thiong'o, 1986). Unfortunately, a large number of tourism discourses are grounded on those Western perspectives that create and maintain power hierarchies that dominate non-Western voices (Pritchard & Morgan, 1998). In Ghana for instance, these power hierarchies are embedded in the language of instruction, books by Western authors, and several Eurocentric case studies that are used in classrooms. This influences how students both view and understand tourism.

One more thing worth noting is that as it relates to whose knowledge receives greater value and voice in tourism education, the historical, cultural, institutional, and epistemic conditions of participating parties determine the power relations. Gramsci (1971) clarified this using the concept of hegemony, explaining how the dominant ideology of tourism education for instance is reproduced through 'the ability to present an ideological understanding of the world as common sense and, hence, unquestionable' (Kelly, 2011, p. 126). This can be best illustrated by the ongoing Eurocentric nature of tourism education in many parts of the Global South, where Western knowledge is normalized as representing the 'God-eye' (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015) and all other knowledge as not matching up. Hall and Tucker (2004) put this explanation forward to highlight this relationship. They argued that tourism education inadvertently reinforces neocolonial power relationships when Western theories, perspectives, methodologies, and recognition schemes are privileged, while neglecting local and Indigenous scholars, theories, perspectives, methodologies and ways of knowing.

Additionally, power relations in tourism education are also maintained in how academic publishing and research funding operate. Hollinshead (2020) argued that the hegemony of Western institutions has produced academic colonialism in tourism studies characterized by the West leading the canon of the field, both directing research agendas and suppressing non-Western scholars. This inequality perpetuates power structures in the global tourism education system, where it becomes difficult for non-Western scholars to introduce local contexts into global academic discussions (Cohen, Cohen & King, 2018). This is why scholars like Chambers and Buzinde (2015) argue for decolonizing tourism education through timely discussion of Indigenous knowledges systems, frameworks for academic partnerships that unsettle and dismantle hegemonic systems and reworking tourism curricula to position local perspectives and realities at their center.

Carnicelli and Boluk (2020) offer a compelling framework for understanding how tourism education can both reproduce and resist systems of oppression. Their concept of *critical tourism pedagogy* challenges the dominant neoliberal and Eurocentric paradigms that have historically shaped the field. In this advocacy, they call for an approach grounded in social justice, reflexivity, and transformation instead of existing neoliberal and Eurocentric ones. This perspective resonates with the central aim of my dissertation, which is to interrogate how colonial power relations continue to influence tourism education at the University of Cape Coast and to explore possibilities for epistemic decolonization.

2.11 New Approaches to Tourism Education

The growth in overall tourism numbers and the resultant provision by many universities in tourism education programs has necessitated the need for industry and academia to work together to facilitate a symbiosis. Sheldon *et al.* (2016) argue that the intersection of tourism and universities is a powerful nexus of potential influence. They suggested that from the tourism industry perspective, and in the coming decades, tourism employment needs to have a very different profile than it does today. “Students entering the uncertain world of the future and, in particular, the vulnerable tourism sector needs different skills, aptitudes, and knowledge to succeed. To meet the challenges of the next few decades, tourism educational systems, however, need radical change”

(Sheldon *et al.,* 2013, p. 3). Kim and Jeong (2018) also emphasize how the landscape of tourism higher education is dramatically changing. They observed that the change is mainly influenced by internationalization and advanced technology, along with demographic shifts such as aging population and growing minorities. As a rapidly evolving and diverse industry, tourism demands a workforce equipped with the latest knowledge and skills to navigate its complexities.

These concerns, together with challenges facing the tourism industry and tourism educators, universities, and other institutions of higher learning, necessitate new approaches to tourism education (Kim & Jeong, 2018; Sheldon *et al.,* 2003; Wang, Ayres & Huyton, 2010). Traditional approaches to tourism education have often fallen short in keeping up with the industry's dynamism. In response to these challenges, new approaches to tourism education are emerging, aiming to provide students with a holistic understanding of the industry, foster critical thinking, and embrace technological advancements. Numerous initiatives, campaigns, and endeavors have been undertaken to champion more flexible approaches to tourism education within academic environments. One notable example is the Tourism Education Futures Initiative (TEFI). TEFI was born as a guiding influence, aiming to offer vision, knowledge and a structural foundation for tourism education programs aimed at addressing these challenges. The objective of TEFI was for these programs to foster global citizenship and cultivate optimism for a world that conscientiously addresses these issues.

2.11.1 Tourism Education Futures Initiative (TEFI)

TEFI was established in 2007 by a consortium of prominent tourism educators who recognized the evolving landscape awaiting future graduates in the tourism and hospitality sectors, necessitating a fundamental overhaul and reconfiguration of universities and tourism institutions. TEFI advocates not merely for incremental changes, such as adding new courses or transitioning to online platforms, but rather for a transformation in both the content and delivery of education. Central to TEFI's philosophy is the belief that tourism programs must delineate the essential values, knowledge, and competencies that graduates require to lead positively, responsibly, and effectively (Sheldon *et al.*, 2013).

In 2010, over 70 representatives from leading universities offering tourism study programs convened to articulate a vision, impart knowledge, and devise a framework for tourism education programs geared towards fostering global citizenship for a more promising world. They emphasized five key values: *Stewardship, Knowledge, Professionalism, Ethics, and Mutual Respect.* TEFI's overarching vision extends beyond reshaping tourism education; it also aims to guide industry leaders towards practices rooted in fundamental values. In addition to the 2010 meeting, Working Groups emerged from the TEFI initiative, presenting their tools and findings at the TEFI World Congress held at Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, from May 18 to May 21, 2011. These Working Groups undertook various activities, including crafting a faculty and student code of ethics, implementing an outreach pilot program to universities worldwide, and developing a values inventory for program assessment.

TEFI's rationale for developing a value-based approach to tourism education is based on the premise that "the intersection of the tourism industry and universities is a powerful nexus for tourism education in that both universities and tourism are products of the world - hence, a paradox exists in that they are both shaped by the world and have the potential to shape it" (Sheldon *et al.,* 2013, p. 4). Consequently, TEFI contends that tourism educators and institutions should not only critique but actively engage in shaping a productive world by nurturing a highly skilled workforce. During the inaugural TEFI summit, participants explored prospective scenarios that future tourism education programs might need to accommodate to align with evolving societal needs. After extensive deliberations, it became evident that attempting to design programs tailored to numerous or singular future scenarios was fraught with uncertainty. However, consensus emerged around the adoption of a value-based approach, one capable of equipping students with foundational tools to navigate and adapt to the uncertainties of the future, regardless of the specific world scenario that unfolds.

TEFI identified five core value-based principles - ethics, stewardship, knowledge, professionalism, and mutuality - that should underpin tourism education programs, shaping students into responsible leaders and stewards of the destinations they inhabit or serve (Sheldon *et al.,* 2013). These values are depicted conceptually as interconnected Value Principles, highlighting their

interwoven nature and permeability. The members of TEFI advocate for educators to integrate subsets of these five value principles into their courses as per their contextual needs. *Figure 2.1* below shows the TEFI values of tourism education.

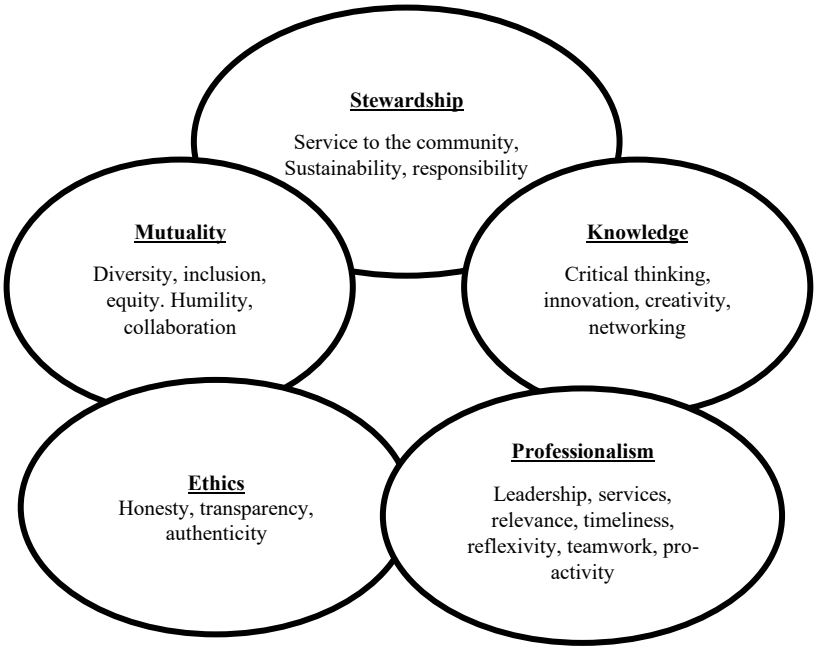


Figure 2.1 *The TEFI values of tourism education*
Sheldon *et al.* (2014)

Ethics as a value involves distinguishing between right and wrong behavior. It serves as the foundation for moral conduct and offers a structure for evaluating behaviors. According to Jamal and Menzel (2008), ethical behavior entails striving for actions perceived as morally sound and "good", guided by principles and values. Moreover, ethical behavior encompasses the explicit articulation of these principles and values, along with transparent decision-making processes (Fennell, 2000; Hudson & Miller, 2005). Acknowledging that morally upright actions are influenced by distinct value systems underscores the necessity for comprehending and respecting actions stemming from various ideological frameworks. TEFI therefore advocates that those processes involved in tourism education, including but not limited to teaching and learning, must be imbibed with ethics as a core value.

Knowledge is another value which TEFI recommends should be part of every tourism education effort. The key concern here is that knowledge creation, as part of tourism education, should address issues of critical thinking, creativity, and networking. Knowledge involves more than just summary descriptions of things around us and things in context. Broadly defined, it refers to several things: first, it refers to the skills and expertise a person acquires through education and experience. Secondly, knowledge encompasses both theoretical and practical comprehension of a subject, as well as the accumulation of facts and information within a particular field. Moreover, it denotes the awareness or familiarity gained through direct experience of a fact or situation. It is crucial to acknowledge, as highlighted by Barber (2011), that existing knowledge serves as the foundation for new knowledge, indicating that knowledge acquisition involves interpretation and contextualization. Consequently, it is imperative to respect the knowledge of others while equally valuing and questioning existing knowledge (Sheldon *et al.,* 2014).

Another fundamental aspect of the TEFI values is *Stewardship*, which entails the responsibility to nurture and care for something or someone, coupled with the obligation to act accountably. According to Barber (2011), stewardship encompasses activities related to sustainability, responsibility, and community service. The significance of stewardship is deeply intertwined with the concept of sustainable development (Liburd, 2010). This definition implies that tourism educators and students should assume leadership roles in promoting sustainability, responsibility, and community service. The value of stewardship lies in the belief that if all stakeholders, including tourism educators and students, take responsibility for the future of the planet in tourism, it will lead to an adaptable approach to tourism education that fits diverse future societies. In essence, stewardship becomes operational when individuals and organizations acknowledge their responsibilities and act accordingly (Sheldon *et al.,* 2013).

The next pillar of the TEFI values is *Professionalism*, which entails aligning personal and organizational conduct with professional and ethical standards, encompassing responsibility, service, and a commitment to lifelong learning and improvement (Haga, 1976). Dredge *et al.* (2015) characterize professionalism as aspiring to uphold the highest professional standards,

supported by elements such as relevance, leadership, practicality, timeliness, partnerships, teamwork, service, and reflexivity.

The final element of the TEFI values framework is *Mutuality*, defined by Dredge *et al.* (2015, p. 42) as "a process that is evolving and dynamic, emphasizing that achieving mutual respect is a long-term and even lifelong learning process that can be developed at different levels, starting from the individual to the society and global levels". The TEFI framework recognizes mutual respect as inherently grounded in human relationships, necessitating continuous attitudinal evolution and dynamism. In the context of tourism education, this entails embracing a humanistic approach to tourism, encompassing principles of inclusion, humility, diversity, equity, and collaboration (Dredge *et al.,* 2015). Mutuality also involves self-awareness of structural and systemic inequalities, acceptance, empowerment, open-mindedness, and a constant re-evaluation of cultural perspectives (Barber, 2011; Dredge *et al.,* 2015; Sheldon *et al.,* 2013).

2.11.2 Aligning TEFI's Value-Based Framework with Critical Ethnography for Decolonizing Tourism Education

As established in the mandate of TEFI, it is clear that the initiative goes beyond incremental changes in curriculum or digital learning formats, to advocating for a fundamental shift in the values, knowledge, and competencies embedded within tourism programs (Sheldon *et al.*, 2013). I argue, based on this approach that the transformation TEFI seeks aligns closely with critical ethnography's role in illuminating power dynamics, colonial influences, and systemic inequities within tourism education contexts (Madison, 2019).

Later in this dissertation, I will take a deep dive into critical ethnography, as my chosen methodology and how that aligns with the purpose of my study. But to demonstrate how my methodology aligns with TEFI's framework, I start by siding with Denzin and Lincoln (2018) in stating that as an approach, critical ethnography emphasizes the examination of hegemonic structures and the ways in which colonial histories continue to shape contemporary education. Bringing this into the context of tourism education, it represents the interrogation of how existing curricula, pedagogical practices, and institutional frameworks perpetuate colonial ideologies.

Fusing critical ethnography with TEFI's value-based framework, particularly stewardship, ethics, and mutuality, we are provided a lens through which we challenge and reshape tourism education in ways that decolonize knowledge production and dissemination (Mbembe, 2016).

Taking TEFI's value of mutuality into consideration, we see the promotion of diversity, inclusion, and humility. These elements parallel decolonization and critical ethnography's objectives of amplifying marginalized voices (Dredge *et al.*, 2015). Practically, by integrating Indigenous and local perspectives into tourism education, critical ethnography aligns with TEFI's mandate of fostering a more equitable and ethical tourism sector. Additionally, TEFI's commitment to knowledge, which calls for critical thinking, creativity, and networking, also suggests that tourism education must critically engage with its historical foundations and seek alternative ways of knowing different dominant Western epistemologies (Sheldon *et al.*, 2013). This reinforces the need for decolonial educational approaches that dismantle Eurocentric perspectives and integrate Indigenous ways of knowing (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015; Smith, 2012).

The TEFI framework is also important for discussions regarding the link between colonization and tourism education. It constitutes an important structure for creating ethical and sustainable values within educational systems. In this light, TEFI's focus on stewardship, which encompasses responsibility, sustainability, and community service, in an environment where colonial legacies continue to plague not just the tourism system but tourism studies themselves through Western-centered epistemologies and curricula, is critical to building a tourism education with responsiveness to local and Indigenous needs (Liburd, 2010).

Furthermore, the TEFI value of ethics calls for a re-examination of the moral and philosophical foundations of tourism education (Jamal & Menzel, 2008). In the Ghanaian context for example, this is important as colonial narratives still influence tourism policies and practices. By encouraging a model where the principles of the tourism curriculum can be made ethical by prioritizing local perspectives with control over their culture (Fennell, 2000; Hudson & Miller, 2005), educators can challenge existing paradigms and cultivate a new generation of tourism

professionals who are capable of balancing the requirements for tourism developers with the needs of Indigenous and local communities.

Over time, TEFI has broadened its scope to conceptualize education in a holistic manner (Dredge *et al.,* 2015), recognizing that students in higher education are the future industry, government, and third sector stakeholders. Consequently, TEFI conferences and the collective efforts of its members strive to develop an agenda that encompasses teaching, research, and service functions within the realm of tourism education. (Dredge *et al.,* 2015; Dredge & Schott, 2016). Figure 2.2 shows TEFI's expanded agenda in summary.

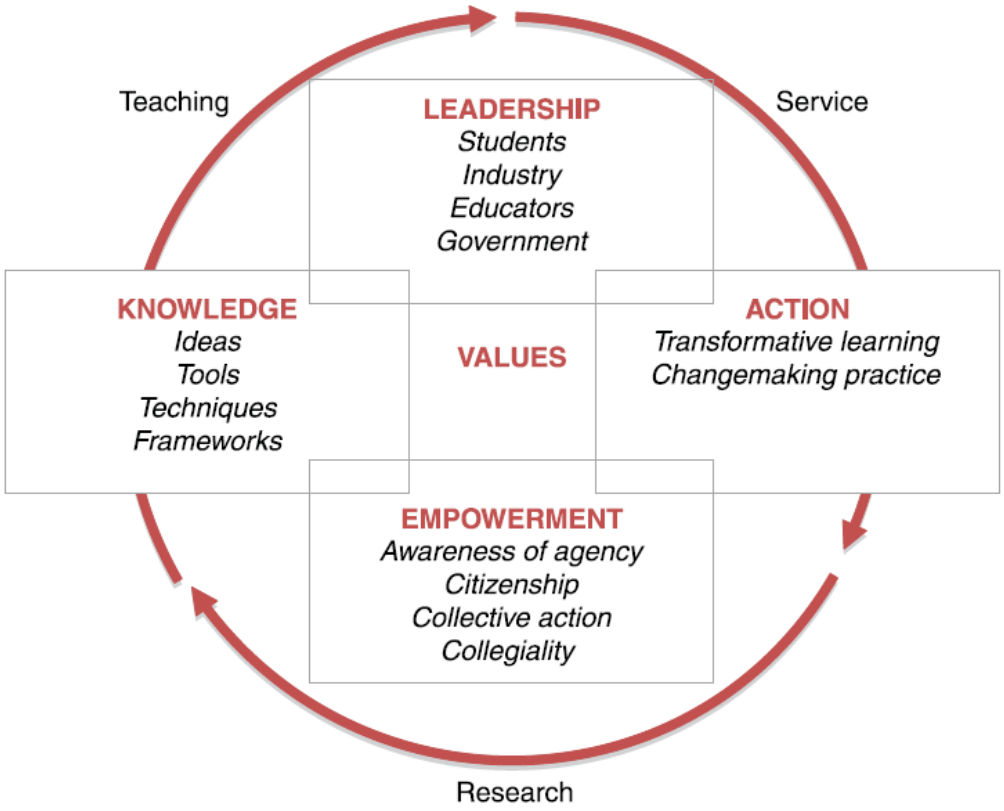


Figure 2.2 *TEFI's core agenda*
Dredge *et al. (*2015).

Recent scholarship has drawn attention to the coloniality that continues to be present in tourism education, enabling hegemonic understandings of tourism to marginalize non-Western knowledges (Hollinshead, 2020; Chambers & Buzinde, 2015). While TEFI proposes a shift towards a value-based education system, postcolonial countries like Ghana, still lack the proper operationalization and understanding of how to implement this shift in these societal, political and religious spheres. This is one of the reasons that through critical ethnography, I seek to bridge this gap by highlighting how tourism education sustains colonial ideologies, and to explore avenues for decolonial futures.

2.12 Defining Colonialism, Postcolonialism and Neo-colonialism

The concepts of colonialism, postcolonialism, and neo-colonialism are complexly interconnected and aid in the understanding of the historical and ongoing dynamics of power, influence, and identity in a world shaped by the legacies of colonization. To understand this interconnectedness, we can say that postcolonialism sheds light on how formerly colonized societies grapple with colonial legacies, while neo-colonialism highlights and describes how power dynamics persist even in the absence of formal colonial administrations.

2.12.1 Colonialism

The concept of colonialism is inherently complex and challenging to define. Horvath (1972) remarks that the evolving moral perceptions of colonialism contribute to its ambiguous understanding, stating that "…people feel strongly about colonialism – it has either been a dirty business engaged in by evil people, or a praiseworthy endeavor undertaken by fine gentlemen for the noble purpose of saving the wretched, savage, and unfortunate" (Horvath, 1972, p. 45). Similarly, Butt (2013) notes the diverse descriptions of historic and contemporary interactions between different peoples labeled as colonial or neo-colonial, illustrating the difficulty in defining the term. Young (2001) expands on the multifaceted nature of colonialism, highlighting its various manifestations over centuries, encompassing settler colonies such as British North America and Australia, administered territories like British India and Japanese Taiwan, and maritime enclaves such as Hong Kong, Malta, and Singapore.

From these perspectives, colonialism can be understood as the practice whereby one country extends its political, economic, and cultural dominance over other territories, often through the establishment of colonies or controlled territories exploited by the colonial power. This phenomenon was prevalent from the 15th to the mid-20th century, with European powers establishing colonies worldwide to extract resources, impose their culture and institutions, and exert control over Indigenous populations (Osterhammel & Frisch, 2005). However, defining colonialism is complicated by its interchangeability with imperialism. Kohn and Reddy (2023) argue that while colonialism typically refers to the settlement of regions such as North America, Australia, and New Zealand by permanent European residents, imperialism often denotes foreign governments administering territories without significant settlement, as seen in the scramble for Africa and American domination of the Philippines and Puerto Rico.

Butt (2013) further elaborates on this, suggesting that colonialism can be considered a specific instance of imperialism, characterized by domination and exploitation. Horvath (1972) identifies three recurrent characteristics of colonialism: *domination, cultural imposition,* and *exploitation.* Similarly, Butt (2013) emphasizes colonialism's role as a form of domination, involving control over territory and behavior. This domination, manifested in various institutional forms, often entails the denial of self-determination and the imposition of rule from a separate political jurisdiction. Additionally, colonial powers frequently seek to impose their culture and customs onto the colonized, whether through the promotion of racial or cultural superiority, the spread of specific religions, or the consolidation of political control (Horvath, 1972). Moreover, colonialism is intricately linked with the exploitation of colonized peoples, taking various forms such as the slave trade, misappropriation of cultural property and natural resources, establishment of exploitative trade relations, and imposition of capitalist modes of production (Butt, 2013; Chinea, 1996; Kalu & Falola, 2019; Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012).

2.12.2 Postcolonialism

Postcolonialism emerges as a broad theoretical framework and academic field of study examining the enduring impacts of colonialism and racism on social, political, and economic systems (Given,

2008). This approach seeks to analyze the cultural, social, and political effects of colonialism on both the colonizers and the colonized after the end of direct colonial rule.

Numerous postcolonial theorists have profoundly influenced the development of key concepts within the field as an intellectual discipline. Frantz Fanon's seminal work delved into the psychological impacts of colonialism, highlighting its effects on the psyche (Fanon, 1991). Edward Said is renowned for his formulation of "Orientalism", a concept that has significantly shaped postcolonial discourse (Said, 1979). Gayatri Spivak's contributions focused on the concepts of the "subaltern" and "essentialism", which have had a profound impact on postcolonial thought (Spivak, 1988). Additionally, Homi Bhabha emphasized the significance of psychoanalytical concepts such as ambivalence and hybridity in understanding colonialism (Bhabha, 1994). More recently, postcolonial studies have been characterized by a dedication to exploring the intricate connections between race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and various forms of social stratification (Given, 2008). These scholarly endeavors transcend a simplistic additive model of identity, instead analyzing how different forms of inequality intersect within specific discourses and historical contexts.

According to Given (2008), postcolonialism is characterized by the enduring impacts of historical racism and the evolving manifestations of oppression ingrained within contemporary international relations, which have emerged in the wake of national liberation movements in numerous countries across the majority world. Fajardo-Acosta (2005) underscores postcolonialism as a movement resisting colonialism and seeking to understand its historical emergence and lasting consequences, analyzing the experiences and subjectivities of colonial victims.

In essence, postcolonial theorists aim to elucidate how colonialism continues to shape power structures, identities, culture, and knowledge production in contemporary societies, shedding light on its enduring legacies amid processes of nation-building and globalization.

2.12.3 Neo-colonialism

Despite the claim of an official end of colonialism in the twentieth century, Wijesinghe, Mura and Bouchon (2017) suggest that neocolonial structures of power have continued to influence the political, socio-cultural, and economic arenas worldwide. Neo-colonialism refers to the continuation of economic and political control over formerly colonized countries by external powers, even after they have gained formal independence. Normally, this control is exerted through economic mechanisms like trade agreements, loans, and cultural influence, even without the overt presence of direct colonial rule. Mohawk (1992) noted that we have not come to an end of colonialism as some people may claim, but it is a phenomenon that is still happening. Huggan (1997) states that the world is still in neocolonial times, and this is characterized by unequal power relations, global hegemonies, racial oppression, widespread corruption, but to mention a few. Present day interactions between nations and the idea of the end of colonialism has sparked many debates about whether scholars should be talking about postcolonialism, or rather neocolonialism. For instance, Wijesinghe *et al.* (2017, p. 1265) questions the discussion of postcolonialism when to them, "colonialism is not over".

What neocolonialism does is that it highlights the ongoing workings of colonialism in today's global capitalist structures. Debitage (2012) laments that many nations (former colonies) continue in the constant production activities for the world market, and this continues to make them vulnerable to the demands of creditors and former colonizers. Neocolonialism has many things in common with colonialism. The major difference, however, is that unlike colonialism which is very direct, and the presence of colonizers very visible, neocolonialism is more indirect and subtle in nature. Subramani and Kempner (2002, p. 245) called neocolonialism the "salt in the water", referring to its domination as not visible and subtle in nature. Grosfoguel (2007) outlines how global organizations such as the United Nations, the World Bank, the United Nations World Tourism Organization, the International Monetary Fund, and several other organizations and corporations continue to be politically, economically, and culturally influenced, controlled, and led by countries from predominantly formerly colonizing regions. The resulting outcome is that developing countries (most of which are former colonies) perpetually continue to share in the suppression and control of these corporations through the systems of global capitalism, free market

policies, democracy, privatization, deregulation, and globalization. Of critical importance is the understanding that neocolonialism is not always a direct consequence of historical colonialism (Cywiński, 2015), but instead it is the product of both ongoing global forces and historical colonial structures of power.

Wijesinghe *et al.* (2017) cite the examples of countries considered now as superpowers, such as China, Japan, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand (i.e., BRICS countries) as gaining political, economic, technological, and cultural prominence and global influence, much like most former colonizers in the West. They noted that, these countries, despite being formerly considered as the "Other", now dictate technological advancements, socio-economic, and political environments, and how they should look like. Smith (2021) echoed this sentiment by stating that this development raises concerns about how we understand and conceptualize the world, because our understanding of knowledge production, and how various power structures in today's globalized and neocolonial era function is now complexly evolving.

2.13 Colonialism, Postcolonialism, Neocolonialism and Tourism Studies

Tourism studies have intersected significantly with the concepts of colonialism, postcolonialism, and neocolonialism. The roots of tourism can be traced back to the European Enlightenment and the Renaissance eras, gaining momentum with the advent of the Grand Tour, where privileged males from English, German, Scandinavian, and American backgrounds sought travel experiences beyond their usual environments. Consequently, theories within tourism studies primarily emerged within and for Western ideologies and perspectives. Winter (2009, p. 23) observed that "nearly all of the tourism field's fundamental concepts have been grounded in Western Europe and North America", including package tours, mass tourism, the tourist persona, sustainable tourism, and more. Scholarly discussions have often revolved around the persistent manifestations of colonial power dynamics within both tourism and tourism studies. Scholars such as Church and Coles (2007), Hall (1992, 1994, 2003, 2004), Hall and Tucker (2004), Mathieson and Wall (1982), Matthews (1978), and Richter (1989) have highlighted tourism's inherently political nature, a facet often overlooked by mainstream tourism research.

Within the framework of colonialism, postcolonialism, and neocolonialism, tourism studies shed light on the intricate relationships between these concepts and tourism. Boorstin (1972, p. 109), in "*The Image"*, defines tourism as "a form of experience packaged to prevent real contact with others", portraying it as a manufactured, superficial form of travel sanitized by commercialism. While contested, some authors suggest that tourism's nature allows for the reenactment of colonial processes and practices.

Lew, Hall, and Williams (2004) argue that (post)colonialism and tourism are closely intertwined, particularly through the pursuit of "exoticism" by tourists in former colonies. They elucidate how exoticism is deeply rooted in colonialism, turning tourist experiences of exotic landscapes into mere caricatures of the colonial past (ibid). Additionally, within the broader geopolitics of Western dominance, landscapes of colonized regions have been utilized as cultural canvases where meanings are imposed, erased, and overwritten (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 1995). Hall and Tucker (2004, p. 2) highlight the intimate relationship between tourism and colonialism, noting how "former colonies have become popular tourist destinations (the Pacific Rim; Asia; Africa; South America) while remnants of colonialism are transformed into tourist attractions, including Indigenous customs, artifacts, lifestyles, and histories".

Colonial dominance in tourism studies, in its holistic sense, manifests itself in many forms. Some of these include but not limited to "Eurocentrism" – the notion that Europe is the epicentre of knowledge, culture, economy and power, hence the histories and cultures of non-Western societies are viewed from an European or Western perspective (Fanon, 2007; Hollinshead, 1992; Ravi, 2020; Said, 1978); the construction of the "Other" – a phenomenon where some groups of people are labelled and defined as not fitting in the social norm, an idea controlled by groups that have greater political power (Aitchison, 2001; Fanon, 2007); and the construction of the "Exotic" – the cultural ideology that projects Western fantasies about profound cultural differences (Ashcroft, 2009; Fanon, 2007; Said, 1978).

The entanglement of tourism with colonialism is evident in various aspects such as identity, contestation, and representation, which are increasingly acknowledged as fundamental to the

essence of tourism, especially in light of scrutiny regarding the ethical underpinnings of tourism and tourism studies (Hall & Tucker, 2004). Nursalam (2016) posited that both tourism and narratives of (post)colonialism perpetuate the romanticized notion of the colonial exotic by fabricating geopolitical myths about destinations. This underscores a specific set of illusions that blend climatic and social conditions, fashioning them into paradisiacal imagery. For instance, in the context of Hawaii, the establishment of mercantile shipping connections between Hawaii and the US mainland laid the groundwork for both the annexation of the islands by the US and the emergence of a tourism industry, with commercial interests labeling the region as 'paradise' as early as the 1850s (Douglas & Douglas, 1996).

Pritchard and Morgan (1998) also discussed the various discourses of cultural representations in travel imagery that reflect stereotypes that privilege one culture or group over another. The authors shed light on gendered representations and power relations in tourism imagery. They argued that tourism's "promotional language and imagery privileges the white, male, heterosexual gaze" (Pritchard & Morgan, 1998, p. 118). For example, in their analysis of the Jamaican Tourist Board, the researchers explained that "appeals to the male gaze are abundant, with sinful suggestions beneath the tempting sunsets – maybe, the audience seems to be invited to think, with the barely clad, tempting girls with exotic skin – clearly this is marketed as a white, male heterosexual paradise" (Pritchard & Morgan, 1998, p. 127). Pritchard (2000, p. 247) pointed out that stereotyping is "a manifestation of the power of one to label or define another" and it is often resistant to change.

Pritchard and Morgan (1998) therefore argued that the representational paradigm of stereotyping is established through consensus within the dominant group, which also reflects Gramsci's position on socialization processes creating hegemonic structures. They assessed many national tourist boards in the Caribbean and East-Asia and found that many of them structured the representations and language in promotional material in structures that dominate the male, Western gaze. More specifically, Pritchard and Morgan (1998, p. 132) write, "by constructing what is 'Other' as feminine and often child-like, tourism discourses are affirming existing inequalities between nations, genders, races, and sexes. In other words, these authors note that through affirmations and

consensus among similar marketing strategies, certain positions are usually taken for granted as truth.

In many areas, the structural and economic legacies of colonialism are still evident in tourism. D'Hauteserre (2004, p. 237) argued that "tourism development, through its approach to Third World destinations (in the form of, for example, resort enclaves and "international standard" hotels), perpetuates colonial forms of interaction". This position is also echoed by Kothari (2015, p. 263) that resorts in enclaves, that is those developed on a territory or area that is different compared to the surrounding territory or area, or resorts that separate tourists from local community members, exemplify the continuing salience of tourism as a realm of colonial representations. This is an expanding global form of development that epitomizes the increasingly exclusionary division of space across a variety of global contexts.

In the words of Tucker (2019, p. 91), "the structural and economic colonialism legacies in tourism are clearly apparent in the ways in which tourism perpetuates particular global relations of domination and subordination that have their roots in the history of modern European colonialism". She argues that these global relations of domination and subordination are forms of neocolonialism. Her stance is also buttressed by her colleague, Michael Hall, and herself that neocolonial relationships exist when 'core' powers exercise influence over the postcolonial 'periphery' through the expansion of capitalism and economic power, as is often the case in global tourism relations (Hall & Tucker, 2004). Several scholars have discussed the concept of global tourism as a neocolonial phenomenon (see Craik, 1994; Edensor, 1998; Jaakson, 2004; and Tucker & Akama, 2009). These writers all concur with the idea that many of the economic and structural relationships that were previously based in colonialism are far from over.

As a matter of fact, tourism's legacy of colonialism is seen in the relationship shared between people as the person who 'tours' a place, on one hand, and the other whose place is 'toured'. In this case, the tourist originates from formerly colonizing regions to engage in tourism in formerly colonized regions (Tucker, 2019). This description mirrors previous colonial relationships, that is the 'agents of tourism', comprising, tourists, capital, and corporations, originating from the

'centre', whilst tourism happens in and to the 'periphery' (Akama, 2004; Fisher, 2004). These scholars' assertion that tourism in the present day is a neocolonial phenomenon is not a claim that has no roots. In fact, Britton (1982) argued earlier, stating that the global structure of international tourism as a luxury and pleasure-seeking industry generally entails 'rich' tourists from the metropolis (mainly from developed Northern countries) visiting tourist attractions in the periphery (mainly poor and resource-scarce countries in the South). Britton (1982, p. 347) argued further noting that "[…] the emergence of tourism as a means of achieving economic independence is inextricably linked to the historical process of colonization". In effect, Britton began to expose the tourism industry as part of a global system that is ultimately not designed to benefit the destinations who enable it.

Consequently, these destinations are relegated to a subservient position and recolonized by the industry which mostly does not serve them (Kincaid, 1988). For example, Scheyvens (2002) cites economic leakages as instances where tourism communities benefit less from tourism. In such cases, revenues that accrue from tourism businesses are unavailable to be reinvested in destination communities due to the foreign ownership of these businesses. Unfortunately, large-scale leakages are mostly associated with mass tourism, which is mostly externally controlled (Mbaiwa, 2005). In some cases, tourism jobs that are available to local community members are often low paying, require excessive hours, have poor terms and conditions, lack equal opportunity, and have high employee turnover (Goodwin, 2018). This, together with many other ordeals of tourism communities, substantiates Britton's (1982) call to situate tourism within the dialogue of development.

Finally, Henderson (2004) argues that another way tourism reinforces colonialism is tourism's colonial structural relationships, illustrated in tourism contexts where the demands and desires of tourists always seem to take precedence over the needs of the local community. Henderson (2004) noted that the precedence given to tourist needs, thereby creating inequalities and imbalances, are based on assumptions of the superiority of Western culture and European-Atlantic dominance. Brown (2013) extends the discussion of tourism as a form of neocolonialism by using the metaphor of tourists as colonizers. In her words, she states:

> "Today, tourism involves the voluntary displacement of people and capital often from the rich industrialized north to the tropical south…They have the resources to make choices, the impact of which, supported by the economic and political structures of capitalism, allow them to penetrate ever deeper into "host societies." Their presence in exotic landscapes results in the reterritorialization of the destinations that mimics the colonial enterprise" (Brown, 2013, p. 186).

2.14 Colonization, Tourism Studies and My Decolonial Perspective

The critical insights presented in the preceding sections on colonialism, postcolonialism, and neocolonialism have deeply informed my decision to engage with decolonial perspectives in my doctoral research. This literature presented demonstrates how tourism, far from being a neutral activity, is intricately entangled with the legacies and structures of colonialism, both in its historical origins and contemporary practices (Brown, 2013; Hall & Tucker, 2004; Winter, 2009). As a doctoral student who is interrogating the complex relationships between tourism education and colonization within a postcolonial context, particularly in Ghana, this critical perspective not only resonates with my lived and academic experiences but compels me to interrogate and offer resistance through my work, to the dominant paradigms that continue to marginalize Indigenous and local knowledges and experiences.

The text highlights the Eurocentric foundations of tourism knowledge, tracing its conceptual evolution through Western historical movements such as the Enlightenment and the Grand Tour. Winter's (2009) assertion that "nearly all of the tourism field's fundamental concepts have been grounded in Western Europe and North America" points to the epistemic imbalance that continues to shape tourism studies across the globe. Concepts such as "package tours", "mass tourism" and "tourist" are not neutral or universally representative but rather reflect particular Euro-American values and histories (Franklin, 2003; Urry, 2002; Winter, 2009). Framing such concepts with these biases makes alternative ways of knowing and experiencing tourism, particularly those rooted in African, Indigenous, or Global South epistemologies, almost neglected. With these assumptions in mind, taking up decolonial perspectives in my dissertation offers me a critical lens through

which I could challenge and transform the structures of knowledge production that exclude or marginalize non-Western voices.

Also, the literature highlights the representational imbalance embedded in tourism discourse, particularly through the construction of the "Other" and the "Exotic." In their works, scholars like Said (1978), Fanon (2007), and Ashcroft (2009) demonstrate how tourism continues to perpetuate colonial fantasies by objectifying host communities, reinforcing cultural stereotypes, and commodifying societies by reducing their complex formations to consumable images. These insights have deeply influenced my choice to engage with decolonial theories that prioritize critical reflexivity, ethical representation, and the dismantling of hegemonic discourses within tourism education.

The literature's analysis of tourism's structural and economic neocolonialism is relevant to why I chose to adopt decolonial perspectives for this work. From tourism models that separate tourists from local communities (D'Hauteserre, 2004; Kothari, 2015) to economic leakages where tourism revenues bypass local populations (Scheyvens, 2002; Mbaiwa, 2005), the tourism industry is portrayed as one that often sustains global inequalities under the guise of development. Brown's (2013, p. 186) metaphor of the tourist as a modern colonizer captures this dynamic well, describing how wealth, mobility, and capitalist structures enable tourists from the Global North to "penetrate ever deeper into host societies." This neocolonial relationship mirrors the dynamics of colonial domination, with former colonizers now returning as tourists, capitalists, and knowledge producers. This recognition prompts me to not only critique tourism as a global system of domination but also to explore ways in which tourism education can serve as a site of resistance and transformation.

Tourism education itself is not immune to these colonial influences. The content, pedagogy, and dominant frameworks of tourism education often reproduce Eurocentric assumptions and exclude Indigenous and local histories and epistemologies. The call to decolonize tourism studies, therefore, is not simply about changing what we study, but how we study, and who gets to produce and validate knowledge. While I am engaging with scholars such as Chambers and Buzinde

(2015), Mbembe (2016), Akama (2004), Naidoo *et al.* (2020), Hall and Tucker (2004), Smith (2012), Higgins-Desbiolles (2022), Foucault (1972, 1980), Tribe (2005) and Kincaid (1988), I am reminded that epistemic justice requires more than inclusion; it demands a fundamental rethinking of power, representation, and pedagogy. My decision to embrace decolonial approaches is, therefore, an ethical and scholarly imperative to unsettle dominant narratives and amplify voices from the margins, particularly in the DHTM, where it all began for me as a tourism scholar.

I must say that the literature exposes the persistent coloniality within tourism practice and scholarship, and in doing so, it calls all scholars, particularly those who are situated in postcolonial contexts like Cape Coast, Ghana, to resist complicity and seek epistemic transformation. Using this decolonial lens, I view my dissertation not just as an academic exercise, but as a contribution to a broader movement toward justice, equity, and the reclamation of Indigenous and local ways of knowing within tourism education.

2.15 Decolonization

Decolonization has had varying meanings and descriptions in different times, places, and subject positions. The concept has received much attention in recent times, and the multiple meanings the concept has taken is increasingly acknowledged by tourism scholars (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015; Lee, 2017). Within the field of tourism and practice, decolonization emerged from the critique of the industry as being colonizing. Till today, tourism's cultural, social, economic, and political formations are entangled with colonialism (Veracini, 2015; Wolfe, 2006). Strega and Brown (2015) project decolonization as having a dual political mandate against colonial power. First, it represents resistance (to colonial power) and second, resurgence (of Indigenous culture) (Strega & Brown, 2015). It is important to point out that decolonization as a concept has had several definitions and has been drawn upon by academia, institutions, and governments.

Fanon (2007) offers a radical perspective on decolonization, viewing it as a chaotic departure from a colonial state that is heavily influenced by the violence of the colonizer and remains unresolved in its potential trajectories. Fanon's (2007) decolonization represents a radically intentional move away from colonization. It is an agenda which is seen as the most provocative of the earliest,

critical studies of decolonization which followed the disassembling of French West Africa and the outbreak of violent resistance by the National Liberation Front in Algeria (Betts, 2012).

Fanon, Said, and Mignolo are key decolonial thinkers, and it is interesting to know that they have approached colonialism from different perspectives. While Fanon offers a reflective critique of colonial atrocities (Fanon, 2007), literature registers Said's approach as examining colonialism through the lens of European writers who portrayed the Oriental world in biased, Eurocentric literary texts (Said, 1978). Mignolo builds on Fanon's work to address colonialism from an epistemological standpoint. Building his argument around what he calls "coloniality of power", Mignolo argues that colonialism is not just a historical period but an ongoing structure that continues to influence contemporary global relations, knowledge production, and social hierarchies (Mignolo, 2003). Mignolo (2003) describes decolonization similarly to how Chambers and Buzinde (2015) describe it, calling it an epistemic project – a radical delinking from Western-centric ways of knowing, being, and organizing the world. Despite these differences, they have collectively provided a robust theoretical foundation for understanding how educational leaders can contribute to the decolonization of education. Like Grosfoguel's (2007), Mignolo (2003) emphasizes the need to recognize the epistemic dimension of colonialism - where Western ways of knowing and thinking are privileged over other knowledge systems.

Smith (2021), a Maori Indigenous academic activist who grew up in a world in which science and Maori beliefs and practices coexisted, cogently critiqued the cultural evolution of the entirety of Western concepts of research. At a time when Western forms of research created devastating effects on Indigenous Peoples and lands, Smith (2021) recommended a new Indigenous Research Agenda; one which aimed to replace all colonizing Western academic approaches. She emphasized the need to recognize that colonialism was not a finished business. She therefore called for decolonization, an agenda she reckons "involves performance of counterhegemonic theories that disrupt the colonial and postcolonial" (Denzin, Lincoln & Smith, 2008, p. xi).

Decolonial scholars like Grosfoguel (2007) characterize decolonization as an expansive endeavor aimed at reshaping both the framework and substance of discourse, striving to establish an

alternative ‘epistemic grounding’ rather than merely pursuing transformation within the confines of dominant Eurocentric paradigms. Chambers and Buzinde (2015) draw on Grosfoguel’s (2007) ideas of decolonization to inform their arguments around tourism’s epistemological decolonization. Another meaning of decolonization is the political and material process of returning autonomous control of Indigenous lands to Indigenous Peoples, and consequently, restoring or revitalizing Indigenous lifeways (Tuck & Yang, 2012). All the different meanings and forms of decolonization point out one key element – an active process that fosters the cultural, psychological, and economic freedom for Indigenous people with the core aim of achieving sovereignty over their lands, economic and socio-cultural systems (see Chambers & Buzinde, 2015; Chilisa, 2012; Fanon, 2007; Grimwood, Stinson & King, 2019; Kramvig, 2017; Smith, 1999; Tuck & McKenzie, 2014; Tuck & Yang, 2012).

Learning from all these decolonial thinkers, I re-echo, Cameron’s (2012) admission that decolonization is a tough grasp and the best she can land on is that decolonization is awkwardly turning both toward colonial knowledges (to critique them) and away from colonial knowledges (to amplify other ways of knowing and being). Colonial dominance, in its holistic sense, manifests in many forms. Some of these include but not limited to “Eurocentrism” – the notion that Europe is the epicentre of knowledge, culture, economy and power, hence the histories and cultures of non-Western societies are viewed from an European or Western perspective (Fanon, 2007; Hollinshead, 1992; Ravi, 2020; Said, 1978); the construction of the “Other” – a phenomenon where some groups of people are labelled and defined as not fitting in the social norm, an idea controlled by groups that have greater political power (Aitchison, 2001; Fanon, 2007); and the construction of the “Exotic” – the cultural ideology that projects Western fantasies about profound cultural differences (Ashcroft, 2009; Fanon, 2007; Said, 1978). Decolonization thus involves a move away from colonial dominance and its manifestations in tourism production, towards perspectives and worldviews that represent individuals, communities, and peoples, as a way of amplifying other ways of knowing and being.

It is important to also mention that even though decolonization has gained much popularity and importance, especially in recent scholarly work, practice and industry, some scholars have also

described ways in which decolonization is losing its focus as was initially envisioned by pioneer scholars. For example, Hirmer (2020) argued that the term 'decolonial' is often used as a mere trendy term that lacks radical re-thinking and restructuring. She writes: "While decolonization's widening scope is unconditionally welcome, it is often the very amplification of its reach that gives the semblance of a world that is increasingly decolonial, thus frequently exonerating academics, activists and lay people from persistently and scrupulously verifying that the structural and systemic changes essential for decolonization are implemented" (Hirmer, 2020, p. 121). Tuck and Yang (2012) also emphasized the need to not metaphorize decolonization. They argue that when decolonization is used as a metaphor "it recentres whiteness, resettles theory, extends innocence to the settler, entertains a settler future, and kills the actual possibility of decolonization" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 3).

Considering the potential of decolonization's commitment to embracing differing worldviews and perspectives (Hudson & Vodden, 2020) its adoption into tourism studies, education, management, and development in communities could be seen as the starting point for doing tourism in a manner that does not reinforce colonial outcomes. Many tourism scholars such as Stinson, Grimwood and Caton (2021), and Hollinshead and Suleman (2017) have adopted decolonization in tourism contexts to refer to different approaches to the workings of tourism. Scholars such as Dillette (2021) have examined diaspora tourism, a growing tourism phenomenon that connects ethnic communities to ancestral homelands, such as the recent North American interest in the slave route from Ghana.

It is important to note that decolonization is a complex and ongoing process, and its outcomes can vary widely depending on the specific historical, cultural, and political context of each case. Decolonization has been a significant global phenomenon in the 20th century, with many African, Asian, and Pacific Island nations gaining independence from colonial powers. However, its impacts continue to be felt today, as societies grapple with the legacy of colonialism and work toward more just, emancipatory, and equitable futures.

2.16 Epistemic/Epistemological Decolonization

In recent years, there has been a resurgence of interest in decolonial theory driven by global calls for knowledge decolonization. Central to addressing the epistemic challenges of colonialism is the concept of epistemic decolonization (Posholi, 2020). Alcoff (2007, p. 82) asserts that the epistemic repercussions of colonialism are perhaps the "most damaging, far-reaching, and least understood". This assertion underscores the belief within decolonial thought that "the primacy of the epistemic is crucial in dismantling coloniality" (Cheah, 2006, p. 10), with epistemology playing a critical role in shaping the next era of revolutionary thought and practice (Alcoff, 2011, p. 67). Decolonial examinations of epistemology reveal its role in establishing and perpetuating a hierarchy of knowledge and knowers tailored to colonialism's needs (Alcoff, 2007, p. 82). As an epistemological endeavor, decolonization carries a dual mandate. Firstly, it involves critically scrutinizing dominant paradigms of knowledge and core concepts to expose latent Eurocentrism. Secondly, it entails a reconstructive effort aimed at reformulating and reconstructing knowledge systems and norms (de Sousa Santos, 2018, p. vii), a duality of political mandates referred to as resistance (against colonial power) and resurgence (of Indigenous culture) by Strega and Brown (2015).

Posholi (2020) acknowledges that comprehending epistemic decolonization necessitates grasping the epistemological impetus behind contemporary calls for knowledge decolonization. This impetus stems from an epistemic crisis characterized by the inadequacy of dominant Eurocentric frameworks to theorize the global order effectively and address its key challenges. Eurocentric paradigms often fall short of delivering on modernity's promises and fail to offer viable solutions to contemporary world problems (Escobar, 2014). The entanglement of Eurocentric thought with colonialism and its hegemonic aspirations is seen as central to the failure of Eurocentric categories and concepts to accurately interpret the global order (Bhargava, 2013; Posholi, 2020; Quijano, 2007). De Sousa Santos (2013) argues that Eurocentric knowledge is limited in its scope and unable to effectively learn from the experiences of the wider world due to its colonialist attributes.

Given this epistemic crisis, proponents of epistemic decolonization advocate two general approaches: radical and moderate. The radical approach involves a fundamental epistemological

departure from Eurocentrism, transcending Western ideas and conceptual instruments to construct alternative frameworks (Mignolo, 2003, p. 85; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 7). This entails thinking beyond the colonialist Eurocentric paradigm and envisioning epistemological frameworks outside its confines (de Sousa Santos, 2016). The alternative, the moderate approach to decolonization acknowledges that, despite its entanglement with colonial domination and oppression, Eurocentric thought remains unavoidable and essential for conceptualizing the contemporary world (Chakrabarty, 2000). As Bhargava (2013, p. 416) suggests, "we cannot ignore Western ideas, nor can we entirely free them from the detrimental impacts of their imperial origins". This implies that we are already deeply entrenched in and influenced by Eurocentric thought; we cannot extricate ourselves from it completely. The notion that Western thought is inescapable implies that despite their problematic associations with colonialism and various injustices, Eurocentric conceptual frameworks still possess some capacity to aid us in understanding the world.

Grosfoguel's (2007) viewpoint on decolonization is one that is a far-reaching project with an agenda to change both the terms and the content of the conversation, and to develop a different 'epistemic grounding' rather than pursuing change within the context of prevalent Eurocentric paradigms. Chambers and Buzinde (2015) draw on Grosfoguel's (2007) ideas of decolonization to inform their arguments around tourism's epistemological decolonization. Chambers and Buzinde (2015) argued that epistemic decolonization must actively challenge and dismantle colonial or Eurocentric ways of thinking, knowledge production, and systems of knowledge dissemination. They also note that epistemic decolonization is a complex and ongoing process that goes beyond tourism studies and can have broader social, cultural, and political implications.

Therefore, the process of epistemic decolonization must recognize that colonialism did not only have material and political consequences but also deeply influenced how knowledge is constructed, validated, and transmitted.

2.17 Decolonizing Tourism Studies and Tourism Education

Tourism studies and education have operated within colonial and Eurocentric parameters and has therefore resulted in calls for decolonial action. Decolonial theory, particularly focusing on

epistemic decolonization, signifies a departure from convention and a pursuit of alternative avenues within tourism. It challenges existing norms and envisions alternative forms of tourism that disrupt established paradigms, fostering narratives, developments, and educational frameworks that prioritize justice, liberation, and relevance for local and Indigenous communities. Decolonial work in tourism studies and education helps to illuminate tourism's inextricable links with colonialism. For several decades now, tourism studies have richly engaged critical questions of colonialism. In the early 1980s, Britton (1982, p. 347) observed that the emergence of tourism in "third world" contexts as a means for achieving economic independence was inextricably linked to historical processes of colonialism. Pratt's (1992) analysis of travel writing, arguably one of the most incisive and influential works in tourism geography, sedimented how tourism narratives were used to validate the superiority of Eurocentric ideologies and imaginaries and condition audiences to understand themselves in relation to peoples and places represented in "remote", colonized lands.

Building on these studies, research in tourism has begun to explore the discursive connections between colonialism and tourism, recognizing postcolonial theory as a valuable reflexive framework for uncovering and analyzing colonial power dynamics (e.g., d'Hauteserre, 2004; Hall & Tucker, 2004). For instance, Palmer (1994) illustrated how the reliance of the Caribbean tourism industry on certain colonial imagery perpetuates ideologies that hinder host communities from forging their own self-defined identities. Consequently, decolonization has garnered increased attention among tourism scholars, who are becoming more attuned to its multifaceted meanings and applications (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015; Grosfoguel, 2007; Lee, 2017).

In the realm of tourism studies, Hollinshead *et al.* (2021), Stinson *et al.* (2021), and Chambers and Buzinde (2015) have delved into decolonization discourse, shedding light on perspectives resonating with many Indigenous Peoples and offering new approaches to conceptualizing and conducting tourism research. For instance, Chambers and Buzinde (2015) advocate for "tourism's epistemic de-linking", a concept they define as a rejection of Western epistemologies that view tourism from a detached, omniscient perspective, thus creating space for alternative ways of understanding and engaging with tourism. They contend that such critical theorizing can offer an

epistemological framework for tourism that validates the cosmologies of traditionally marginalized groups and actively empowers them.

2.17.1 Decolonization as Indigenist research

Wilson and Hollinshead (2015) introduced the term "Indigenist research", which encapsulates a radical and politically charged critique concerning modes of knowledge, practices, and representations that prioritize the perspectives of Indigenous Peoples. "That voice should be written *by* them, rather than continuing to only be *on or about* them" (Wilson & Hollinshead, 2015, p. 40). Miller (2017) defines indigenist research as research that prioritizes how Indigenous Peoples are treated and how resources are distributed. The literature on Indigenous tourism provides numerous instances illustrating how tourism initiatives can prioritize Indigenous community control and autonomy over their lands (Holmes *et al.*, 2016; Johnston, 2006), cultural narratives and adaptations (Notzke, 1999; Ryan & Aicken, 2005; Whitney-Squire, 2016), the transmission of knowledge and values (Walker & Moscardo, 2016), as well as economic and social development (Bennett *et al.*, 2010; Butler & Hinch, 2007; Colton, 2005).

Indigenist research is evident in several ways; three of which include (a) *working with communities*, (b) *centering Indigenous Peoples as tourists themselves, and* (c) *shaping tourism knowledge systems*.

Engaging with communities in research and development efforts can take different forms, each with its own implications. While working *on* communities might imply a one-sided extraction of resources or knowledge, working *for* communities can carry undertones of a savior complex. However, adopting a "working *with* communities" approach emphasizes mutual respect, shared learning, and collaborative creation. Additionally, centering Indigenous Peoples as tourists themselves prompts tourism researchers to 'delink' themselves from the tendencies of their Western gaze and settler stories, and open up to new questions and areas for critical inquiry and consideration (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015). This would include viewing tourism experiences and behaviors as an integral part of contemporary Indigenous lifestyles - as something pursued and used for intended benefits and/or enhanced quality of life. The story of Arctic tourism is one that

has so far ignored northern Indigenous Peoples as tourists themselves, an observation that echoes concerns raised by Peters and Higgins-Desbiolles (2012) in relation to the Indigenous tourism literature. Settler stories of Arctic tourism are ingrained with essentialist characterizations of who tours (non-Indigenous southerners) and whose culture and lands are toured (Indigenous northerners). When Indigenous perspectives and experiences are centred in tourism research, we discover that tourism may not be all the relevant within the fabrics and happenings of a community.

Thirdly, indigenist research is beginning to shape the tourism knowledge system. Scholars are rightfully advocating for greater inclusion of, and respect for, Indigenous knowledges in tourism research. Tribe and Liburd (2016) identify Indigenous knowledges as a key component of the tourism knowledge system, suggesting that:

> the explicit inclusion of Indigenous tourism knowledges in this system offers a site of resistance against possibilities of marginalization, exploitation and oppression in tourism which may be at the hands of nation states, or politically dominant ethnic groups that are actively or passively legitimized by the more established forms of knowledge production (p. 52).

Tribe and Liburd (2016) argue that respecting Indigenous knowledges represents a 'speaking back' to colonial essentialisms, erasures, and oppressions. While this imperative recognizes and helps amplify the power and agency of Indigenous Peoples, it risks placing the burden of colonial resistance squarely on the shoulders of those who have been historically oppressed by colonialism (Cameron, 2015). The parallel risk here is that Indigenous Peoples and knowledges are once again essentialized in tourism research, this time as colonial counter-narrative. Those who embody colonizer subjectively must assume greater responsibility for dismantling colonial structures. "Such a process requires one to decolonize self and critically ponder how the institution has molded him/her into who s/he is" (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015, p. 12).

2.17.2 Decolonization as a constructive project

Wilson and Hollinshead (2015) emphasize that for tourism scholars aiming to contribute to decolonization, it is also crucial to remain attentive to the evolving everyday governance structures

in their environment. Additionally, they must be mindful of the multifaceted and continually evolving identities and aspirations of the individuals their academic endeavors aim to impact. Simultaneously, scholars should maintain a reflective stance regarding their own roles as creators of knowledge. This approach to engagement is termed "critical multilogicality", drawing inspiration from the concept introduced by Kincheloe & Steinberg (2008). As a constructive project, that is, a project aimed at producing solutions to both practical and theoretical problems, decolonization can take many forms including restructuring tourism education and utilizing disruptive methodologies in tourism research.

2.17.2.1 Restructuring tourism education

A radical restructuring of tourism education challenges existing norms and envisions alternative forms of tourism that disrupt established paradigms, fostering narratives, developments, educational frameworks that prioritize justice, liberation, and local relevance. Decolonizing tourism education illuminates tourism's inextricable links with colonialism. As a constructive project, decolonizing tourism education encompasses a multifaceted approach aimed at challenging and dismantling colonial structures of power, knowledge, and representation (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015; Hollinshead *et al.,* 2021; Lee, 2017).

It involves recognizing and rectifying the historical injustices, epistemic violence, and cultural hegemony perpetuated by colonialism. Decolonization in this sense starts from the foundation – "epistemic de-linking" (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015). It involves rejecting Western epistemologies that position tourism as embodying a singular, all-encompassing perspective, thus creating opportunities for alternative modes of thinking, existence, and understanding within the realm of tourism. This radical project also involves *critical pedagogy* – a radical education that questions dominant narratives, challenge power structures, and fosters critical consciousness among learners (Carnicelli & Boluk, 2020; Lai & Kan, 2020), *centering Indigenous knowledges* (Landeros, 2019; Wilson & Hollinshead, 2015; Young & Maguire, 2017), and *extensive land-based learning* (Arellano, Friis & Stuart, 2019) - a radical education that often emphasizes experiential and land-based learning approaches that connect students with their local ecosystems, histories, and communities. It encourages students to interrogate their own assumptions, biases, and privileges,

and to engage critically with diverse perspectives and experiences. Overall, decolonization as radical education seeks to empower individuals and communities to critically engage with the legacies of colonialism, imagine alternative futures, and work towards a more just, equitable, and inclusive society. It involves ongoing reflection, dialogue, and collective struggle against all forms of oppression and marginalization.

2.17.2.2 Disruptive Methodologies

First, as a constructive project, decolonization can take the form of *disruptive methodologies.* Several methodologies such as autoethnography and collective memory work are examples of unique methodologies that are commonly now being undertaken by decolonial tourism scholars. Collective memory work (CMW) is utilized in disrupting conventional methodologies. CMW involves gathering a shared reservoir of memories, knowledge, and information within a social group that is closely linked to the group's identity (Roediger & Abel, 2015). This method has been applied in tourism studies, as demonstrated by works such as those by Fortin, Hurst, & Grimwood (2021) and Grimwood & Johnson (2022). It functions as a participatory, action-oriented methodology that encourages and supports a group of research participants, referred to as "co-researchers", to examine how their unconscious adherence to unquestioned beliefs contributes to the construction of social and ideological aspects of identity, including gender, race, sexual orientation, and other relevant social categories (Campbell & Kean, 2016). Haug (2008) underscores that this approach facilitates the generation of diverse forms of knowledge, leading to innovative learning methods. Essentially, CMW aims to uncover how individuals' narratives intersect with discourse and ideology, thereby implicating them in social structures that perpetuate oppression (Haug *et al.,* 1987). Other examples of disruptive methodologies include autoethnography and critical ethnography, the latter which is the chosen methodology for my dissertation work.

2.17.2.3 Language and Metaphor

Also, as a constructive project, decolonization has embraced the potency of language and metaphor. Highlighting the influential role of metaphor in shaping tourism experiences and environments, Stinson, Grimwood, and Caton (2021) advocate for the adoption of the metaphor of the common plantain (i.e. *Plantago major*). They argue that this metaphor instructs non-

Indigenous individuals on how to position themselves as active participants (or accomplices) in decolonization efforts. Following colonization, Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island noticed the proliferation of common plantain along the paths traversed by European settlers. This invasive, ground-hugging plant earned the moniker "White Man's Footstep" from various Indigenous communities and became esteemed for its medicinal and nutritional properties (Stinson, Grimwood & Caton, 2021). Drawing inspiration from Potawatomi scholar Kimmerer (2015), who underscores the significance of common plantain in helping settlers of Turtle Island "become naturalized to place" (p. 214), Stinson, Grimwood, and Caton (2021) illustrate how embodying the characteristics of common plantain unveils new meanings and avenues for conducting tourism and tourism research that are simultaneously mindful of and disengaged from colonization.

Specifically, they illuminate how *common plantain* teaches Settlers to be accountable to where they come from; to be discreet and humble as they work in relation to people and place; and to use their gifts to help heal and nourish. Becoming common plantain reflects a positionality in tourism that is much different than tourism researchers as knowledge experts and much different than tourists as consumers of spectacle and experience.

2.17.2.4 Re-storying tourism

Recurrent stories within tourism hinge on industry-oriented development desires of destination areas and communities as exotic and othered (Muller & Viken, 2017). The narrative of the Arctic as a pristine and hostile 'wilderness', home to extraordinary and vulnerable species and cultures and activities, is perhaps the most rampant in popular and media discourses. Similarly, the narrative of tourism in the Global South has historically been shaped by Eurocentric ideologies, positioning these places as exotic, primitive, and in need of Western intervention. This is evident in some branding of destinations as "untouched paradises", "hidden gems" or places where one can "escape" modernity – essentially reinforcing the idea that these regions are awaiting 'discovery' (Aikau & Gonzalez, 2019; Kincaid, 1988). As Grimwood (2015) observed, the reification of the Arctic as peripheral wilderness privileges "a particular, largely exogenous version of nature, along with its attendant socio-cultural rules, norms and structures, to mask or erase contemporary Aboriginal livelihoods within the landscape" (p. 6).

Indeed, the narrative of tourism development being a monolithic 'outside' force imposed on Arctic Indigenous Peoples has been destabilized by researchers and tourism critics who realize how Indigenous communities are leveraging and taking ownership of tourism production. That Indigenous Peoples are, or should and can be, active agents in designing, promoting, marketing, managing, facilitating, and guiding Arctic tourism experiences within their communities and territories is a development 'counter narrative' with increasing purchase (Rantala, 2019). As Kramvig (2017, pp. 50-51) observed, many Arctic Indigenous communities look to tourism:

> not only as a business activity *per se*, but also as a way to practice the knowledge of nature, and as a gentler way to utilize the land and engage in traditional cultural practices in a new way. This entails some form of exotification and commercialization of culture and identity, which people perceive and with which they struggle.

Although Kramvig (2017) rewrites the opportunity-threat dichotomy in this instance, the point serves to illustrate that Indigenous Peoples are capable decision-makers who are negotiating and controlling the complex implications of tourism within their lands.

2.17.2.5 Re-structuring Tourism Education

Tourism education has witnessed significant growth over the years, with universities worldwide offering specialized programs to meet the demand for skilled professionals in the tourism industry (Airey, 2015). However, the foundations of tourism education are rooted in a historical context that cannot be ignored. Colonization and its legacies have shaped educational systems, including tourism education, and have perpetuated power imbalances and inequalities (Tribe, 2005). The historical context is crucial in understanding the relationship between tourism education and colonization. During the era of colonial expansion, knowledge systems were utilized as tools of control and domination (Smith, 1999). Western knowledge systems and ideologies were imposed on colonized regions, including their educational institutions (Hall & Tucker, 2004). This legacy continues to influence the content and approach of tourism education, often perpetuating a Eurocentric perspective.

A re-structuring of tourism education, specifically in curriculum design, pedagogical approaches, power dynamics and representation, among many others, plays a central role in shaping the knowledge imparted to tourism students, and defining the culture of tourism education (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015; Steinbrink, 2020). Unfortunately, many existing curricula in tourism education and pedagogical approaches tend to overlook the contributions of Indigenous cultures and non-Western perspectives. This Eurocentric bias limits students' understanding of the diversity and complexity of global tourism destinations (Bandyopadhyay & Morais, 2005). A decolonial approach to re-structuring the curriculum, re-imagining and enacting Indigenous pedagogies, and balancing power dynamics and representation, involves incorporating alternative narratives, local perspectives, and Indigenous knowledges systems into the teaching materials and course content (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018), one that involves local communities and Indigenous representatives in curriculum development and classroom discussions. This can provide students with a more nuanced understanding of the impacts of colonization on tourism.

Also, traditional teaching methods often rely on passive learning, rote memorization, and a one-size-fits-all approach. Such approaches fail to foster critical thinking, cross-cultural understanding, and empathy (Freire, 1970). By adopting student-centered and experiential learning approaches, tourism educators can empower students to critically analyze the impacts of colonization on tourism destinations and develop sustainable and ethical practices.

In conclusion, tourism education plays a crucial role in shaping the future professionals of the industry. Acknowledging and addressing the relationship between tourism education and colonization is vital for creating a more inclusive and equitable educational experience. Decolonizing tourism education requires critical self-reflection, curriculum redesign, and the adoption of inclusive pedagogical approaches (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012). By doing so, tourism educational institutions can contribute to the development of responsible tourism professionals who understand and respect the diverse cultural and historical contexts of the destinations they serve.

2.18 Conceptual Framework

This dissertation, while drawing on decolonial scholarship, is guided by tourism's epistemic decolonization, as discussed by Grosfoguel (2007) and Chambers and Buzinde (2015). At the core of epistemic decolonization is an agenda to challenge and dismantle the Eurocentric, Western (and in the case of Ghana, Anglophonic) hierarchies of knowledge that have informed the structure of both tourism practice and tourism education (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 1986; Fanon, 2007; Mbembe, 2016; Mignolo, 2003; Said, 1978). When situated within the context of UCC's DHTM, this framework invites a critical critique and interrogation of how the educational culture, as demonstrated by the curricula, pedagogical practices, and library collections reinforce colonial power relations and marginalize Indigenous and local epistemologies and/or resist them (see *Figure 2.3 below*).

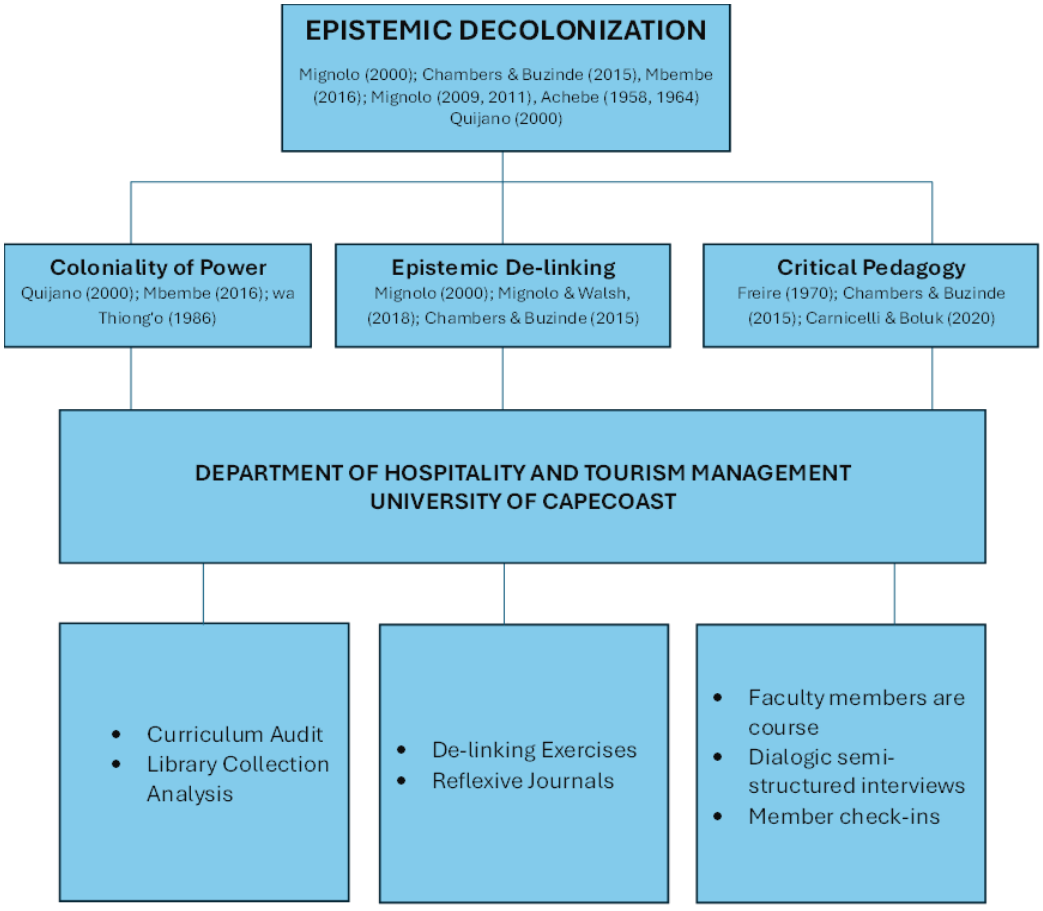


Figure 2.3 *Conceptual framework of tourism's epistemic decolonization in tourism education.*

This framework rests on three pillars: the Coloniality of Power (Mbembe, 2016; Quijano, 2000; wa Thiong'o (1986), Epistemic Delinking (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015; Mignolo, 2000; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018), and Critical Pedagogy (Carnicelli & Boluk, 2020; Chambers & Buzinde, 2015; Freire, 1970). Coloniality of Power is based on the premise that colonial structures persist in educational institutions (Quijano, 2000). Epistemic Delinking, however, is the process of disengaging from Eurocentric and Western epistemologies in order to allow space for pluriversal knowledge, particularly Indigenous and local knowledges (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). The third pillar, Critical Pedagogy, draws on Freire (1970) and Chambers & Buzinde (2015) to emphasize reflective actions in pedagogical approaches aimed at transforming oppressive educational landscapes. Following Quijano (2000) and Mbembe (2016), the "coloniality of power" discusses how historical structures of domination and colonialism continue to manifest in contemporary educational settings. Of relevance to this dissertation is Foucault's (1978) analytics of power/knowledge and Hollinshead's (1994) critique of tourism as an apparatus of cultural governance and how they illuminate the ways in which colonial legacies shape whose knowledges are deemed legitimate in educational contexts. Additionally, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) highlights the key role language plays in maintaining epistemic hierarchies. He argued that English-medium instruction functions as an instrument of cultural subjugation.

For the reasons stated above, Mignolo (2000, 2009), Quijano (2000) and Mignolo and Walsh (2018) call for "delinking" from Eurocentric and Western epistemologies. Their notion of 'de-linking' represents an intentional breaking away from the dominance of European and Western ways of knowing". It means rejecting the superiority of assumptions and hierarchies of knowledge that were established through colonialism, and instead privileging and re-centering non-Western and Indigenous ways of knowing and frameworks. Grosfoguel (2007) and Chambers and Buzinde (2015) applied this theoretical concept in tourism studies by highlighting decolonial strategies that actively challenge and disrupt colonial canons of knowledge in tourism education. Delinking exercises, including critical audits of curriculum and library collections illuminate entrenched colonial power struggles as they manifest in knowledge production and legitimacy (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). Later in this dissertation, I operationalized these exercises through curriculum

audits, library collection analyses, and reflexive journaling I conducted during my fieldwork. The third pillar of this theoretical framework is Critical Pedagogy, inspired by the work of Freire (1970) – "Pedagogy of the oppressed". In this work, Freire (1970) laid the foundation for a critical pedagogy that is put together to serve as a blueprint to be used to delink from colonial knowledge systems. It encompasses rejecting the 'banking model' of education, embracing what he calls 'conscientização' meaning critical consciousness, centering lived experiences and agency, and linking education to liberation (Freire, 1970). Critical consciousness is central to Freire's (1970) work because learners move from passive acceptance, a place where they merely adapt to the world as given, to a new place of active inquiry and transformation of that world. By cultivating critical consciousness, education becomes an emancipatory practice that delinks learners from internalized oppressions rooted in Eurocentric and colonial mindsets (Freire, 1970).

This same theory is extended by Chambers and Buzinde (2015) within tourism education. Critical pedagogy provides the pedagogical engine for decolonial transformation, emphasizing dialogic, participatory learning that privileges Indigenous and local knowledges and empowers learners to interrogate power in tourism contexts (Carnicelli & Boluk, 2020). Another key aspect of my theoretical framework is that it integrates scholarship on tourism pedagogy (Tribe, 2002; Dredge *et al.*, 2015; Holloway & Humphreys, 2022; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006; Christie-Mill, 1979) and educational culture (Acheampong, 2022; Boakye, 2021; Hofstede, 2001; Bartell, 2003). This link highlights how education departmental values, such as stewardship, ethics, and local community engagement (TEFI) (Sheldon *et al.*, 2014), intersect with broader national and global educational norms. Additionally, examining cultural dimensions to education helped to explain why certain decolonial initiatives succeed or struggle to do well within the educational contexts of Ghanaian universities. As I situated my dissertation at the intersection of these pillars - coloniality of power, epistemic de-linking, critical pedagogy, I established a robust lens through which to explore the research questions that guided this research. This theoretical framework not only oriented my methodological choices (e.g., curriculum audits, reflexive journaling, dialogic interviews) but also directly informed the analysis of data I gathered towards advancing a decolonized tourism education model in Ghana and beyond.

2.19 Conclusion

This literature review has examined the complex relationships between tourism, tourism education and colonial legacies and how the same colonial/neocolonial structures keep shaping the field. The chapter has demonstrated that tourism is not simply an economic activity, but rather a socio-political and cultural process firmly rooted in historical exercise of age-old scripts of power. As shown in the review, dominant paradigms in tourism education are largely Eurocentric, marginalizing Indigenous systems of knowledge and local perspectives.

By questioning the theories employed within tourism development, the consequences of globalization, and the epistemic injustices sustained by tourism education, I have put forward a compelling case for the urgent need to decolonize tourism education. The Tourism Education Futures Initiative (TEFI) is a set of guidelines for sustainable tourism education, calling for value based dimensions for education focusing on ethics, stewardship and mutuality. Likewise, theoretical frames of power and knowledge production (Foucault, 1980) have contributed to an understanding of the hegemonic forces within tourism curricula, thus reinforcing the need for epistemic decolonization (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015; Grosfoguel, 2007).

Ultimately, this literature review has highlighted the need to reimagine tourism education through decolonial lenses. By integrating alternative epistemologies, Indigenous pedagogies, and inclusive curriculum design, tourism education can move towards a more equitable and just framework that challenges historical injustices and empowers local communities.

Chapter 3

Overview of Educational Reforms in Ghana

3.0 Introduction

The goal of this chapter is to provide to readers a historical overview of Ghana's educational system, tracing its evolution from early missionary and colonial-era initiatives through successive periods of post-independence policy change. I do not necessarily undertake a decolonial critique of each reform in the chapter, instead, my aim is to give readers a clear, descriptive account of how the main levels of Ghana's educational structure - basic, secondary, and tertiary education - and the policies underpinning them, have developed over time in Ghana under respective governments. As I laid out the key milestones, that is, from the Accelerated Development Plan of 1951 and the Education Act of 1961, through the New Structure and Content of Education of 1974, to the introduction of Free Senior High School (SHS) in 2017 and beyond, I provide readers the foundational background to understand the institutional scope within which tourism education operates in Ghana.

The chapter is mostly descriptive, and the goal is to establish the factual groundwork upon which subsequent, more critical discussions build. In later sections of this chapter (see sections 3.3 – 3.5), however, I engaged with the ongoing legacies of colonial structures and neoliberal adjustments to situate Ghana's educational reforms within a decolonial frame. By this, the chapter situates my dissertation's focus on decolonizing tourism education within a broader narrative of Ghana's educational history. It does that by showing how long-standing curricular frameworks, governance shifts, and language policies have shaped the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management (DHTM) at the University of Cape Coast. With this contextual foundation, readers can appreciate both the institutional constraints and the opportunities for transformation that this critical ethnographic work unpacks. Finally, this chapter does not only lay out the formal development of Ghana's education system but also frames my study into how tourism education can become more responsive to Indigenous knowledges systems and local community needs and agency.

3.1 Early History of Education in Ghana

According to Kadingdi (2004), Ghana's educational system was considered one of the most advanced and effective in West Africa (Foster, 1965), however, by the 1980's it had nearly collapsed and was seen as dysfunctional in achieving the country's goals and aspirations (Peil, 1995; Scadding, 1989). Ghana, formerly known as the Gold Coast, was the first sub-Saharan African country to gain political independence from colonial rule in 1957. With a land size of about 92,000 square miles, Ghana shares boundaries with three French-speaking countries: Burkina Faso to the north, Côte d'Ivoire to the west, and Togo to the east. The Atlantic Ocean lies in the south of Ghana. Like several African countries, Ghana prides herself in diversity and multilingualism, being a great home to over 48 Indigenous languages spoken throughout the country, the most widespread of which is Akan. Despite the many local languages and dialects, English is the formal language of instruction at all levels of education. However, depending on the region, local languages may sometimes be used at the elementary level (*Fact sheet, Education in Ghana*, 2012).

Obeng (2019) has described Ghana as one of the first countries in West Africa to implement formal education systems under colonial and postcolonial governments. The development of education in Ghana is closely tied to the socio-political changes that have taken place from colonial times to the present day. Education was mainly informal and based on apprenticeship before the arrival of European settlers. The earliest recorded history of formal education in Ghana is linked directly with the history of European activities on the Gold Coast. The Portuguese were the first European settlers to arrive at the then Gold Coast in 1471 (Adu-Gyamfi *et al.*, 2016). In 1529, the then Governor at the Elmina Castle, the first European building sub-Saharan Africa, in Ghana supported the notion to teach reading, writing, and the Catholic religion to the people. European merchants, as well as Christian missionaries established schools in the mid-eighteenth century to reduce the high levels of illiteracy and to spread the gospel among the Indigenous people (Antwi, 1991a; Wiafe, 2021). However, this was only targeted at populations linked with their social, economic and religious interests (Adu-Gyamfi *et al.*, 2016; Graham, 1971). Throughout the late eighteenth century and the nineteenth century, children of wealthy African merchants on the coast and relatives of some of the important local chiefs were taught to read and write at the castle schools

built at the coast. A renowned historian, C. K. Graham, reported the findings that the majority of students who benefitted from these schools were 'mulatto' [children of mixed White and Black racial ancestry]. These were the children of the European castle staff and their African women whom they took as wives (Graham, 1971).

While these students received religious instruction as part of their basic educational training, the primary purpose for the education of these young people was to facilitate the training of the locals as interpreters for the purposes of trade and as a conversion to the Christian religion (Kadingdi, 2006), and on the other hand prepare them for employment in the European commercial enterprises on the coast (Obeng, 2019). For this reason, the schools were fully funded by the European settlers (Adu-Gyamfi *et al.*, 2016; Graham, 1971) and had a narrow focus on basic literacy with the Bible and scripture as the main texts (Kadingdi, 2006). The effort to provide Christian education on the Gold Coast took a decisive turn with the arrival of Wesleyan and Basel missionaries in 1835. Despite the achievements on the coast, efforts to open schools in the mainland areas of the then Gold Coast faced some friction from local dwellers.

Apparently, a section of the local chiefs in these areas expressed fear that the western-style education would negatively impact local values and culture. Wesleyan efforts to establish schools for formal education continued to be limited to just the coast throughout the nineteenth century (Graham, 1971). Education followed this path till Ghana's independence in 1957.

3.2 Major Educational Reforms after Independence in 1957

Over the years, several reforms in education have been introduced to address the challenges that have been faced by education in Ghana. This section provides a brief discussion of the various reforms implemented by successive governments since independence; all aimed at providing Ghanaians with an effective and high-quality educational system.

3.2.1 The Accelerated Development Plan of 1951 and Education Act of 1961

Following Ghana's independence, the country's educational landscape experienced significant instability due to frequent changes in governance, largely driven by successive military takeovers

(Kadingdi, 2006). The political instability, coupled with severe economic challenges in the early 1970's contributed to a nationwide economic downturn. According to Nti (1999), the military rule of 1981 ushered in an era of intense revolutionary zeal, leading to the mass exodus of well-trained and highly qualified teachers. The resultant effect was that there came frequent changes in the educational policy at the time. During this period, the quality of teaching and learning in basic schools declined drastically, leaving many school leavers functionally illiterate and diminishing public confidence in Ghana's once highly regarded education system.

Ghana's commitment to formal education, however, had deep roots. As early as 1951, the nation's first president, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, initiated an ambitious expansion of the education system to accelerate educational progress in the Gold Coast. This momentum continued after Ghana gained independence in 1957, setting the stage for a series of educational reforms and policy developments in the years that followed. Under his presidency, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah initiated the first educational reform. It was known as *The Accelerated Development Plan of 1951 (ADP).* The seven-year development plan was designed to accelerate the expansion of Ghana's educational system while emphasizing the crucial role of teacher training institutions in producing well-qualified educators. A key aspect of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's educational reforms was the promotion of African identity by establishing a teacher training framework rooted in African perspectives. As part of these efforts, subjects that reflected African cultural heritage, values, and traditions were incorporated into the curriculum (Kadingdi, 2006).

The introduction of the Accelerated Development Plan (ADP) in 1951 laid the foundation for subsequent legislative actions, including the Education Act of 1961, which provided a legal framework for the ADP's implementation. This act mandated free, compulsory, and universal basic education for all children starting at the age of six, spanning a six-year period. It also placed the management of educational affairs under Local Authority Councils, while parents and guardians were expected to contribute to the operational costs of schools in their communities. The primary education sector witnessed rapid expansion, with the number of schools increasing significantly from 1,081 in 1951 to 3,372 by 1952. Additionally, enrollment doubled within five

years, earning Ghana recognition for having the most advanced education system in Africa (Foster, 1965; Ghana Human Development Report, 1998; Scadding, 1989).

Due to this growth in the number of schools, there was the resulting need for more trained teachers. The 1961 Education Act, for that matter, established new teacher training colleges, expanded existing ones, and introduced various emergency and short-term in-service training programs for unqualified teachers. Between 1951 and 1953 alone, the number of teachers had increased by 1,000, with the annual output of trained teachers from these colleges rising from 420 to 1,108. In 1961, basic education, that is, primary and middle schools, became free and compulsory, though uniforms and books were not included (Adu-Gyamfi *et al.*, 2016; Akyeampong, 2017).

Despite increased enrollments after the Education Act of 1961, the quality of teaching and learning did not necessarily improve significantly. The measures taken to accommodate the growing number of pupils were insufficient to balance the quantity and quality of education (Kadingdi, 2006). A key issue was the shortage of trained teachers, leading to the employment of many untrained 'pupil teachers' which negatively impacted teaching and learning quality. In line with the Education Act of 1961, the central government also assisted in establishing approximately fifteen new secondary schools across various regions of Ghana. Additionally, several technical institutions were established to enhance the technical and/or vocational sectors for increased productivity.

3.2.2 Reforms of the National Liberation Council (NLC)

On February 24, 1966, a new regime emerged, following a coup d'état which was organized by the National Liberation Council (NLC). It included both military and civilian officers. The NLC was a body that emerged from a coup d'état against the Nkrumah government, executed jointly by the Ghana Police Service and Ghana Armed Forces, with support from the Ghana Civil Service. It governed Ghana from February 24, 1966, to October 1, 1969.

This coup marked the first instance of a power takeover in Ghana's history. To address the country's severe economic situation, the NLC made several major decisions in the education

sector, including forming a new Education Review Committee to conduct a comprehensive review of the entire formal education system (Pinkney & Pinkney, 1997). Upon assuming office, the NLC quickly abandoned Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's Seven-year Development Plan and modified many aspects of the plan. For example, the structure of the education system changed from ten years of elementary education to eight years, to better prepare students for secondary school entry. An additional two-year continuation course at middle school was introduced. Secondary school admission was based on the Common Entrance Examination taken by students in their final eighth year. Secondary education also lasted five years, preparing students for the West African Examinations, which served as the university entry requirement. After secondary education, university education also spanned four years (Adu-Gyamfi, *et al.*, 2016; Pinkney & Pinkney, 1997; WAEC, 2012).

3.2.3 The Dzobo Committee and the New Structure and Content of Education (NSCE) of 1974

Prior to 1972, the education system in Ghana came under scrutiny and was criticized as being elitist, modeled after the selective British grammar school system (Kadingdi, 2006). In 1974, a new military government led by Colonel I.K. Akyeampong who also seized power through a coup d'etat to overthrow the previous government headed by Dr. Busia. Colonel Akyeampong formed a new committee known as the Dzobo Committee to review the then state of education in Ghana (Dzobo, 1974). This led to the implementation of the first major post-Independence reform in pre-university education in 1974, known as *The New Structure and Content of Education (NSCE).* This reform reduced the length of pre-tertiary education from seventeen years to thirteen years. Interestingly, the six years of primary education remained the same, the four years of middle school which is equivalent to junior secondary school was reduced to three years. Also, senior secondary school was reduced from five years to four years. The goal was to equip students with employable skills at any exit point from the system and to enable graduates to develop skills that will be beneficial in the job markets or even make them self-employed. The reform aimed to maintain educational standards despite the reduced duration of pre-tertiary education. It focused on giving a vocational approach to pre-university education to make it more functional and responsive to local demands and challenges. New subjects such as Tailoring, Woodwork, Catering,

Dressmaking, Metalwork, Technical Drawing Masonry and Automobile Practice were introduced (Adu-Gyamfi, *et al.*, 2016; Owusu-Mensah, 2008).

Despite its commendable goals, however, the NSCE failed to have a lasting impact on the country's education system. Several issues such as the presence of unqualified teachers, insufficient resources to support teaching and learning, and challenges teachers faced regarding the curriculum's context and content demands continued to challenge the reform. Unfortunately, the situation led to widespread dissatisfaction among parents, employers, academics, and some politicians (Kadingdi, 2006; Owusu-Mensah, 2008).

The Government's White Paper, based on the Committee's recommendations, played a crucial role in approving a 13-year pre-university educational structure. It also supported the integration of pre-technical and pre-vocational subjects into both primary and junior secondary school curricula. During this time, the Ghana Education Service was established to bring together teachers, educational administrators, and other professionals in the sector under a centralized government agency within the Ministry of Education (MoE), tasked with overseeing the new education framework. A third major policy shift in basic education emerged in response to the near collapse of the education system, further exacerbated by another military takeover in 1981 (Kadingdi, 2006).

3.2.4 The virtual collapse of the Ghanaian Education System and the PNDC of 1981

The Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) staged yet another takeover of the ruling government in December of 1981. By 1983, the quality of the education system in had severely declined. Specifically, enrollment rates came to a standstill, and education's allocation of the percentage Gross Domestic Product (GDP) had dropped to 1.7% from an allocation of 6.4% in 1976. Government resources were now insufficient to support existing educational facilities or construct new ones. The resultant economic downturn led to a mass exodus of qualified teachers to other parts of the continent, significantly reducing the ratio of trained to untrained teachers in the basic education sector.

Abdallah (1986), the then Secretary for Education, speaking on the state of the education in Ghana at the time, said:

> "Over the past decade, there has been a sharp deterioration in the quality of education at all levels. There has been a virtual collapse of physical infrastructure in the provision of buildings, equipment, materials, teaching aids, etc.…to solve these problems, the PNDC has decided to embark upon a comprehensive program of educational reforms" (p. 1).

Due to the economic challenges the country was facing in the late 1970s and early 1980s, combined with bureaucratic obstacles and a lack of interest and commitment from administrators, the new program never progressed beyond the experimental stage. The experimental Junior Secondary School (JSS) system experienced stagnation and near collapse. By 1983, the education system was in crisis, plagued by a shortage of educational materials, deteriorating school structures, low enrollment levels, high dropout rates, poor administration and management, significant reductions in government funding for education, and a lack of data and statistics needed for effective planning (Adu-Gyamfi *et al.*, 2016; Kadingdi, 2006).

3.2.5 The 1987 Education Reforms

The third phase of this historical account was characterized by the military in the helm of affairs, championing the agenda of many other educational reforms. This phase was characterized by significant educational reforms, leading to the introduction of the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) reform in 1996. During this time, Ghana actively participated in and endorsed various international agreements, including the Education for All initiative, the Declaration on the Rights of the Child, the Beijing Declaration on Women's Rights, and the Lomé Convention (Adu-Gyamfi, *et al.*, 2016; Kadingdi, 2006; Owusu-Mensah, 2008). Consequently, the government had to adhere to its constitutional obligations, guided by policies influenced by these bilateral and multilateral negotiations.

During this period, the government demonstrated a strong ambition to reform the educational system, undertaking comprehensive efforts to restructure the nation's economic base to meet the World Bank's financial credibility criteria. Meeting these conditions allowed Ghana to negotiate

for credits and grants to finance major educational reforms. Besides World Bank credits, various donor agencies supported Ghana's reform implementation, with a significant focus on basic education. Despite having successive military governments since 1966, 1987 marked a new phase in governmental approach to development, particularly in the area of education. In 1987, the *New Educational Reform Programme (NERP)* was introduced, aiming to completely restructure the pre-tertiary education system, improve access by providing infrastructure, and make the curriculum more relevant to social and economic needs (Kadingdi, 2006; Owusu-Mensah, 2008).

The 1988 Ministry of Education report highlighted that the National Education Reform Program (NERP) was introduced to revitalize the education system and ensure it served both individuals and the nation effectively. With support from the World Bank, the initiative also facilitated the construction of 3,000 pavilions to strengthen school infrastructure. The key objectives of the 1987 NERP, as outlined in the World Bank's Sector Adjustment Policy Document (1986), included:

i. Expanding access to education.
ii. Enhancing the quality of education.
iii. Aligning education with the aspirations of individuals and the socio-economic needs of the country.
iv. Restructuring the pre-university education system into a 12-year format (6-3-3).
v. Ensuring cost-effectiveness and cost recovery in education.

A major aspect of the 1987 NERP reform was the introduction of a broader curriculum in pre-university institutions, incorporating practical subjects alongside traditional academic courses (Kadingdi, 2006). This shift aimed to move away from an education system perceived as overly elitist, which had long sidelined technical, vocational, and agricultural training. This perspective was reinforced by Professor Dzobo, who chaired the committee that reviewed earlier reforms and shared these insights at the National Workshop on the 1987 Educational Reforms. He stated:

> "Despite the bold educational innovations of the 1920s and subsequent efforts, Ghana's formal education system remained Western, predominantly academic, and elitist. As a result of the Accelerated Development Plan of Education in 1951, the pre-university educational system has become increasingly dysfunctional, producing many school leavers without

> marketable skills or the mindset for self-employment. These leavers see no bright future for themselves, creating significant economic and social problems for our society...” (Dzobo, 1987).

Despite the statement of what was seemingly a major challenge to Ghana’s educational system, these strong sentiments expressed by Dzobo were insufficient to ensure the successful implementation of the 1987 Education Reforms or to change the public and educational establishments’ attitudes. Moreover, similar to the English 11+ system, Ghana’s elitist education system continued to favor students who were more academically prepared. Basic Education was made to be compulsory for all children, and this included the first-nine years of schooling [that is, six years of primary school and three years of Junior Secondary School (JSS)]. At the end of the final year of JSS [Year 3], students were required to sit for the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE), in order to determine their admission into Senior Secondary School (SSS). At the start of the reform, it was anticipated that basic education would become accessible to more Ghanaian children, as it was estimated that 43% were not attending school before 1987.

In 1988, Asante, who was serving as Ghana’s Minister for Education, addressed the challenges facing the country’s education sector. He pointed out that the economic downturn of the 1970s, combined with the large-scale migration of qualified teachers to neighboring countries, had left more than half of primary and middle school teaching positions filled by untrained personnel. He also highlighted shortages in textbooks and exercise books, deteriorating school infrastructure, and declining student enrollment, which led to many students dropping out before completing their studies. As a result, nearly two-thirds of the adult population was illiterate. Low teacher morale, inadequate supervision, and the absence of reliable data for educational planning further contributed to inefficiencies, leading to reactive and uncoordinated decision-making. During this time, several developed nations and international donors provided financial support to Ghana, largely due to the perceived success of the country’s 1983 Economic Recovery Programme. Some of these donors included the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Financial assistance for education reform came from the World Bank’s Sector Adjustment Credit, as well as grants from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Switzerland, the United

Kingdom, Norway, and Canada. Additional funding was provided through concessional loans from the OPEC Fund (Adu-Gyamfi *et al.*, 2016; Kadingdi, 2006).

This era was marked by a renewed focus on improving the quality of education, with schools being given the resources and autonomy to adapt to ongoing changes. Increased donor interest also led to the introduction of the USAID Primary Education Programme. However, seven years into the implementation of the New Education Reform Programme, concerns about poor student performance prompted the formation of another Education Review Committee in 1994 to reassess the system. At that time, national assessments revealed that only 6% of sixth-grade students in public schools scored at least 60% in English, while fewer than 3% managed to score 55% or higher in Mathematics (Adu-Gyamfi *et al.*, 2016; Kadingdi, 2006). The committee decided to develop and introduce new curricula for primary schools, arguing that much of the existing curriculum was irrelevant to the pupils' immediate environment and criticized for being overloaded, rigid, and compartmentalized, reducing teaching and learning effectiveness. As a result of the 1994 review, a further major reform, *the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education Programme (FCUBE),* was initiated as a constitutionally mandated charge of the 1992 Constitution.

3.2.6 The Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education Program (FCUBE) of 1996

The FCUBE initiative was introduced by the Ministry of Education as a response to the constitutional requirement outlined in Article 39 (2) of the 1992 Constitution of the Fourth Republic of Ghana:

> 'The Government shall, within two years of parliament first meets (sic) after coming into force of this Constitution draw up a program for implementation within the following ten years, for the provision of free, compulsory and universal basic education (Government of Ghana, 1992).

Even though the FCUBE policy did not introduce new concepts per se, it had a strong emphasis on implementation. By mandating nine years of free education for all Ghanaians, the government's aim was to equid all graduates of the basic education system with basic foundations necessary for

further studies and skills development. The provisions in Article 39 (2) of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana guaranteed every school going child access to 'a balanced and broadly based curriculum which promised to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society' (Article 39 (2)). The education was also meant to nurture not just people with amazing academic abilities, but also with moral, cultural, spiritual, and physical growth.

The reforms which were introduced through the FCUBE initiative also aimed to expand educational opportunities, equipping young Ghanaians with essential literacy, numeracy, and language skills. By doing so, the initiative sought to empower students to further their education or acquire practical training to develop their talents and contribute meaningfully to society (MOE, 1987, 1996, 1998). This was to be achieved through the four objectives of the FCUBE reform:

i. to improve the Quality of Teaching and Learning;
ii. to improve Management Efficiency and Sustainability;
iii. to increase Access and Partnership; and
iv. to decentralize the Management of the Education Sector (MOE, 1996, p 15).

The FCUBE Policy Document of 1996 focused primarily on the improvement in the quality of teaching and learning through curriculum review and development, the provision of textbooks, teaching and learning materials and books for school libraries. Additionally, the development of an assessment and evaluation system for pupil performance was top priority. The school curriculum was envisaged to develop in pupils the following:

> '…skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing and knowledge of the principles and skills of the numeracy, measurement and of the relationship involving space and shape. In addition, knowledge and understanding of the cultural, economic and physical heritage of the people and their neighbors should be emphasized. Research and study skills, skills of enquiry, analysis and knowledge of healthy living plus issues of gender sensitivity in text of curriculum as well as in illustration should be pursued…' (MOE, 1996, p 17).

Overall, the 1996 FCUBE Basic Education Policy Document had two notable features. The first was a strategy for revitalizing quality education, which focused too heavily on material inputs,

neglecting how to engage teachers' attitudes and behaviors to address the unfamiliar pedagogical issues in the revised curriculum (Kadingdi, 2006). Secondly, the policy did not effectively address the arrangements for supervision and monitoring of the program at the district level, nor did it resolve how to provide the necessary logistical support for such supervision. Consequently, policymakers appeared to overlook the importance of considering the attitudes and behaviors of teachers who were responsible for implementing the changes. Specifically, in the Ghanaian context, this oversight ignored the need to change teachers' practices rather than merely changing their curriculum materials.

3.2.7 Educational Reform of 2007

In the year 2000, the New Patriotic Party (NPP), led by President John Agyekum Kuffour, won the 2000 general elections in Ghana, and two years into his administration he inaugurated a committee to review the existing education system. The committee's reports led to several reforms. In a nutshell, the primary goals of these reforms included developing human capital for industrial growth, preserving cultural identity and traditional Indigenous knowledges, and enhancing science and technology education (Ghanaweb, 2009).

One significant change was the extension of Senior High School (SHS) education from three years to four years. The first year of SHS was focused on "core subjects" which were English Language, Mathematics, Integrated Science, Information Communication Technology (ICT), and Social Studies. The committee also recommended including two years of kindergarten into the Universal Basic Education framework, thus extending it to eleven years. The structure of Universal Basic Education became two years of kindergarten, six years of Primary Education, and three years of Junior High School (JHS). At the basic level, there was also an increased emphasis on Literacy, Numeracy, and Creative Arts (Adu-Gyamfi *et al.*, 2016; Ghanaweb, 2009). The extension of Senior High School (SHS) education from three years to four years was intended to give teachers more time to complete the syllabus and provide students with adequate preparation for the West African Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE). Unfortunately, studies conducted into comparative performance of students under past reforms and the current revealed that students under the three-year system scored higher grades than those in the four-year system.

Consequently, the Atta-Mills-led government reverted SHS back to three years following their election victory in 2008 (Ghanaweb, 2009).

3.2.8 Educational Reforms of 2017

The year 2017 marked the period of another modification to the educational system in Ghana. One of the major campaign promises of the President, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, was to introduce free education at the SHS level, expanding on the existing free compulsory basic education (Free SHS - Wikipedia, 2018).



Figure 3.1 *showing Akufo-Addo seeking a re-election to continue his mandate as President of the Republic of Ghana*
Source: Facebook, 2024

Despite the initiative's good intentions, it put significant pressure on Ghana's education system, particularly regarding facilities and teachers. To address these challenges and to accommodate more students and reduce overcrowding in schools, the government introduced the double-track system as part of the Free SHS policy. This system divided the total student population and staff into two tracks; while one track attended school, the other would be on vacation, and they would switch periodically (Dwomoh *et al.,* 2022).

3.2.9 Present day Structure of Ghana's Educational System

The present day structure of Ghana's educational system is grouped under three main levels – Basic, Second cycle, and Tertiary.

Basic Education in Ghana lasts a period of eleven (11) years. The curriculum used for this level is free and compulsory. Meant for the ages of four (4) to eleven (11), it is defined as "the minimum period of schooling needed to ensure that children acquire basic literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving skills as well as skills for creativity and healthy living" (Armah, 2017; Aziabah, 2017; Takyi *et al.*, 2021). Basic education in Ghana is divided into Kindergarten, Primary school and Junior High School (JHS). Kindergarten spans a period of two (2) years, primary school, six (6) years, while Junior High School, three (3) years (Armah, 2017; Aziabah, 2017; Takyi *et al.*, 2021).

The primary education's content typically comprises several subjects, including English Language, which is sub-divided into Reading, Writing, Comprehension, and Dictation; Ghanaian Language, also comprising Reading, Writing, Comprehension, and Dictation; Mathematics, Integrated Science, Introduction to Information Communication Technology (ICT), Religious and Moral Education, Citizenship Education, and Creative Arts (Ministry of Education, 2018). The JHS section of this level introduces students to basic scientific and technical knowledge and skills that are necessary to prepare students for further academic work and acquisition of technical and/or vocational skills at the secondary level. Similar to the primary schools, the JHS teach subjects such as English Language, Mathematics, Ghanaian Language, Social Studies, Pre-Technical Drawing, Integrated Science, Agricultural Science, Religious and Moral Education and Pre-Vocational Skills (Ministry of Education, 2018). The end of this period is marked the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE), which one must pass to be able to move to the next level of education known as the Second-cycle level.

The next level of education in Ghana is the second cycle, also known as the secondary school level of education. It spans a period of three (3) years. It is made up of the Senior High School (SHS), Grammar and Technical Education, as well as other post-basic skills development programs, including the National Apprenticeship Program. At this level of education, students enroll of

several courses in their respective fields of study, again, with the end of the level marked by students undertaking a standardized examination called the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE). In the SHS system, all students are required to study core curriculum subjects consisting of English Language, Integrated Science, Mathematics, and Social Studies. In addition to that, students are also required to select a total of three (3) or four (4) elective subjects. The electives are chosen from one of the six categories: Sciences, Arts (Social Sciences and Humanities), Vocational (Visual Arts or Home Economics), Technical, Business and Agriculture. Examples of the elective subjects in the various fields of study comprise the following (Ministry of Education, 2018):

i. *Sciences:* Elective Mathematics, Elective Biology, Elective Physics and Elective Chemistry),
ii. *General Arts:* Government, History, Geography, Literature, French, Elective Mathematics, Akan, Christian Religious Studies and Economics,
iii. *Visual Arts:* Sculpture, General Knowledge of Arts, Textiles, Graphic Design, Economics,
iv. *Home Economics:* Food and Nutrition, General Knowledge of Arts, Elective Biology, Management in Living, Economics,
v. *Business:* Elective Mathematics, Accounting, Costing, Economics, Business Management,
vi. *Agricultural Science:* Animal Husbandry, Horticulture, Elective Physics, Elective Biology, Elective Mathematics, Elective chemistry,
vii. *Technical:* Elective Physics, Elective Chemistry, Elective Mathematics, Technical Drawing, Wood Carving, Metal Works, Building Technology.

From this level, students may advance on to University, Technical University (formerly called Polytechnics), Colleges of Education or other forms of specialized training institutions, depending on the students' choice and performance in the WASSCE. Students who wish to pursue vocational education after the BECE have the option of following the vocational and technical pathways. These students also have the option of furthering their education in programs from a university or

a technical university provided that student passes their WASSCE (Armah, 2017; Aziabah, 2017; Bibby & Peil, 1974; Takyi *et al.*, 2021).

The final level of education in Ghana is the Tertiary level of education. It comprises several degree and diploma programs. At the teacher and nursing training institutions, diploma and some degree programs are offered. Technical universities are also equipped to award students several diploma and degree programs. Some technical universities also offer graduate level programs. At the university level, undergraduate programs spanning a period of four (4) years for undergraduate degree courses are offered all across the country. In addition to these programs, graduate programs, including master's programs, usually spanning an average of two years, and doctoral level education also spanning three (3) to four (4) years are offered at the tertiary educational level. Students are only accepted into these institutions through a competitive selection process following successful performance in their WASSCE. After completion of a tertiary education in Ghana, new graduates are mandated to serve one year within the National Services under the National Service Scheme.

The National Service Scheme (NSS) is a Government of Ghana program under the Ministry of Education of Ghana National that was established in 1973 with the goal of deploying freshly graduating youth under the NSS arrangement to ensure that priority sectors of the national life are never lacking in the requisite human resources needed for development. The scheme has a mandate to deploy a pool of skilled manpower drawn primarily from tertiary institutions to support the development efforts of both the public and private sectors in Ghana (https://www.nss.gov.gh/about).

3.3 Colonization and Ghana's Educational History

Ghana's efforts to expand access to education over the past decades have been remarkable. For instance, the youth literacy rate jumped from 71 percent in 2000 to 86 percent in 2010 (Adu-Agyem & Osei-Poku, 2012; *Fact sheet, Education in Ghana*, 2012). Today, Ghanaian children attend school at higher rates than their peers in many other African countries and developing regions worldwide. In 2017, over 84 percent of children were enrolled in elementary education,

and the gross enrolment rate for secondary education rose from 57 percent in 2012 to 73 percent in 2017. As of 2021, Ghana's youth literacy rate for individuals aged 15-24 was approximately 93.5%. This reflects continued improvement in literacy among young people in the country, following a steady rise from previous years (StatsBank Ghana, 2021).

While these developments have shown significant promise over the years, Ghana's educational system, since its inception, has had colonial ties. The different secondary education models that were introduced in Ghana since the colonial era can be linked to the concept of "educational transfer and adaptation". These models were significantly influenced by educational systems from England and other countries like Japan and the United States, and they played a crucial role in shaping Ghana's development (Quist, 2003). Quist (2003) also argued that while these foreign educational models have been vital for Ghana's human resource and socio-political development, their focus on academic education has led to a dependency in areas such as techno-scientific and economic development.

Three key models of secondary education were transferred and adapted in Ghana during and after the colonial period. These include the Church Missions' model, represented by a Senior High School in Cape Coast called *Mfantsipim School*, the British and American colonial models, demonstrated in *Achimota School*, located in Achimota, Accra, and the Junior Secondary School pattern introduced as a structural but also curricular reform project, first implemented in Ghana on an experimental basis by the National Liberation Council (NLC) military regime of General Ignatius Kutu Acheampong (1972-1978), and more comprehensively implemented by the Provincial National Defence Council (PNDC) military government of Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings (Quist, 2003).

3.3.1 The Church Missions' Model - Mfantsipim School

The Church model, introduced by the English Wesleyan Mission in colonial Ghana, was the first secondary education model transferred from England and adapted to the local context. This model, represented by Mfantsipim School, was initially embraced by the educated Ghanaian elite, particularly the Fanti-speaking group, who sought to blend it with local cultural values. Mfantsipim

School played a significant role in shaping secondary education in Ghana, symbolizing the tensions between adopting foreign academic standards and promoting Ghanaian cultural identity. Also, the curriculum at Mfantsipim became a focal point for these tensions, as it aimed to integrate English-style academic education with a cultural renaissance movement known as "Gone Fantee", meaning "The Doctrine of Return to Things native".

Tenkorang (1974, p. 165) defined "Gone Fantee" as "a fusion of what is good in the traditions and customs inherited from our ancestors with the adaptation of what is good – and only what is good – of what we learn by contact with Europeans". In other words, this movement advocated for a fusion of valuable local traditions with beneficial European influences. This adaptation process reflected the broader nationalist sentiments of the educated elite, who were critical of colonial rule and sought to redefine education to serve Ghanaian needs while maintaining high academic standards. The "Gone Fantee" movement was a cultural revival and protest against colonialism's negative effects on Ghanaian culture, values, and traditions, particularly in the upbringing and education of the youth (Quist, 2003). The movement criticized the curriculum of mission schools for being overly Western and disruptive to local customs.

However, despite this disapproval, the educated elite were reluctant to abandon the Western-style academic education, which they saw as essential for social and occupational advancement in a rapidly modernizing society, where status had traditionally been tied to royal lineage. History has it that even though the original intentions were to adapt the curriculum at Mfantsipim School to reflect Ghanaian cultural elements, not so much actual adaptation occurred (Agbodeka, 1977; Awudetsey, 1978; Boahen, 1996). English and Latin, the two main foreign languages and cultural tools remained the main emphasis of the curriculum. Obviously, this played a huge role in influencing students' thought patterns and cultural values. Additionally, subjects like Mathematics and Advanced mathematics which benefited from Western methods of teaching remained key components of the curriculum. Tenkorang (1974) observed that while there were efforts to incorporate subjects like carpentry, printing, and metalwork that were more aligned with the Ghanaian environment and local occupational opportunities, these adaptations were limited. History and religion were also intended to reflect Ghanaian perspectives, but due to the lack of

comprehensive scholarly resources on Ghanaian history and religion, these subjects still heavily leaned on non-Ghanaian content (Quist, 2003).

The Church model, as exemplified by the Mfantsipim School, emphasized academic excellence, and was closely followed by other institutions like Adisadel College and St. Augustine's College that were all founded by the church. Despite being influenced by Western educational systems, this model resisted complete adoption of foreign practices due to the cultural nationalism of its founders. The model's "adaptive" nature was shaped by a cultural renaissance that celebrated Ghanaian traditions, evident in practices like wearing *kente* cloth [*kente* is a type of silk and cotton fabric made of interwoven cloth strips and is native to the Ghana] and incorporating drumming and dancing into school activities (Awudetsey, 1978; Quist, 2003). While technical and vocational studies were included, the model primarily focused on cultural rather than curricular adaptation, contrasting with the colonial government's approach at Achimota School.

3.3.2 The British and American Models – Achimota School

The second model that was introduced and adapted to the Ghanaian cultural context happened under the governance of the British colonial government, led by Sir Frederick Gordon Guggisberg. He led the government from 1919 to 1927. This model, also known as the Achimota model, was different from, and more complicated than the Mfantsipim model. The model was a blend of two different educational systems: the English "public" school model which was based on the Eton and Winchester model and the Hampton-Tuskegee model from the U.S. (Quist, 2003). Unlike the Mfantsipim model, Achimota's approach became controversial due to the challenges of adapting a foreign system to the local context. It was introduced by the British colonial government as a reform to modernize Ghana's secondary education. However, this model faced opposition from the educated elite, particularly those associated with Mfantsipim School and Adisadel College, who were more aligned with existing educational institutions.

Sir Frederick Gordon Guggisberg's idea for Achimota School was for the school to be different from any other institution in British colonial empire. His vision was to see Achimota be the first educational research station planted by the British Colonial Empire in Africa, with the most

important research area being agriculture (Agbodeka, 1977; Steiner-Khamsi & Quist, 2000). It was set up as a tool for addressing the human-resource needs of the colonial state and training its future leaders. As the finest institution in British colonial Africa, the school's aim was to produce "students who were 'Western' in intellectual attitude towards life, with a respect for science and capacity for systematic thought but who remained African in sympathy and desire for preserving and developing what was deserving of respect in tribal life, custom, rule and law" (Gold Coast, Committee Report, 1932, p. 21; Foster 1965, p. 167; Steiner-Khamsi & Quist, 2000).

The dilemma which Achimota School faced was the challenge of adapting to a Ghanaian environment that was culturally different from the British model it was based on. The school embodied the complexities of transferring and adapting educational models, particularly in relation to human-resource development (Berman 1971; Quist, 2003). The school combined elements from two distinct educational prototypes: the British Eton-Winchester model, which was elitist and aimed at grooming gentlemen, statesmen, and politicians, and the American Hampton-Tuskegee model, which was non-elitist, focused on technical and industrial training, and aimed at preparing African Americans for manual work (Agbodeka, 1977; Steiner-Khamsi & Quist, 2000). While the latter model was considered suitable for African development by Western powers, it was not appropriate for the context of colonial Ghana.

Despite the design of the curriculum at Achimota School was to adapt Western education to the Ghanaian context, it overall struggled with balancing this adaptation and its inherently Western and elitist core (Foster, 1965; Steiner-Khamsi & Quist, 2000). The curriculum included subjects such as agriculture, African history, Geography, and Science, but remained Western in its approach, particularly in the sciences and humanities (Quist, 2003). The main aim of the school was to produce graduates who would help in the development of agriculture, take pride in African culture, and provide future political leadership. Also, despite the intentions to encourage graduates to return to their villages as community leaders, most of the graduates instead gravitated towards urban areas, reflecting a failure in the school's adaptation goals. This setback notwithstanding, Achimota set a different pattern of secondary education, particularly by being co-educational and focusing on cultural and curricular adaptation with national development implications.

3.3.3 The American Japanese model in post-colonial Ghana

The Junior Secondary School system, introduced in 1987, marked a significant shift from previous colonial educational models in Ghana. Initially tested by the National Liberation Council (NLC) and later fully implemented by the Provincial National Defence Council (PNDC) under Jerry John Rawlings, this system drew on American, Japanese, and Nigerian educational structures (Quist, 2003). It established three years of Junior and three years of Senior Secondary education. Although not explicitly focused on "education for adaptation", it incorporated elements of transfer and adaptation to better meet national needs. The model's benefits included reduced pre-university education duration, cost-effectiveness, and better alignment with the need for a workforce that could drive national development. However, like earlier models, it still faced challenges related to balancing curriculum content with the goals of human resource development and educational adaptation, though these challenges were less complex than those of the Achimota model (Dei, 1999; Quist, 2003).

As could be seen in the previous two models, the content of the curriculum has been a point of tension between the objectives of human resource development and the challenges of "educational transfer and adaptation", although these tensions were not as complex or contradictory as those seen with the Achimota model. The content of most subjects at both the Junior and Senior Secondary levels underwent significant revisions, with teaching topics now streamlined and condensed to emphasize the most essential principles, procedures, and themes. At the Junior Secondary level, much emphasis was put on industrial-technical and agricultural education, with schools being viewed as community-day comprehensive junior secondary schools (Agelasto, 1996; Dei, 1999; Quist, 2003). This focus reflected the original aims that guided the establishment of Achimota School. Meanwhile, at the Senior Secondary level, the academic secondary education typical of the previous models had persisted. The classification of subjects in the Arts, Business, and Science streams, along with teaching methods, examination practices, course design, and certification processes continued to reflect features of the colonial models. Despite the modifications that were reflected in the new model, English remained the medium of instruction.

Similar to the system in Japan, the Ghanaian educational model included extracurricular activities such as student assemblies, club activities, attendance, school ceremonies, and excursions. Additionally, subjects like Cultural Studies, Ghanaian languages, such as Twi, Ewe, and Ga among others, Environmental Studies, Agricultural Science, and Life Skills, all rooted in Ghanaian themes, had gained importance at the Junior Secondary level, adding an "adaptive" dimension to the system. This adaptation resembled how Mfantsipim School adjusted the English Wesleyan High School model to fit local needs. Unlike the American system, the Ghanaian model predominantly followed a single track, with three years each of Junior and Senior Secondary Education, except for those pursuing technical or vocational education (Awudetsey, 1978; Quist, 2003).

In this model, the Junior and Senior Secondary model saw the introduction of two new examinations. The first was the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) which students would write at the end of Junior Secondary, and secondly, the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSSCE) (now called the WASSCE) at the end of Senior Secondary. These exams completely replaced the previous colonial model and did not follow the American or Japanese systems. The most significant adaptation, or indigenization, occurred in the curriculum through the "Africanization" project (Awudetsey, 1978). However, this initiative closely mirrors what Mfantsipim emphasized and what Achimota later implemented. Awudetsey's (1978) position on "Africanization"

> "…implies not only teaching more agriculture, technical subjects, African languages and customs, the traditional subjects of the curriculum; or breaking with former colonial masters if that is for the good of the country; but also, a change in the attitude of those at the helm of affairs so that they can look at Africa with an educative eye and upon things African with pride" (p. 19).

This reasoning by Awudetsey (1978) suggests that *Africanization* goes beyond merely incorporating African content into the educational curriculum. Instead, it also involves a broader shift in mindset among leaders and educators. This attitudinal change means viewing Africa and its cultural heritage with pride and respect and valuing African knowledge and practices in

education. It emphasizes the importance of not just teaching African subjects but also fostering a sense of pride and confidence in African identity and perspectives, while making decisions that benefit the country independently of former colonial influences. Considering the numerous potentials of "Africanization" to African nations, Awudetsey (1978) believes that the Africanization of education is a political decision which each country will have to make now or someday.

At the core of Africanization (or indigenization) merging Ghanaian and African elements with beneficial aspects of foreign, particularly Western, culture and education were key. However, Quist (2003) observed that this approach had a significant limitation. Specifically, it overlooked the importance of focusing on science and technology and how these fields can be effectively Africanized to advance development in Ghana and across Africa. Today, the effects of this is seen in Africa's ongoing reliance on the West for new knowledge in science, medicine, and technology, especially in communications technology (Fabayo, 1996; Segal, 2021). This dependence has cultural and environmental implications for Africa and Ghana's journey toward rapid national development.

3.4 The Legacy of Structural Adjustment Programs and Their Impact on Education in Ghana: A Decolonial Critique

The historical overview of the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) in Ghana during the 1980s, under the auspices of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank marked a pivotal moment in Ghana's educational development. We see clearly in the reports that the programs enforced stringent neoliberal reforms, including budget cuts, currency devaluation, and cost-sharing in public services while being framed as economic recovery measures in the wake of a national crisis (Kadingdi, 2006). Even when justified on grounds of their need to stabilize the economy, such policies had far-reaching and adverse consequences on the education sector, particularly by undermining public investment in schooling. By 1983 government spending on education had fallen from 6.4% of GDP, in 1976, to 1.7% in what has been described universally as 'the virtual collapse of the education system' (Adu-Gyamfi *et al.*, 2016; Kadingdi, 2006). Another outcome of these programs was that donor agencies and Bretton Woods institutions pushed Ghana to adopt cost-recovery mechanisms in education through user fees and textbook

levies, despite widespread poverty. Consequently, local populations including the poor, women, and rural communities, were significantly burdened, thereby deepening educational inequality among different regions (Adu-Gyamfi *et al.*, 2016; World Bank, 1986). Additionally, the quality of instruction severely deteriorated due to the exodus of trained teachers induced by economic hardships, and the recruitment of untrained personnel. This development undermined the goals of universal access and equitable learning outcomes.

From a decolonial standpoint, the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) reflect a continuation of colonial logics that situate the Global South as dependent on Global North financial institutions for policy direction. The educational sovereignty of Ghana was therefore not just eroded due to Ghana's compliance with these externally imposed requirements, but contextually grounded educational visions and objectives were displaced (Adu-Gyamfi *et al.*, 2016; Kadingdi, 2006). Clear evidence of the enduring legacy of colonial-capitalist structures in shaping postcolonial education in Ghana was shown in the prioritization of economic conditionalities over social investment. Although reforms such as the 1987 New Educational Reform Programme sought to revitalize the system, their alignment with donor interests rendered them technocratic and externally driven, rather than genuinely responsive to the epistemic and cultural needs of Ghanaian learners (Kadingdi, 2006; Owusu-Mensah, 2008).

In a nutshell, the legacy of the SAPs in Ghana's education sector reveals how global financial interventions, under the guise of development, can reinscribe structural inequalities and stall decolonial aspirations. The Ghanaian experience calls for a radical rethinking of educational reform, one that prioritizes epistemic justice, resists external dependency, and centers Indigenous and Afrocentric educational philosophies.

3.5 Influence of Ghana's Educational History on Present-day Education

The educational system of Ghana, as discussed in this chapter, has undergone significant transformations over the years, blending traditional and local elements with foreign influences to create a unique model. The system, consisting of primary, secondary, and tertiary levels, has seen the introduction of several key examinations and curricula designed to meet both national and global standards. I argue that while the adoption of certain aspects from systems like those in

Britain, the United States and Japan has played a role in shaping Ghana's overall education, the country continues to face challenges related to resource allocation, infrastructure, and maintaining cultural relevance. Quist's (2003) assessment of what Ghana's educational system has lacked suggests that as Ghana progresses in the 21st century, the emphasis on improving the quality of education, particularly in the fields of science and technology, will be crucial for national development. However, achieving this goal will require not only sustained investment in education but also a careful balance between adopting foreign models and nurturing locally viable alternatives that reflect the socio-cultural context of Ghana.

It is arguable, however, that the successful implementation of present-day models adopted by the Ghanaian government could be a key driver for accelerated economic development. This success is highly dependent on the provision of essential material, financial, and human resources, including but not limited to equipment, adequate funding, and well-trained teachers. Ghana's and Africa's rapid techno-scientific advancement in the 21st century will increasingly depend on the availability and support for high-quality secondary technical education that is geared toward development and technology (Gyamfi, Okine & Oware, 2019; Quist, 1999b; Sam-Amoah & Frimpong, 2020; Tetteh *et al.*, 2020). Such an initiative would require significant state funding, along with greater involvement from private businesses. Taking a cue from Grosfoguel (2007) and Chambers and Buzinde (2015) 'epistemic decolonization' I argue along the lines of Broadfoot's (2001, p. 261) caution that, "while it may be tempting to adopt seemingly successful practices from other contexts, doing so can be risky. The effectiveness of any educational strategy depends not only on what teachers do but also, crucially, on what students themselves contribute to the learning process. Therefore, when reforming secondary education through the "adaptation" of foreign models - a process that demands considerable caution due to differing socio-cultural contexts - it is important to remember that "educational transfer and adaptation" can lead to the displacement of Indigenous alternatives that could have been developed and implemented (Steiner-Khamsi, 2000; Terminski, 2013).

In summary, the peripheral status of Ghana and other African countries since colonial times, particularly in our increasingly globalized and homogenized world, must be considered. Whether

educational models focus on academic content or vocational-industrial training, Ghana and other African countries may continue to meet their human-resource development goals but remain dependent within the global system (Clayton 1998; Kamens *et al.* 1996; Soko & Lehmann, 2011).

3.6 Concluding Thoughts

I presented an overall discussion on Ghana's educational reforms over the years, because as seen in the chapter, this discussion is instrumental to understanding the entrenched colonial histories that form the foundations of Ghana's educational system and the lingering after-effects on tourism education, particularly as it relates to the cultural context of the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management (DHTM), University of Cape Coast. One of the key importance of this chapter was that, following changes to the educational guidelines over an extensive period, we see how Ghana's educational framework that was designed to attend to colonial economic and administrative objectives still influence how knowledge is generated and taught in tourism studies.

Another interesting theme you will note in this chapter is the transfer of foreign educational models, in both its form and process, and how they became integral part of Ghana's educational content and delivery (Kadingdi, 2006). The colonial education system which was shaped by European missionary activity and the expectations of the British administration, brought an academic structure that typically favoured Western systems of knowledge at the expense of the Indigenous and local epistemologies it dismissed and marginalized (Agbodeka, 1977; Boahen, 1996; Quist, 2003).

In addition, the chapter shows that despite the several attempts by post-independence educational reforms to Africanize education, they failed to shake off their colonial trappings (Foster, 1965; Steiner-Khamsi & Quist, 2000). Although educational reforms in 1987 and the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) programme tried expanding access and integrating vocational aspects into education, the core of the system remained the imperial heritage of Western academic paradigms, rather than Indigenous tourism expertise. In particular, the focus on tourism education as a driver of economic development lends itself to a historicized perspective on the

positioning of Ghana as a site for consumption, framed in colonial narratives of heritage and hospitality.

Cape Coast, being a significant site of colonial history and a major hub for tourism education, exemplifies the intersection of these historical and contemporary influences. The dominance of English as the medium of instruction, the continued reliance on Western tourism theories, and the structured nature of hospitality education all reflect the enduring impact of colonial-era reforms. Furthermore, the tourism curriculum in institutions like the University of Cape Coast often privileges international tourism standards and Western perspectives on conservation, sustainability, and management, sidelining Indigenous Ghanaian frameworks of hospitality, cultural heritage, and community-based tourism practices.

It is therefore critical that we identify import of this chapter. It reminds us of the need to critically re-examine and decolonize tourism education in Ghana. Due to the entrenched nature of how colonial histories have established and reinforced processes inherent in Ghana's educational fabric, policy makers, educators, and scholars all have a mandate to learn to incorporate Indigenous knowledges, practices, and perspectives into tourism education, not only in the DHTM, UCC but in Ghana as a whole. Such a shift is much needed, both to challenge the epistemic hegemony of West-centric theoretical frameworks (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015), and towards making tourism education locally relevant and contextually integrative in relation to the socio-cultural realities of local communities.

In conclusion, this chapter shed light on the colonial continuities that persist within the Ghana's educational reforms and structure. At the heart of these reflections lies a need to re-imagine and re-work tourism education in the DHTM, UCC, and Ghana as a whole to better understand Ghanaian epistemologies, histories, and aspirations.

Chapter 4

Methodology

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I describe the methodology I adopted for this study. I also present the rationale for choosing critical ethnography as the methodology for this study. My study is purely qualitative as it describes and interrogates an academic phenomenon 'imbued with social dimensions' (Kirunda, 2005, p. 126). My goal was to explore meanings, understand experiences, and interpret the social and human environment in the DHTM, UCC. I start the chapter by situating my study within a qualitative research paradigm, describing my chosen methodology - *critical ethnography*, and the opportunities and challenges that this methodology presents, the study area information, the methods, and procedures which I utilized in gathering and analyzing the data, as well as the ethical considerations I made.

My research also involved analyzing the beliefs, values, practices, and collective norms upheld by the members of the DHTM. Specifically, I examined the interpretations of social realities in order to uncover the underlying forces that shape the department's culture and its historical relationship with colonization. Emphasizing the 'why' and 'how' aspects, I also investigated how the department's educational culture is enacted every day.

4.1 Critical Ethnography

Critical ethnography is grounded in the theoretical foundations of critical theory (Carspecken, 1996; Quantz, 1992). For instance, critical methodologists unpack broader economic, political, and social issues that centre around oppression, power, and inequality by expanding conventional ethnography (Schwandt, 1997). Given (2008) defined critical ethnography as "a research methodology through which the socio-cultural, economic, and political issues are interpreted and represented to illustrate the processes of oppression and engage people in addressing them" (p. 2). Traditions of critical research differ from other forms of research mainly due to the acknowledgement that truth claims are always situated and implicated in power relations (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003). Hence, in order to address different power relations in contexts, critical ethnography was birthed as a

methodological approach (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Foley (2002) noted that like ethnographers, critical ethnographers tend to do "intensive empirical investigations of everyday, lived cultural reality" (p. 472). This means however that critical ethnographers think more deeply about relations of power and their possible impacts on the perspectives of each account, whereas traditional ethnographers tend to treat the participant observations and accounts of that lived cultural reality as an accurate representation. In effect, critical ethnography addresses inequities based on class, race, gender, patriarchy, ideology, among others (Anderson, 1989).

Through the use of critical ethnography, I leveraged on my familiarity with the DHTM to explore how power circulates within the culturally situated relationships among faculty, tourism students, and staff, revealing how these dynamics both reproduce and contest the enduring legacies of colonization in tourism education. While conducting my critical ethnography, I took on the role of an advocate, supporter, and a champion of culture, in defiance of oppressions within a culture of oppressions toward the entire culture more generally (Rose, 2015). As an advocate, I actively voiced concerns about the marginalization and silencing of local cultural values and knowledge systems within the department. Part of this involved me pushing for the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives in the overall operations of the DHTM, such as, in curriculum development and pedagogical choices. I also engaged in this critical ethnography as a supporter, walking alongside students of the DHTM, faculty, and staff who were grappling with tensions of cultural erasure and systemic exclusion. I did this mostly by listening empathetically and amplifying their experiences throughout the research process. As a champion of the culture, I have celebrated and defended the richness of the Ghanaian local identities, epistemologies, and practices that are often undervalued in the academic tourism discourse. I did this at several international tourism conferences, where I shared preliminary findings of this dissertation. My familiarity with the educational context of the DHTM, UCC is from my own educational experiences from the department during my undergraduate studies from September 2013 until August 2015.

Of critical importance to my PhD work is critical ethnography's emphasis on the double nature of social institutions (e.g., education), where institutions play a role in both advancing systemic inequality and producing citizens capable of changing said systems (Carspecken, 2005). On the one hand, education systems, being a product of colonial histories, can be tools which reproduce systemic inequality,

particularly when curricula, pedagogies, and institutional cultures prioritize Eurocentric and Western worldviews whilst marginalizing Indigenous and local knowledges. In this way the university becomes a site for normalizing and maintaining colonial power structures. On the other hand, critical ethnography also emphasizes that these same institutions possess the transformative potential to cultivate critical consciousness among students, faculty, and staff.

Understanding how colonization shapes tourism education in the DHTM, as seen through the perspectives of students, faculty, and staff, my personal observations during the fieldwork, reading of scholarly works, policy and historical analysis aligns with the aims of critical ethnography. This is because critical ethnography goes beneath surface appearances, challenges the status quo, and "unsettles both neutrality and taken-for-granted assumptions by bringing to light underlying and obscure operations of power and control" (Madison, 2012, p. 5). This can be applied to the DHTM in order to highlight ways in which the department's educational culture reinforces and/or resists colonization.

In other words, critical ethnography is more concerned with how individuals experience their world and how they actively shape it, rather than merely observing and documenting their actions from an external standpoint (Given, 2008). The choice of critical ethnography as the methodology for my research created the avenue for tourism students, staff, faculty, and me as the researcher to actively question colonization and tourism education relationships, and to partake in the co-construction of knowledge in the DHTM's educational culture. Additionally, the political dimension of critical ethnography places a focus on social change and action through awareness creation of colonial and oppressive power structures that are most often taken for granted (Thomas, 1993). Critical ethnography enabled me to understand how resistance to colonial power is carried out in the DHTM, and how imagination for alternative possibilities of tourisms that unsettle and generate more just, liberatory, and locally meaningful tourism narratives, developments, and educations are initiated. Overall, critical ethnography presented the possibility for centering and prioritizing local knowledge and expectations for change within tourism education contexts in the DHTM, Cape Coast, and Ghana at large.

Several tourism scholars have used critical ethnography to investigate many issues (*see* Adams, 2006; Guerrón Montero, 2021; Lonon, 2016; Salazar; 2010; Stephenson & Bianchi, 2007). For example, Adams (2006) utilized critical ethnography to analyze the interplay between local traditions and global tourism, shedding light on issues of power, representation, and cultural change in Tana Toraja, Indonesia. Also, Salazar (2010) employed critical ethnography to investigate how tourism imaginaries are constructed and disseminated among the Maasai in Tanzania. He focused his work on the narratives and representations that shape tourists' expectations and experiences. There are also examples of scholars like Babb (2011), Bruner (2001) and Cohen (2010) who have used critical ethnography to examine on-the-ground relationships between tourism, nationalism, and nation-building. In the Ghanaian context, Quan-Baffour (2020) adopted this methodology to examine how an annual cultural event and performance of the Bono ethnic group in Ghana attracts tourists to the rural area. Findings of this study showed that critical ethnography allowed for an understanding into how research participants perceive their setting and their interpretations of their lived experiences in relation to culture and tourism. Ormsby (2012) also utilized critical ethnography to describe community attitudes toward a sacred forest and tourism in grove settings in Ghana and India. The researcher noted that this methodology created the platform for a practical engagement with community participants in order to assess the extent to which participation in management and tourism profit sharing were key to the effectiveness of forest conservation.

Ashkanasy and Daus (2021) remind us that it is only when we have a clear view of the nature of our culture and what possibilities are open to us that we can affect our own personal development and the surroundings we have. With this understanding, critical ethnography allows for the creation of clearer images of the larger picture of which we all are part, and once this picture is examined in detail, many opportunities for revisions take shape. As a methodology, critical ethnography provided the opportunity for a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the larger social, cultural and political systems within which tourism education in the DHTM operates. By entering the DHTM space and focusing on how members of the department experience and navigate the educational culture, I was able to gain a more comprehensive picture of the complex relationships that tourism education has with colonization.

Using critical ethnography for this study helped me to uncover underlying cultural and social issues that have shaped the educational culture in the DHTM. Specifically, this methodology has revealed how colonial legacies, cultural stereotypes and power imbalances have influenced the day-to-day interactions among members of the DHTM, how curriculum is designed and carried out, and how the DHTM is represented on the global stage. The other productive part of using critical ethnography for this study is that once these social and cultural issues were examined, the methodology helped reveal opportunities for rethinking and reimagining current educational practices.

4.2 Colonial roots of ethnography and my approach to "epistemic de-linking"

Recognizing that the methodology of ethnography and its attendant practices have roots in colonial frameworks, I needed to consciously ensure to not perpetuate colonial power imbalances by my overall approach to the study. Historically, ethnography involved Western researchers observing and interpreting non-Western societies, often without respect for the autonomy or voice of the communities being studied (Pels & Salemink, 1994; Said, 1978). Sadly, this practice only reinforced unequal power dynamics, where knowledge about the "Other" was produced through a colonial lens, often reducing complex societies to simplified and exoticized stereotypes (Aitchison, 2001; Ashcroft, 2009; Fanon, 2007; Said, 1978). Due to these colonial roots of this methodology, I needed to be 'decolonial' in my approach to my chosen methodology.

These critiques necessitate what Grosfoguel (2007) and Chambers and Buzinde (2015) refer to as "epistemic de-linking". While on the field, I adopted the concept of epistemic de-linking (Grosfoguel, 2007; Chambers & Buzinde, 2015) to focus on specific methods that decenter Western and Eurocentric epistemologies and rationales for actions and put at the foreground local and Indigenous knowledges of doing things. I must say however that a true critical ethnography goes beyond just the use of qualitative tools, to engage with culture and power in context. In other words, it is not defined by its methods but also by its ethical-political orientation. While the next few sentences focus on specific methods I adopted and how I intentionally was critical about their use, it does not sum up all of the agenda behind critical ethnography. My study used these

ethnographic methods, but only as a part of a broader project to challenge structures of coloniality in tourism education in the DHTM, UCC. While interacting and engaging with members of the DHTM, I chose to not impose Western frameworks that are prevalent in research on the participants. Specifically, drawing from Smith's (2012) work on Indigenous methodologies and Quijano's (2000) critique of the coloniality of knowledge, I treated the participants of this study not merely as research participants, but as co-constructors of knowledge.

Also, in order to decenter Western and Eurocentric traditions that place the researcher at the centre, the choice of my approach to the interviews I conducted, the meets-and-greets, classroom visits and observations, was done with the members of the DHTM in mind as the focus. My intention of using these methods was not simply to gather data but to co-create knowledge in ways that disrupt colonial research hierarchies. Instead of assuming my role as 'the PhD candidate from the University of Waterloo, Canada' coming to the University of Cape Coast to conduct research, I focused on de-emphasizing my own power and authority and creating collaborative opportunities where our engagements were bi-directional. To do this, I was intentional about de-centering my authority as a researcher, fostering collaborative relationships with all research participants. Rather than positioning myself as the sole knowledge producer, I created space for students, faculty and staff to be able to shape the research process through their own voices, critiques, and experiences. In other words, I critically constantly reflected on my own identity, academic privilege, and the historical asymmetries between Western and African universities. For instance, during my interview sessions with students, I refrained from dominating the conversation with structured questions. Instead, I encouraged students to set the direction for our conversations by letting them highlight issues they found most relevant to their lived experiences and the subject matter. For faculty, I invited them not only to reflect on their pedagogical choices, but also to critique the assumptions behind my study. This helped me to learn from their professional and cultural contexts. Also, this approach gave the students, faculty and staff the opportunity to retain control over how their narratives were shared and represented.

In the spirit of decolonization, I utilized a decolonial Indigenous approach to interviewing – one that privileges relational ways of knowing that respects the relations people have with one another.

This approach was meant to deviate from what Chilisa (2012) observed about conventional interview method, that it leans towards individualistic, Westernized assumptions and theories that ignore Indigenous value systems. For that reason, I wanted my relational encounters in the DHTM to respect local and Indigenous ways of knowing. Therefore, instead of asking fixed interview questions, I allowed the conversations to flow more naturally. Although I had a guide with key discussion areas based on my research questions, the interactions were organic. Most participants told their stories and shared their perspectives on the subject at hand. The practices I chose to engage in as a way of navigating the colonial histories associated with ethnography allowed for the perspectives of members of the DHTM to be brought to the forefront. It also allowed them to lead the interpretation and representation of their own educational cultural narratives (Mignolo, 2007). In this case, instead of interpreting participants' stories solely through an insider-outsider lens, participants had the power to determine how their experiences and cultural realities are understood and conveyed. Participants had the space to explain what their experiences mean to them in their own terms, using their own cultural logic, values, and knowledge systems. In addition, participants had the power to influence how their stories and narratives are written about, framed, and shared. Consequently, my approach was a way to disrupt traditional power dynamics that are embedded in colonial ethnographic methodologies, while amplifying the voice of participants and positioning their shared knowledge as central to my entire research process. This has helped in "de-linking" from colonial structures that are embedded in traditional forms of ethnography.

Critical ethnography has become a useful research methodology in today's contemporary society. By adhering to the principles of critical research methodologies both the research participants and I interrogated ways in which colonization is reinforced and/or resisted in tourism education in the DHTM, UCC, and in Ghana at large.

4.3 Study Site: Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management (DHTM), University of Cape Coast (UCC).

The Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management, where this study took place is one of the departments in the University of Cape Coast (UCC). UCC is a public collegiate university located in the historic town of Cape Coast. The university operates on two campuses: the Southern Campus (Old Site) and the Northern Campus (New Site) (https://ucc.edu.gh/main/about/history). The Elmina and Cape Coast Castles, which are two important World Heritage sites in Ghana are a few kilometers away from the university.

The University of Cape Coast was established in October 1962 as a University College which was an affiliate to the University of Ghana, Legon. The need for highly skilled and qualified personnel in the educational sector necessitated the creation of the University. For that reason, training of graduate teachers for second cycle institutions, teacher training colleges and technical institutions, was the main mandate at the time of establishment. This was a mission that the two existing public universities at the time, that is, University of Ghana and the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, were unequipped to undertake. On October 1, 1971, an Act of Parliament, known as *The University of Cape Coast Act*, 1971 [Act 390] conferred on the College the authority to confer its own certificates, diplomas, and degrees. This authority made the University of Cape Coast a full and independent University. The Act of Parliament later became the *University of Cape Coast Law*, 1992 [PNDC Law 278]. The vision of the University has since been to be a university with a worldwide acclaim that is strongly positioned for innovative teaching, research, outreach, and professional development (https://ucc.edu.gh/main/about/history).

The Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management was carved out of the Department of Geography and Tourism in October 2008. The goal of this creation was to have a separate department that would offer programs that reflect current trends in the tourism and hospitality industry at both the national and international levels. Other programs focus on practical aspects of tourism and hospitality service delivery. The Department's vision is to become a center of excellence and scholarship in hospitality and tourism in Africa and thrives on the mission to provide a broad-based training in Hospitality and Tourism Management in order to produce self-

confident, innovative and self-reliant graduates for management careers in the Hospitality and Tourism industries (https://htm.ucc.edu.gh/vision-mission-core-values-department-hospitality-and-tourism-management).



Figure 4.1 *Pictures showing the front view of the DHTM, department's main hallway, waiting area, department library, conference/lecture room, and lecture hall*
Source: Fieldwork, 2023 (Victor Mawutor Agbo)

4.4 Cape Coast

Cape Coast is the capital of the Central Region of Ghana. It served as the seat of the British colonial administration up until 1877. It is a coastal city located within longitudes 1° 11 ′ – 1° 41 ′ W and latitudes 5°7 ′ – 5° 20 ′ N (*see* Figure 4.2 below). Cape Coast Metropolitan Area has a land size of approximately 122 km^2. Its neighbouring communities are the Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abrem (KEEA) Municipality in the west, Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese District in the east, and Twifo-Hemang-Lower-Denkyira District in the north (www.ghanadistricts.com). It also shares boundaries with the Gulf of Guinea to the south.

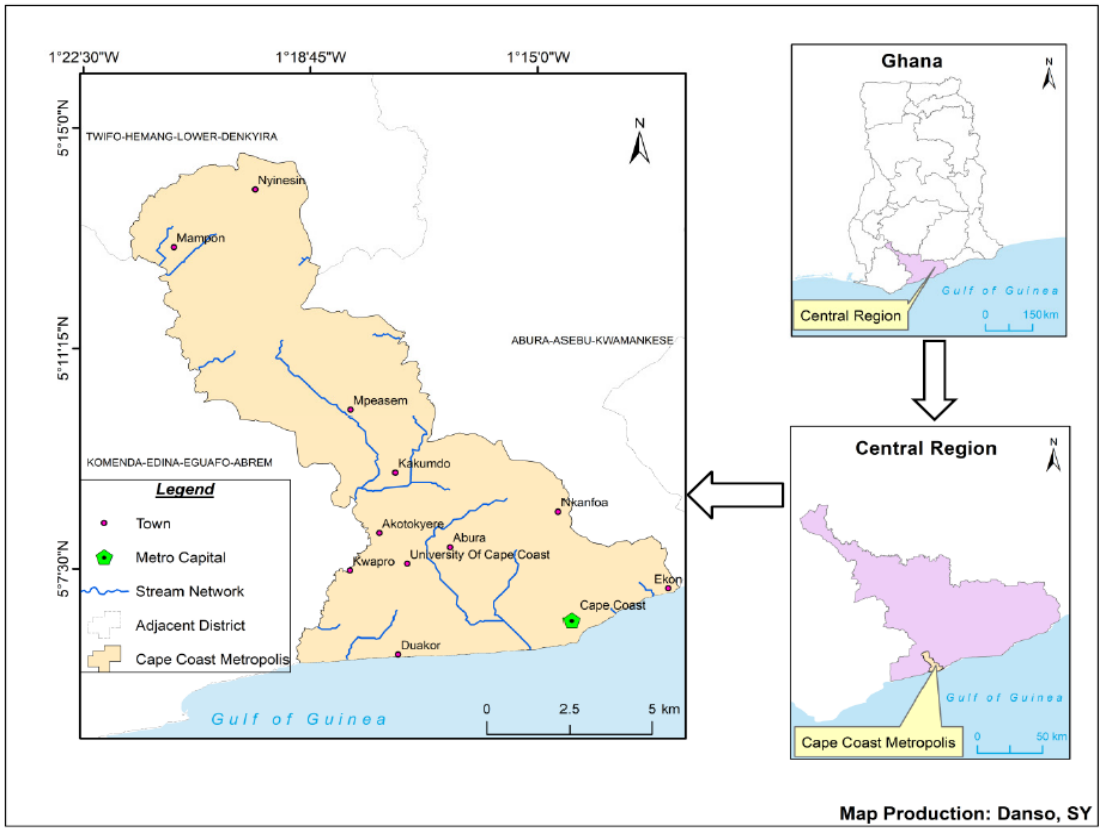


Figure 4.2 *Metropolitan Map of Cape Coast*
Source: Danso *et al.* (2020)

Cape Coast's coastline is known for its ancient forts and castles built by early European traders. Notable among these historical features are the Elmina Castle, Fort St. Jago, and the Cape Coast Castle, the three of which have been designated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as World Heritage Monuments. Cape Coast is famous for

Tourism, Fishing and Agriculture. Tourism is very predominant in Cape Coast, a reason why the Ministry of Tourism in Ghana named Cape Coast and Central Region as "the heartbeat of Ghana's tourism industry" (Amankona Kwadwo, 2010).

Some of the most visited tourist sites in the region are the three designated World Heritage Monuments, the Kakum National Park, the Stingless Bee Research Center, tombs of historical importance, historical buildings in the old sections of the town, and shrines. Cape Coast also has several hotels, guest houses and restaurants that mainly serve international tourists who visit the municipality. Today, Dutch and Portuguese influences in Cape Coast are still seen through the existence of forts, castles, churches, schools, and cemetery, as well as street names and family names. More than 100,000 international tourists visit the forts and castles annually (Arthur & Mensah 2006). It must be noted that Cape Coast, like any other coastal town, inherited a large number of buildings from past colonial activity which to this day reminds the visitors of an intense contact in its past with foreign culture. The Cape Coast Center for National Culture, the biennial Pan-African Historical Theatre Festival (PANAFEST), and the Oguaa Fetu Afahye (the city's annual traditional festival) are other attractions in Cape Coast.

Cape Coast is also well known for its high-quality educational institutions. It has institutions at all levels of education. At the tertiary level, it has the University of Cape Coast and the Cape Coast Technical University. There are also eleven (11) Senior High Schools, one (1) Technical School and one (1) Training College (Ministry of Education, EMIS, 2020).

4.5 Research Context

I conducted this critical ethnographic study within the context of tourism education in the DHTM, UCC, with the goal of interrogating the culture of tourism education in the department and its relationships with colonization. The educational culture of the DHTM consists of all tangible and intangible characteristics defining the beliefs, values, behaviour patterns, and understandings that are shared by members of the department. An academic departmental culture does not exist in a vacuum. It operates within the broader context of the culture of the entire institution. Hence, I situated my doctoral work within the broader cultural contexts of the University of Cape Coast and

Ghana as a whole. I focused on examining the department's origins, development over time, and how its history has shaped current priorities and approaches to tourism education and research. Another area of focus was the departmental mission, describing how the DHTM positions itself within the broader academic landscape. Other key areas I examined included curriculum and pedagogical approaches, departmental values and norms, physical site, technological resources, and community and social impact of the DHTM.

4.6 Data Generation

I generated all the data for my critical ethnography in the DHTM, UCC. The process spanned a period of four (4) months, starting from the 20th of September 2022 to the 11th of January 2023. My data sources included participant observation and personal journaling, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and some policy documents. To effectively navigate issues of access during the conduct of my critical ethnography, I engaged intentionally and respectfully with multiple layers of departmental gatekeepers. The process required me to engage in careful planning, transparency, and continuous negotiation of my positionality as a researcher. Before the start of my data generation, I requested formal permission from appropriate administrative authorities at UCC by providing detailed letters to the Head of the DHTM, explaining the purpose, significance, and intended outcomes of my research. In the letters, I explained my study, describing my chosen methodology and ethics, and where I sought to contribute to the academy and tourism education efforts at the local level.

Key gatekeepers included the Head of the Department, senior faculty members, administrative staff, and students of the DHTM. Faculty and staff played critical roles not only as formal gatekeepers granting me institutional access but also as informal facilitators who introduced me to students, provided initial credibility, and significantly enhanced my acceptance within the department. My time in the DHTM involved building and maintaining relationships in order to keep my observations going. This process of building relationships was guided by principles of mutual respect, reciprocity, transparency, and trustworthiness, which are all key tenets of critical ethnographic methodologies. I began with informal conversations and dialog in order to establish rapport, openly sharing my personal background, research intentions, and motivations for

undertaking this specific study. I believe that my openness about the objectives and potential implications of my research facilitated trust and reduced potential suspicions or misunderstandings about my presence and intentions. I also leveraged on my own identity as a former student of the DHTM in order to give me legitimacy.

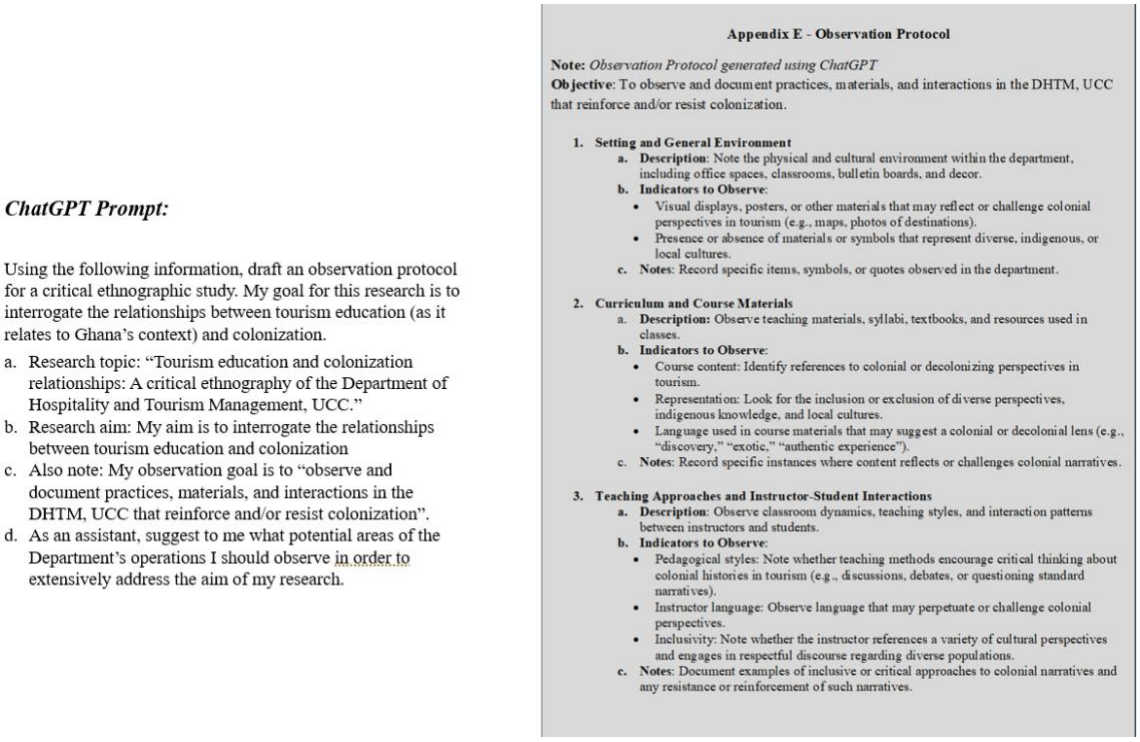
During the fieldwork phase, I communicated regularly with those who participated in research, keeping them fully apprised of developments and assuring them, at regular intervals, of their anonymity and confidentiality. Moreover, I engaged in departmental events, seminars, and community activities beyond my research agenda, demonstrating genuine interest in and respect for the DHTM's culture, perspectives, and lived experiences of its members.

Each of the chosen methods of data generation is explained in detail in the next sections, outlining the procedures that I adopted for the recruitment of participants.

4.6.1 Participant Observation and Personal Journaling

Throughout my critical ethnographic study, I assumed the role of participant observer to allow me to engage in an in-depth study of the complex nature of the relationships that exist between all participants in the DHTM. As a former student of this department, I compared all of my initial thoughts, expectations, and previous experience with the participant observations that I engaged in. The observation took place specifically in common places shared by members of the DHTM. These common spaces include the departmental study rooms, departmental lecture halls, departmental library, lunchrooms, and any other place that is commonly shared by members of the department. I was present at the department from 20th September 2022 to 11th January 2023 in order to conduct my fieldwork. To conduct my observations, I used ChatGPT to develop an observation protocol (see Appendix E) to help with pointers to note during my observations. I must state, however, that I used ChatGPT in this case just as one would have a partner in thinking, rather than an authority in itself. I did not just focus on everything it generated on its first output. Even for the observations I made, I remained the main decision-maker, critically analyzing, evaluating and recontextualizing the prompts it generated. I also vetted and re-wrote some of the prompts suggested for my observations. For example, after the AI-generated draft of observation checklist

items, I reviewed each of the items against my decolonial criteria. I removed any of the items that felt extractive. The items I utilized were those that responded sensitively to Indigenous and local epistemologies, and those that did not raise any concerns of coloniality. Finally, upon arrival at the DHTM, UCC, I piloted my observation protocol in the departmental library by using the prompts to note down my main observations in my first-few days of arrival. The goal was to use my observation outcomes to further refine both the content and style of my protocol, ensuring that I was adhering to cultural, ethical and decolonial considerations in data generation. Figure 4.3 Below shows a picture of the prompt I used to generate the observation protocol.



ChatGPT Prompt:

Using the following information, draft an observation protocol for a critical ethnographic study. My goal for this research is to interrogate the relationships between tourism education (as it relates to Ghana's context) and colonization.

a. Research topic: "Tourism education and colonization relationships: A critical ethnography of the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management, UCC."
b. Research aim: My aim is to interrogate the relationships between tourism education and colonization
c. Also note: My observation goal is to "observe and document practices, materials, and interactions in the DHTM, UCC that reinforce and/or resist colonization".
d. As an assistant, suggest to me what potential areas of the Department's operations I should observe in order to extensively address the aim of my research.

Appendix E - Observation Protocol

Note: *Observation Protocol generated using ChatGPT*
Objective: To observe and document practices, materials, and interactions in the DHTM, UCC that reinforce and/or resist colonization.

1. **Setting and General Environment**
   a. **Description**: Note the physical and cultural environment within the department, including office spaces, classrooms, bulletin boards, and decor.
   b. **Indicators to Observe**:
      - Visual displays, posters, or other materials that may reflect or challenge colonial perspectives in tourism (e.g., maps, photos of destinations).
      - Presence or absence of materials or symbols that represent diverse, indigenous, or local cultures.
   c. **Notes**: Record specific items, symbols, or quotes observed in the department.

2. **Curriculum and Course Materials**
   a. **Description:** Observe teaching materials, syllabi, textbooks, and resources used in classes.
   b. **Indicators to Observe**:
      - Course content: Identify references to colonial or decolonizing perspectives in tourism.
      - Representation: Look for the inclusion or exclusion of diverse perspectives, indigenous knowledge, and local cultures.
      - Language used in course materials that may suggest a colonial or decolonial lens (e.g., "discovery," "exotic," "authentic experience").
   c. **Notes**: Record specific instances where content reflects or challenges colonial narratives.

3. **Teaching Approaches and Instructor-Student Interactions**
   a. **Description**: Observe classroom dynamics, teaching styles, and interaction patterns between instructors and students.
   b. **Indicators to Observe**:
      - Pedagogical styles: Note whether teaching methods encourage critical thinking about colonial histories in tourism (e.g., discussions, debates, or questioning standard narratives).
      - Instructor language: Observe language that may perpetuate or challenge colonial perspectives.
      - Inclusivity: Note whether the instructor references a variety of cultural perspectives and engages in respectful discourse regarding diverse populations.
   c. **Notes**: Document examples of inclusive or critical approaches to colonial narratives and any resistance or reinforcement of such narratives.

Figure 4.3 *ChatGPT prompt (left) and part of the observation protocol (right)*
Source: OpenAI (2022)

This observation protocol was a good place to start, and my observations focused on assessing the day-to-day interactions between students and faculty, students and other students, and staff and students. By assuming the observer-as-participant role during my fieldwork, I was able to capture pertinent details regarding the interactions and connections occurring, while also facilitating the documentation and observation of my experiences throughout the process (Gold, 1958; Creswell,

2013). My goal was to record anything that I observed as they happened in-situ. This notwithstanding, I guided myself by several considerations. I did not rely on specific, pre-formulated questions during my field observations. However, my observations were not random; they were shaped by a set of thoughtful considerations aligned with the focus of my study. Some of these considerations included "who I observed", "where and when I conducted the observations", and "what I observed". Identifying all these key issues before commencing the participant observation ensured that I thought deeply about what the study aimed to achieve, and how best to go about the process of observation.

For instance, going into the field, I initially assumed that tourism education in the department would heavily reflect Indigenous and local models of tourism and hospitality training, given the current calls for decolonization of the curriculum (see Asher, 2009; Lindsay, 2020; Shahjahan *et al.*, 2022). However, through participant observation in classroom settings and informal conversations with students and faculty, I noticed only a few instances where local perspectives, proverbs, and Ghanaian cultural practices were actively integrated into teaching moments. For the most part, classroom conversations and approaches used by faculty took after Western and Eurocentric models and approaches. Additionally, I anticipated a more formal researcher-participant dynamic, but during my time in the field, I observed how relational and communal the academic culture was. This culture influenced how I engaged in the space and reshaped my understanding of academic power dynamics in this context.

Figures 4.4a and 4.4b below show notes from my reflexive journal.

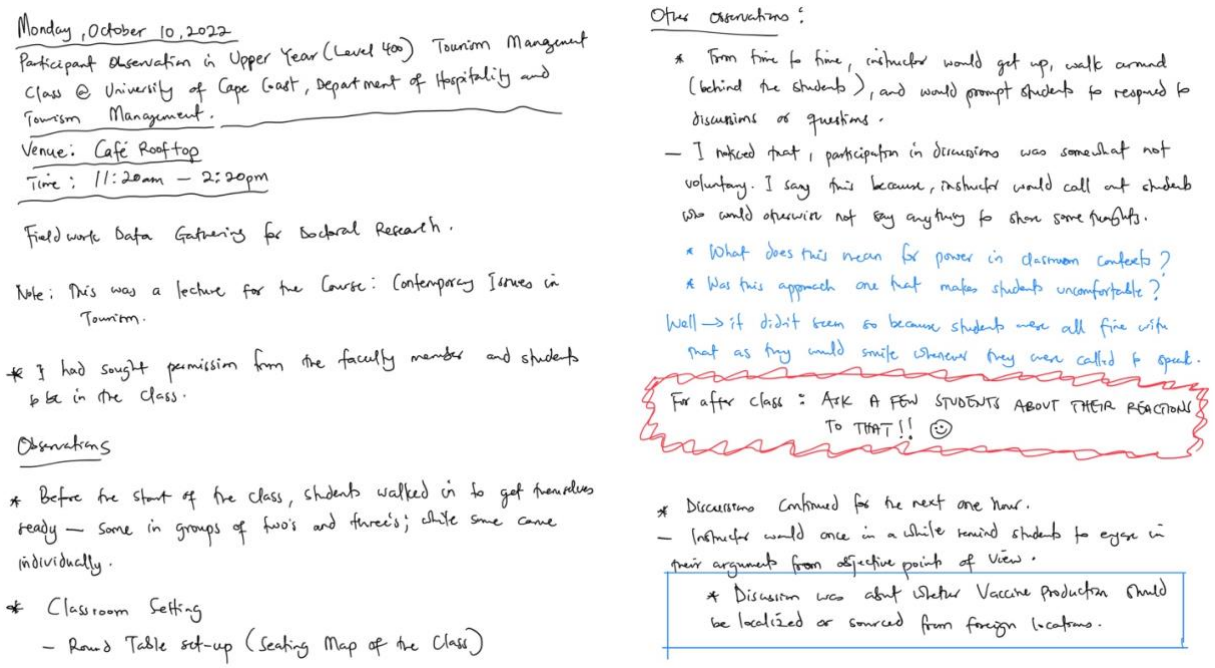


Figure 4.4a *Pictures showing notes from my reflexive journal*
Source: Fieldwork, 2023 (Victor Mawutor Agbo)

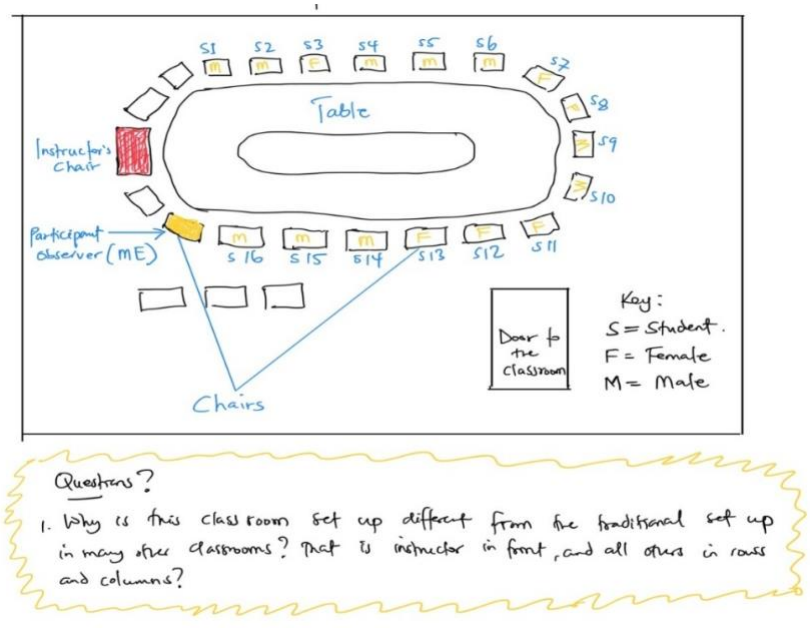


Figure 4.4b *Picture showing some additional notes from my reflexive journal*
Source: Fieldwork, 2023 (Victor Mawutor Agbo)

The aim of this journaling practice was to facilitate a thorough discussion of my personal experiences, observations, and interactions as they unfolded in my memory. Within this reflexive journal, I recorded the events of each day, noting my observations regarding the cultural dynamics within the educational setting and the interactions among participants. Furthermore, I incorporated my own interpretations and reflections on these observations. For example, when I saw a student run to a faculty to help them with their bags into the classroom, I would begin to interpret what power dynamics or cultural values that might be at play in that situation. Additionally, to ensure the retention and acknowledgment of my own experiences, I documented detailed narratives of my personal engagements within the department, including my emotional responses and any outcomes resulting from these interactions.

To align with the reflexive nature of this critical ethnographic study, I also took personal photographs throughout my time in the department and the university as a whole. These photographs were meant to help me in adding extra layers of meaning to the educational culture of the DHTM. In the realm of social research and ethnographic studies, there has been an increasing emphasis on the significance and relevance of utilizing photography as a form of research data (Bryman *et al.,* 2012). Photographs taken during any ethnographic encounters capture specifically what the researcher has observed, which "essentially become part of the researcher's field notes" (Bryman *et al.,* 2012, p. 115). I echo Bryman *et al.*'s (2012) emphasis on the importance of photography driven by research to not only be memory aids throughout data generation, but to also be used as individual sources of data for the ethnographer. The photographs that I took during data collection were only of objects, materials, location, and common spaces. For photographs that had participants of the DHTM in them no faces were shown. All photos were taken in such a way that they do not show the faces of participants (see Picture 4.6). The pictures were taken in this format in order to follow the ethical guidelines of anonymity and privacy.

4.6.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

I conducted semi-structured interviews with selected tourism students, staff, and faculty of the Department of the Hospitality and Tourism at the University of Cape Coast. I recruited participants from the pool of members of the DHTM, UCC. These members comprised *(a)* undergraduate and

graduate tourism students, *(b)* non-academic staff, and *(c)* faculty. To qualify to be recruited for participation, one needed to be a part of this department as a member of one of the groups specified above. I utilized the convenience and snowball sampling techniques to select the participants. The convenience sampling technique involved participants in the department who were "convenient" (Galloway, 2005) at the time of selection. These were members of the DHTM who were available at the time I was recruiting. This method of selection has no pattern in choosing participants. I recruited participants merely by asking people who were present in the DHTM at the time of recruitment and were interested in participating in the interviews. I also only chose participants who were interested, willing, and available to participate in the study.

These interviews made it possible to gain a better and deeper understanding of the different perspectives on tourism education and colonization relationships. It offered the opportunity for participants to discuss their individual and group experiences with the educational culture of the DHTM and to share their perspectives on colonization and potential manifestations in tourism education, among others. Following the first selection procedure, I conducted the snowball method of selection to select more participants for interviews. This method helped in finding more people for my research as the referrals by initial participants directed me to other members in the department. Given (2008) discussed that the conventional procedure for snowball sampling starts with interviewing an initial cohort of research participants who act as informants regarding not just the research subject but also potential additional participants. In certain instances, the subsequent snowballing process after the initial interviews is somewhat indirect, as these initial sources primarily provide insights on how to identify others akin to them; specifically, where such individuals are likely to gather, how to identify them, and similar aspects (Given, 2008). This approach to selection was particularly vital to me in selecting faculty members for the study due to the sensitive nature of my research objectives. This is because discussions that could potentially subject an academic department's educational culture to critical scrutiny is not one that everybody might feel comfortable speaking about. However, when other participants knew that they were specifically referred by people they knew, and were assured of their privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity, they decided to participate.

Some participants did not feel safe sharing their perspectives in the department's physical location. For this reason, I arranged for these semi-structured interviews to be conducted in a safe location on the University of Cape Coast campus at a time which was the most convenient for them. During the interviews, we discussed several issues pertaining to the objectives of my study. Some of these include participants' perspectives on patterns of behaviour, belief, and meanings within the educational culture of the department; Indigenous knowledges in tourism; colonial power relations and how they are either reinforced and / or resisted within the educational culture of the department; and the implications for decolonial actions for tourism studies and education in Ghana and the African sub-region.

In the spirit of decolonization, I utilized an Indigenous approach to interviewing – one that privileges relational ways of knowing that value respect for relations people have with one another. In this situation, I decolonized the interviewing process by taking several actions. First, acknowledging that there were power dynamics between me and the interviewees, I constantly reflected on my own positionality, biases, and the privileges of coming from the University of Waterloo, to make sure that the interactions were not impacted by these attributes. I say this is a decolonial approach because in a more traditional (colonial) interview process, researchers most assume an unchecked "objective" stance, mostly posing themselves knowledge holders. However, in my case, acknowledging that I was from the University of Waterloo – a site of global privilege, and refusing to let this status render me neutral speaks about decoloniality as it unsettles colonial power. This supports Smith's (1999) position on how claiming one's own position disrupts the myth of disciplinary objectivity.

Also, I used the interviews as a space for participants to share their narratives and stories in the way and approach they chose to, rather than sticking strictly to my own agenda. By doing so, I shifted the control of knowledge away from myself (a Western-trained researcher), and back into participants' hands. This approach challenged the traditional hierarchical "researcher-subject" dynamic and places value on participants as co-creators of knowledge and meaning (Smith, 2012). Additionally, I allowed for participants to use local languages, concepts, and culturally relevant terms to express any perspectives they thought would be the most relevant and culturally

appropriate. Also, I made the interview process flexible and adaptable to allow participants to guide the conversation, where necessary, acknowledging that their perspectives and priorities may differ from mine. The last thing I did to decolonize the interview process was to break hierarchies by conducting the interviews in settings comfortable for participants. For example, one of the interviews I conducted happened in a park near the university as we walked and talked, while another took place in a café outside of the university. Smith (2012) taught that in traditional research, researchers often choose and decide where and how data is collected, reinforcing top-down hierarchies. However, by deferring the decision of where my interviews occurred to participants, I shifted the control into the hands of participants, thereby recognizing them as co-creators of the outcomes of the research.

Chilisa (2012) described the conventional interview method as one that leans towards individualistic, Westernized assumptions and theories that ignore Indigenous value systems. For that matter, and in order for relational encounters in the field while remaining within the broad scope of the study, the following core areas, and a few interview questions informed the discussions during my semi-structured interview sessions (see Appendixes G): *(a)* Participants' understandings of patterns of behaviour, belief, and meanings within the educational culture of the department, *(b)* participants' perspectives on colonial, neo-colonial, postcolonial and decolonial as they show up within educational cultural contexts, *(c)* participants' perspectives on Indigenous knowledges and their role in shaping tourism education, *(d)* participants' perspectives on colonial power relations and how they are either reinforced and / or resisted within the educational culture of the department, and *(e)* participants' perspectives on implications for decolonial actions within the educational cultural context of the DHTM, UCC. Some of the questions that guided the semi-structured interviews include but not limited to: "How do you describe the educational culture of the DHTM?", "What does tourism education mean to you?", "What is your understanding of (de)colonization, neo-colonization, and post-colonization"?, "How are tourism education and colonization related as is manifested in the DHTM?", "What is the role of Indigenous knowledges in tourism education?", How does the educational culture of the DHTM reinforce and/or resist colonization?", and "What does decolonization in tourism educational contexts in the DHTM look like?

The semi-structured interviews spanned a time frame of 30 minutes to 60-minutes depending on each case. Table 4.1 outlines the number and gender of participants that participated in the interview sessions.

Table 4.1 *- The roles, number, and gender of the interview participants*

Role	Number of participants		
	Male	**Female**	**Other**
Undergraduate Students	5	3	0
Graduate Students	3	1	0
Faculty	4	1	0
Staff	1	0	0
Total	**13**	**5**	**0**

4.6.2.1 Transcription of Semi-Structured Interview Data

After every interview session, I transcribed each digital audio file into a Microsoft Word format document, with each participant an assigned pseudonym. I ensured that I did all the transcription of all interviews by myself in order to remain close to the data and be able to begin understanding and interpreting the data as I listened and transcribed. As I went through this process I created a password-protected master list of all participants, participant information, and pseudonyms, on my personal computer to maintain confidentiality of all participants. Table 4.2 below (*also* Appendix F) shows the list of pseudonyms used and other relevant information that might be helpful in signaling what participants had to share on the questions for the interviews.

Table 4.2 - *showing the pseudonyms used in this study, the status of participants, and their length of employment/year of study*

No.	Pseudonym	Status in the DHTM	Year of Study of Students in DHTM
1.	Prof. Kwame Nkrumah	Faculty	N/A
2.	Dr. Kofi Anta	Faculty	N/A
3.	Dr. Kwesi Danquah	Faculty	N/A
4.	Dr. Naana Oforiatta	Faculty	N/A

5.	Dr. Yaw Ndebugre	Faculty	N/A
6.	Mr. Nii Tackie	Staff	N/A
7.	Adwoa Nyamekye	Undergraduate	4th
8.	Kojo Armah	Undergraduate	4th
9.	Yaw Bansah	Undergraduate	4th
10.	Nana Owusu	Graduate (PhD student)	3rd
11.	Kwame Adjei	Undergraduate	4th
12.	Akua Mensah	Undergraduate	1st
13.	Kofi Buah	Undergraduate	4th
14.	Adjeley Nortey	Graduate (Masters)	2nd
15.	Yaw Sarpong	Graduate (Masters)	1st
16.	Afia Bempong	Undergraduate	4th
17.	Akua Atule	Undergraduate	2nd
18.	Fiifi Aikins	Graduate (Masters)	2nd

**Note: N/A is used to indicate faculty and staff's duration of service in order to protect their anonymity*

For all semi-structured transcripts, I read through all of them in order to gain an in-depth understanding of all participants' responses. This transcription process is a form of data transformation which enabled me to engage with field data in ways that allowed for easy understanding and analysis of participants' perspectives on tourism education and colonization relationships in the DHTM, UCC. The process also enabled me to gain a deeper understanding of each participant's individual experiences and stories before beginning to look at similarities and differences in the rest of the data.

4.6.3 Policy Documents

Documents are written material sources of information that are available and relate to specific topics, produced either by organizations for public use or by individuals for private use (Green & Thorogood, 2018). The most commonly used documents for research purposes and for public policy include research reports, policy documents, media reports, websites and databases, training manuals, implementation guidelines, national strategies, among others (Kayesa & Shung-King, 2021). Each of these documents may have different uses depending on the goal of the policy journey. Since the official recognition of tourism through a legal instrument as a sector for development in 1970s, governments in Ghana have committed to many development agenda and

polices for tourism development and education. Consequently, tourism and hospitality education and training have also seen massive prioritization.

To supplement the data I generated through participant observations and semi-structured interviews, I reviewed documents such as course syllabi and reading lists from the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management (DHTM), UCC; Ghana's Tourism Act, 2011 [Act 817]; the Education Act, 2008 [Act 778]; the University of Cape Coast Corporate Strategic Plan (https://ucc.edu.gh/main/explore-ucc/corporate-strategic-plan/overview-tertiary-educationsector); and The National Tourism and Hospitality Training Policy (NTHTP) 2019. This documentary analysis allowed me to compare my field findings, trace how colonial-era epistemologies have been maintained or challenged in curricular texts and uncover the formal discourses that underpin pedagogical practices in tourism education. This review was to help me trace the historical progression of tourism policy development and implementation, summarize key themes and describe their effectiveness in terms of delivering tourism education outcomes.

For the above listed policy documents, I identified and extracted relevant historical information concerning the origin, context, and progression of tourism education policies within Ghanaian universities. This process involved noting key dates, milestones, and events that shaped policy development. The next thing I did was to analyze key themes and objectives explicitly stated or implicitly suggested in these documents. I paid close attention to how tourism education was conceptualized, structured, and delivered across different historical periods.



Figure 4.5 *showing the front pages of the Ministry of Education's Education Strategic Plan, 2018-2030 and University of Cape Coast's Corporate Strategic Plan, 2023 - 2027*
Source: Ministry of Education, Ghana and University of Cape Coast, Homepage

Moving on, I evaluated the effectiveness of these policies by assessing the stated objectives of these policies against documented outcomes and current practices within tourism education programs to evaluate their effectiveness, particularly focusing on the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management, University of Cape Coast. I also critically examined the language, assumptions, and priorities within these policies to uncover any explicit or implicit connections to colonial structures, power, or discourses. This critical lens enabled me to illuminate how colonial histories may continue to influence contemporary tourism education policies and practices. Finally, after all the steps, I summarized the findings and insights from each document by highlighting their distinctive contributions to tourism education, especially regarding their relationships to colonialism and decolonial possibilities.

In analyzing the documents, I paid attention to the 'language-in-use' since discourse analysis is "concerned with the description and analysis of both spoken and written interactions" (Paltridge, 2006, p. 3). The consideration of language in policy documents for analysis is critical as it aligns with wa Thiong'o's (1986) notion of language as culture in (de)colonial contexts. I also critically assessed the departmental website to ascertain subtle cues that might be on serving as resistance

and/or reinforcements to colonization within the educational context of the department. Bryman (2012) describes critical discourse analysis as a version of discourse analysis which is strongly influenced by critical theorist Michael Foucault. Its aim is "to link language and its modes of use to the significance of power and social difference in society" (Bryman, 2012, p. 528). Like data analysis, starting a document analysis without having any clearly defined structural or conceptual framework for analysis carries potentials for confusion and unclear analysis of report. Recognizing the potential for confusion utilizing an unstructured method of working with documents, I created an analytical framework before working with the documents. The framework was both thematic and conceptual and it allowed me to intuitively assess specific areas of the documents based on their primary operational areas, thematic emphases and historic contexts. The framework therefore offered a consistent structure for me to conduct a comparative and critical analysis of the materials.

4.8 Data Analysis

In every ethnographic research, researchers are faced with the question of what to do with the volume of data that is available to them (Angrosino, 2007). No matter what the case may be, all the data that is generated from the field through observations, interviews, field notes, among others, require analysis so that the information that emerges makes sense. Rose (2015) clarified that critical ethnography is not only a collection of data collection methods, but also a series of analytical tools that enable researchers to make sense of data. In critical ethnographic studies, the research process requires an iterative analytical process in which the data which is collected informs analysis which also (re)informs subsequent data generation. Angrosino (2007) highlights that two main forms of data analysis of ethnographic data exist: *(a)* descriptive analysis – the process of taking the data generated from the field and breaking it down into different parts. That is, identifying the patterns or themes that emerge from the data; and *(b)* theoretical analysis – the process of identifying how the different parts fit together; in other words, explaining the existence of the patterns in the data.

To analyze the semi-structured interviews, observations, and fieldnotes I gathered throughout this study, I used Foucauldian discourse analysis (FDA). Foucault (1972) sees discourse as a way we

think and make sense of the world. According to him, words do not just describe reality; they actively shape it while also being shaped by it. Discourses evolve over time and across different contexts, but some can become deeply ingrained and resistant to change. They hold power because they dictate what can and cannot be known, making certain ideas visible while silencing others (Foucault, 1980).

An important aspect of discourse is intertextuality. This is the idea that meanings are influenced not just by one source, but by a web of interconnected texts and images (Rose, 2001). Rose argues that visuality itself is a form of discourse, shaping what we see and how we interpret it. These texts and images come together to form what Foucault (1972) calls "discursive formations," which are interconnected systems of meaning. Foucault's work also explores how discourse disciplines individuals and reinforces power dynamics, stressing that knowledge is not neutral but closely tied to power, and carries the ability to shape what is accepted as truth (Foucault, 1980).

Going back to the University of Cape Coast, where I studied to conduct my doctoral research from a Canadian university presented a unique mix of advantages and challenges. On one hand, my familiarity with the academic and cultural environment allowed me to navigate spaces with relative ease, build rapport with participants, and approach the study with an insider's understanding of the institutional, educational, and cultural dynamics. My past experiences provided valuable context and insights that enriched my analysis. However, my position as a researcher from a Canadian institution also introduced a layer of complexity. My academic training abroad has influenced my perspectives and methodologies, at times creating a sense of distance between myself and the participants. There were moments when I had to consciously reflect on how my positionality - assuming both insider and outsider identities - shaped the questions I asked, the interpretations I made, and the power dynamics at play.

While this dual perspective offered depth, it also required me to carefully navigate around my research intentions in order to ensure my work remained both respectful and reflexive. Ultimately, my approach to analyzing the data was an ongoing process that evolved from the moment I arrived in the DHTM, UCC through to writing this thesis. Throughout, I applied a lens informed by

Foucauldian and epistemic decolonization theories to better understand how power operates within the cultural contexts of tourism education in the DHTM, UCC. Within the Foucauldian Discourse Analysis, I identified patterns and themes that emerged from the data as I carefully read the transcripts of each of the different sets of data I generated. I began analysis simultaneously with the collection of data. While these two processes are typically discrete parts of research, ongoing analysis throughout the data collection process helped guide the research and led me to a better understanding of the subject and the data (Hesse Biber, 2007). At the end of each interview, I would make notes of my feelings, questions, observations, and emerging connections in my reflexive journal. I actively engaged with the transcripts and my reflections on what I was learning over the course of my fieldwork. I transcribed my interviews as soon as I could, and as I did so I made notes in the margins regarding my questions, particular words or phrases that stuck out for me, and photographs that I found especially compelling. This phase was deeply iterative, as I was continually moving back and forth between the texts and interviewing participants and engaging with new observational data.

During this phase, I would also check in with my academic supervisor, Dr. Bryan Grimwood, to discuss my preliminary understandings of what was emerging from the data. As I did that, I received invaluable feedback, and this was highly influential for how I came to understand my data. This continued for the duration of my time in Ghana for the fieldwork.

I began my second phase of analysis when I returned to Canada. Over a period of several months, I sat with the transcripts, fieldnotes and photographs, studying them many times over in order to familiarize myself with both their content and their complexity. I continued to read the data through the lens of power, colonization and epistemic decolonization, by doing line-by-line and focused coding (Charmaz, 2006). Both line-by-line and focused coding connect effectively with FDA because they provide structured, detailed, and systematic methods for identifying, organizing, and interpreting discursive data, thereby enabling deeper insights into power-knowledge relationships and discursive formations, consistent with Foucauldian analytical objectives.

I also continued memoing in order to record more detailed notes on my own reflections, observations, questions, and feelings. This phase involved going back to my journal, as I reflected on my experiences and what each documentation had taught me about my research. I tried to keep the fieldwork experience in Ghana alive in my consciousness through ongoing contact with many of the people that I had contacted and spent time with while I was out on the field.

I analyzed my fieldnotes within the same framework for analysis of all data generated. Since the documentation of participant observation experiences is critical to the depth and insight of an ethnographic research project (Rose, 2015), my fieldnotes aided me in recording observations, encounters, and interactions in a rigorous and systematic manner. These fieldnotes that I generated during and after each encounter served as a written record of observations, experiences, feelings, reactions, and reflections, ultimately serving as one of the key primary data sources for my research (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). My fieldnotes served not only as a descriptive log of what happened during my stay in the DHTM, but also that of my feelings and reactions to those happenings (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). The main purpose of my fieldnotes was to give more personalized, detailed description of the educational culture of the DHTM, UCC, and the experiences of the individuals in the department to the best of my ability. In tandem with Gibbs (2007), the rich descriptions that I captured in my notes helped me to begin reflecting on what I think I knew from the observations of the field at that point, and to begin asking questions about what I still wanted to understand.

Over time, my codes and notes became increasingly complex and detailed, and I began to identify commonalities in patterns and themes across the texts from various interviews. As part of the data analysis, I also considered whether patterns I identified were acted by individuals or the groups spontaneously or if they were induced by some prompting on my part as a researcher. Taking these considerations seriously is important because as Gibbs (2007) put it, the most ideal behaviour of groups of people are more likely to be reflected in public statements and actions than behaviours and actions that are expressed in private. What Gibbs (2007) is suggesting is that in public settings where people's interactions and engagements are visible to others, people tend to display attitudes, values, and behaviours that align more closely with societal norms, ideals, and expectations. In

contrast, however, where there is less social scrutiny, people's behaviours and actions do not necessarily align with public ideals as individuals behave and act in ways that reflect their true feelings, biases, and interests, which may not be in line with public ideals.

While this process continued, a series of preliminary themes began to emerge. Although thematic analysis and FDA originate from different epistemological frameworks (Ahl, 2007), the process of emerging preliminary themes aligns closely with the Foucauldian method of tracing discursive formations, practices, and power-knowledge structures. For example, emerging preliminary themes which involve identifying recurring ideas, meanings, and patterns within data closely parallels FDA's emphasis on recognizing recurring discursive practices like language, categories, terminology, and ways of speaking that reveal deeper power dynamics and systems of meaning. Some of these emerging themes were Values, Ethical Behaviour, Curriculum and Pedagogy, Library, Language, Collections, Access and Representation, (De)colonization, Training and Education, Educators, Empowerment, Restitution, and Advocacy. As I continued the analysis, I reflected deeply on how all the material informed one another. At this stage of my analysis, I had the opportunity to present some of my preliminary findings at a series of conferences – both domestic and international. I presented some of my findings at the Canadian Congress of Leisure Research in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada in May 2023; Critical Tourism Studies, North America in Montreal, Quebec, Canada in August 2023; University of Groningen, Leeuwarden, Netherlands, November 2023; and the Royal Geographical Society - IBG Annual International Conference, Imperial College of London, UK, in August 2024. At these conferences, I received invaluable feedback from some of the scholars who had attended my talk, which was highly influential for how I came to further understand the emerging themes and lessons.

As I returned to the transcripts from time to time, I began to see the several ways in which participant responses, my observations, and other fieldnote materials were responding to my research questions. At all times I ensured to remain conscious of my embodied positionality as researcher/former student. Over the course of this phase of my analysis, I engaged more critically with the discourses that were shared with me in terms of dynamics of power, as they relate to relationships that exist and are produced on daily basis between members of the DHTM.

Recognizing that the analysis of discourse is always contextual and situated within the subject positioning of the analyst – in this case myself, a Ghanaian born, studying for my PhD in Canada – I was not attempting to establish what was 'true' about experiences of the members of the DHTM as it relates to tourism education's relationships with colonization. What I was seeking to do was to get a deeper understanding of why participants chose to share what they shared, and how those conversations were embedded within powerful cultural, social, historical, economical, and educational contexts in the DHTM.

The final stage of my analysis involved the writing of my findings. As I wrote through my findings and discussions, the themes and notions of epistemic decolonization, educational culture, libraries, and how these intersect with (de)colonization began to become more concrete and more visible to my understandings of the data. Feedback from my supervisor was also critical at this point, as he guided me to see areas that required greater clarification and others where the connections were weak or irrelevant.

4.9 Critical Analysis of Physical Space

To complement the transcripts from the interviews and the fieldnotes that I took, I conducted an analysis of the physical space of the DHTM, and the context within which my research is being carried out - *the culture of tourism education*. This analysis helped me to understand the inherent power relations that were at play in the department (Perakyla, 2008). For instance, an analysis of the physical space revealed the differences that existed among spaces that were designated and used by faculty, students, and staff, and how each of these spaces was different in size, location, level of comfort and facilities available. For example, while air conditioning systems and Wi-Fi services were available and effective in faculty and staff offices, nothing of such services were available in student spaces, including the DHTM library (a space that is mostly used by students). The following images show facilities and spaces used by faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students:



Figure 4.6 *Pictures showing some spaces available for use for graduate students and faculty ONLY (left) and faculty members (right)*
Source: Fieldwork, 2023 (Victor Mawutor Agbo)



Figure 4.7 *Pictures showing some lecture halls available for use for undergraduate students*
Source: Fieldwork, 2023 (Victor Mawutor Agbo)

This disparate allocation of resources, particularly tables, chairs, and their comfort levels, in spaces available in the DHTM provide some context to where each member of the department is at on the power-spectrum. These pictures suggest that more attention to resources and comfort is paid to graduate students and faculty members more than it is to undergraduate students in the DHTM. Even though the DHTM is a relatively small department in comparison to other departments at

UCC, there are visible differences in how resources are allocated to the various groups in the DHTM.

4.10 Researcher Reflections

As a former student of the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management (DHTM) at the University of Cape Coast (UCC) (2013 - 2015), I carry with me a deep knowledge of the departmental culture and its operations. During my undergraduate studies I served as class representative, participated in field excursions coordinated by faculty and the Hospitality and Tourism Students' Association (HOTSA), and developed lasting friendships with students, faculty, and staff. To my advantage, these connections granted me insider access to syllabi, teaching practices, and the informal networks that mediate knowledge production in the DHTM. Going to the DHTM to conduct this critical ethnographic research with my insider-outsider standpoint has been both an enriching and complex journey. My interactions, interpretations, and overall engagement with all research participants and the DHTM in general were influenced by my insider-outsider positionality. As a Ghanaian, I possess an insider understanding of the cultural, historical, and social contexts that shape the DHTM at the University of Cape Coast, a place I spent two-years of my academic journey studying for my bachelors.

In addition, the experiences I have gained from living and studying in Canada for the past seven years have provided me with an external perspective to critically examine the complex relationships between tourism education and colonization in Ghanaian educational contexts. My rich connection to Ghana and my desire to see tourism education contribute to national development in a way that reflects Indigenous and local Ghanaian values and perspectives constituted a key aspect of my positionality in this study. While this motivated me to undertake this critical ethnography to unravel these complexities, the emotional investment also made it difficult to maintain as much critical distance as I intended.

I have had to grapple with the tension between advocating for epistemic decolonization and maintaining a critical distance from my own aspirations for change. The tension exists because good critical scholarship demands that I hold space for complexity, contradiction, and unexpected

findings, even as I am emotionally and politically invested in the cause of decolonization. For my dissertation work, I am both an advocate and an analyst and balancing these roles ethically and rigorously is part of the integrity of critical ethnographic research (Foley & Valenzuela, 2008; Madison, 2005). I therefore utilized journaling as a reflexive practice to critically engage with my assumptions and to trace how my positionality shaped the process of analysis and interpretation, while remaining attentive to the patterns emerging from the participants' accounts and the documents themselves. I must admit that I was able to recognize the nuances and contradictions within the Ghanaian tourism education system because of my dual perspectives. On one hand, I had the advantage of building rapport with participants of my research and understanding local nuances due to my knowledge of the Ghanaian cultural context. On the other, I had the tools to challenge dominant narratives and critically engage with colonial legacies embedded in tourism education in Ghana due to my exposure to Canadian (Eurocentric and Western) academic discourses.

My dual perspectives therefore empowered me to bridge local and Indigenous knowledges systems with global epistemologies, fostering a more holistic analysis of the tourism education and colonization relationships. I must also add that because of my Ghanaian heritage, coupled with my past connection with the department as a student, research participants were often more open in their discussions with me. I believe that this is because they could perceive me as someone who could understand their experiences and concerns. On the other hand, my second identity – a doctoral candidate from a Western university (University of Waterloo) - introduced a power dynamic that may have shaped participants' responses in a way to potentially frame their stories to align with perceived academic expectations.

Recognizing that these were research implications I could not avoid, I remained mindful of potential impacts of my positionality and encouraged participants to share their genuine perspectives on the issues we discussed. One of the key strengths I brought to this research was my ability to navigate the Ghanaian cultural context effortlessly. This strength enabled me to engage with all participants in their preferred modes of expression without any objections. Also, my familiarity with Indigenous, local, and cultural nuances in the Ghanaian context enriched our

interactions and provided understandings into tourism education and colonization interconnections.

Overall, my reflections highlight the complexities of researcher positionality in cross-cultural and postcolonial contexts. Yes! I agree that while my biases and emotional investment presented challenges, my strengths in understanding the Ghanaian cultural context and interdisciplinary engagements have contributed to a research outcome that is contextually grounded and relevant.

4.11 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations in research play a pivotal role, serving as the guiding principles that delineate between right and wrong conduct (Miller *et al.,* 2012). They aid in discerning acceptable from unacceptable behaviors on the part of researchers. Numerous professional associations and agencies have recognized the relevance of ethics in research and consequently have established codes and policies outlining ethical conduct to direct researchers. These codes address a spectrum of issues including honesty, objectivity, respect for intellectual property, social responsibility, confidentiality, and non-discrimination, among others (Weinbaum *et al., 2019*). While offering fundamental guidelines, researchers often encounter additional ethical dilemmas not explicitly addressed, necessitating individual decision-making to prevent misconduct.

Before embarking on my fieldwork, I had submitted my PhD research proposal to undergo review by the University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee to ensure compliance. My ethics application was duly approved before I set off to Ghana to conduct my fieldwork. In adherence to ethical protocols during fieldwork, I informed all participants of their rights and reaffirmed their autonomy to participate or withdraw at any stage prior to interviews or participant observation sessions. I also informed participants of their decision to request withdrawal of their data from the study within one year of data collection, with contact information provided for communication (see Appendix B). In accordance with traditional procedures, I sought access to participants through official and unofficial gatekeepers, with permission obtained from the Head of the DHTM, UCC, to conduct the study. Upon introduction to the Hospitality and Tourism Students' Association (HOTSA), I had provided a verbal overview of the main aim of my research before

distributing consent forms for members of the department to review and sign before commencing ethnographic activities.

Since there are potential risks inherent in research conducted within gatekeeper-controlled environments such as in the DHTM, UCC, I informed participants of their rights, potential risks, the voluntary nature of participation, their right to withdraw from the study at any point and refuse to answer questions they deemed uncomfortable. I made it clear to all participants that withdrawn participation entailed exclusion of audio recordings or digital images from the study as well. Participants had the option to communicate withdrawal information directly to me or my study supervisor until the final dissertation submission. I audio-recorded individual interviews, with all identifying information removed from collected data and stored separately. I retained all research data, including transcripts, audio recordings, and photographs, for a minimum of two years, with access restricted to myself and my advisor, Dr. Bryan Grimwood. For all publications that will be resulting from this study, including this dissertation, I will anonymize participants' identities, with permission sought for the use of quotations accompanied by pseudonyms (see Table 4.2).

In group observation activities like in-class participant observation, I encouraged all participants to maintain confidentiality, though absolute assurance could not be guaranteed. Additionally, I informed participants of the minimal risks associated with the study, particularly concerning potential exposure to negative narratives related to colonization in the context of tourism education and development in the DHTM, UCC and Cape Coast Metropolis of Ghana.

Finally, I acknowledge the use of an artificial intelligence (AI) tool, specifically ChatGPT, in part of the revision process of this dissertation. Primarily, as stated in section 4.6.1, I utilized ChatGPT to co-create the observation protocol which guided my participant observations. Also, I used it for tasks such as grammatical editing for clarity. Particularly for the volume of information available on Ghana's historical education development, ChatGPT enabled me to summarize key areas of the documents that were relevant to my work. Another way I used this AI tool was to draft list of random Ghanaian names which I used as the pseudonyms for participants in order to provide anonymity to responses. I must establish, however, that all substantive content, critical analysis,

and scholarly arguments presented in this dissertation remain my own and reflect my independent research, intellectual engagement, and academic judgment. This AI tool did not replace original thinking or academic integrity, but I only used it to enhance efficiency and clarity in the writing process. I must however acknowledge that using ChatGPT in any way at all poses epistemic risks for my decolonial approach to this critical ethnography. I say this because ChatGPT embodies Western, corporate-owned knowledge bases that may reproduce dominant narratives or erase local epistemologies; however, I addressed these risks by remaining the main decision-maker, critically analyzing, evaluating and recontextualizing the prompts it generated. As mentioned in earlier sections, I also vetted and re-wrote some of the prompts suggested for my observations. Additionally, the items on the generated observation protocol that ended up utilizing were those that responded sensitively to Indigenous and local epistemologies, and those that did not raise any concerns of coloniality. Finally, upon arrival at the DHTM, UCC, I piloted my observation protocol in the departmental library by using the prompts to note down my main observations in my first-few days of arrival.

Chapter 5

Results and Discussion

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I present the results from the analysis of the data generated from my critical ethnography. The study describes and interrogates the relationships between colonization and tourism education within the cultural contexts of the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management (DHTM), University of Cape Coast (UCC). The first part of this chapter describes the 'educational culture' of the DHTM, UCC and its components. The next section presents a discussion on how colonial power manifests and persists in the pedagogical structures, curricula, and practices within tourism education in the DHTM, UCC. The section discusses the entanglement of colonialism and the department's educational culture overall, with particular focus on the curriculum and pedagogy, academic library, and day-to-day relationships that manifest between members of the department. This chapter also discusses findings relating to how Indigenous understandings and knowledges are shaping tourism education in the DHTM. The chapter also discusses the implications for decolonial actions in educational contexts for the field of tourism education in Ghana and the African education environment. The last section of the chapter describes the role of educators in the DHTM in decolonizing tourism education. The chapter does all these by presenting personal accounts and perspectives research participants (identified by pseudonyms), who are all members of the department, and their understanding of, encounter with, and interpretations of (de)colonization in tourism educational contexts.

I must emphasize that given the dynamic and ever-evolving nature of culture and power in decolonization discourse, I argue that it is neither feasible nor practical to engage comprehensively with every facet of these complex and shifting terrains within a single study. This is why in this chapter, I focus the analytical gaze on specific themes and areas that emerged as particularly relevant and meaningful during the course of the research. I narrowed the scope for analysis deliberately in order for a deeper and more contextually grounded engagement with the manifestations of coloniality and resistance as they appeared within the study's temporal, spatial, and institutional setting.

5.1 Components of the Educational Culture of the DHTM, UCC

Before delving into how colonization is either reinforced and/or resisted in the DHTM, it is essential to first identify and discuss the elements of the department's educational culture. I start off by first mapping the key components of DHTM's educational culture—its prevailing values, teaching-learning practices, institutional norms, and power dynamics—because this approach provides the conceptual scaffolding for all that follows. By detailing what the guiding principles of the DHTM are, and by detailing the values that influence curricula construction, how faculty and students negotiate authority and treat each other, and which standards and values shape daily life in the department, I establish the contextual lens through which participants' voices can be meaningfully interpreted. This way, I ensure that subsequent sections in this chapter are grounded in the lived cultural ecosystem that both inhibits and / or enables decolonial possibilities.

As already defined in chapter 2, educational *culture* is seen as the whole framework within which educational activities take place (Corbo *et al.,* 2016; Detert *et al.,* 2001; Hofstede, 2001; Trowler, 1998). It encompasses the shared values, norms, symbols, and routines through which knowledge is produced, disseminated and legitimized within any academic setting.

The results in this section represent the perspectives of some members of the DHTM, UCC who participated in this critical ethnography on what makes up the educational culture of the DHTM. These members include faculty, students (both undergraduate and graduate level), and non-teaching staff (including library and administrative staff). The educational culture of any academic department is shaped by various factors that influence how knowledge is imparted, how skills are developed, and how teaching and learning experiences are organized. I conceptualize *culture* (educational culture) as encompassing the whole framework within which all the educational activities take place. This includes 'the overall way of life' of UCC's DHTM educational context. I utilized participant observations and interviews with members of the DHTM, UCC, while unpacking the meanings that could be assigned to the concept of educational culture. The findings suggest that similar to Bartell's (2003) and Gunsalus *et al.* (2019) definitions, a department's culture includes the values and beliefs of all its stakeholders and are based on past and ongoing

tradition. Some of the participants imagine the educational culture to include all that is verbally or nonverbally communicated that represents the values people hold dear. One student noted,

> "…culture is a very complex concept; however, I would describe the educational culture of the DHTM as all the knowledge, beliefs, values, and the whole way of life of this department. It includes what we are taught, how we learn, who we are, our relationships, and basically what makes us different from other departments…" (Kojo Armah, 2023).

This definition of the educational culture of the DHTM as described by Kojo Armah above conveys the same idea of several other participants. For example, another student describes the educational culture of any department as "…the value system that prescribes the code of conduct…" (Adwoa Nyamekye, 2023). Taking this a step further, another student imagines educational culture as "…values, norms, and beliefs that guide how people in a particular department must relate with one another. It is the culture that shows how different one department is from all the others in the school (Yaw Bansah, 2023). In addition to describing the educational culture as "all the knowledge, beliefs, values, and the whole way of life…", a faculty participant takes the definition a step further to explain other dimensions of what makes up the organizational culture. He said,

> "…it is very common to refer to the culture of a group of people as their way of life. However, the big question is: what does that mean? What is that way of life? To me, in addition to that, our culture also represents what we stand for, that is our vision and mission statements, our general attitude towards one another in terms of how we treat each other, and how we go about our teaching and learning, our guiding principles, even our image on the global landscape, and many more elements. All these define who we are as a people, and what the overall educational culture of our beloved DHTM is" (Dr. Naana Oforiatta, 2023).

The perspectives speak to some of my own observations I made while spending my time in the DHTM. In one of my fieldnotes, I scribbled down what I observed to be constituents of the departmental culture, which is broadly situated within the overall Ghanaian culture – the culture of respect for the elderly, care and thoughtfulness towards one another. The picture below (Figure 5.1) shows a segment of my fieldnote highlighting my observations that suggest elements of the 'culture' exhibited in the department.

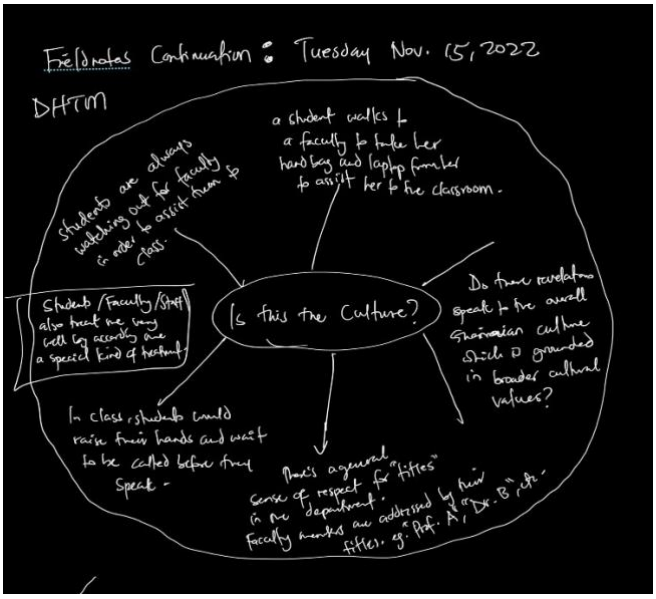


Figure 5.1 *A segment of my fieldnotes showing observational elements that could constitute culture*
Source: Fieldwork, 2023

The perspectives resonate with Yang's (2015, p. 531) definition of academic educational culture as "the attitudes, beliefs, and values that are held by members of an academic department / unit in relation to all aspects of their operations". The following sections describe key constituents of the DHTM's educational culture.

5.1.1 Departmental Vision and Mission Statements

The first component of the educational culture of the DHTM is the vision and mission statements. Conversations with the participants during data generation revealed that members of the department believe that the department's vision and mission distinguish them from all other departments at UCC. *Figure 5.2* below shows pictures of the vision and mission statements of the DHTM, UCC which I took from the department. The department's vision and mission statements are displayed on a glass-framed notice board located on the corridor of the department. The position of the notice board is strategic - directly in front of the main office – and serves as a central and visible reminder of the department's guiding principles to students, faculty, staff, and visitors. When asked about the rationale behind this position, the Head of Department of the DHTM, UCC emphasized that the location of the statements reflects the department's commitment to ensuring

that its core values and objectives remain accessible and integral to its academic and professional environment.



Figure 5.2 *Vision and Mission Statements of Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management, UCC*
Source: Fieldwork, 2023

The vision and mission statements of any organization are two vital aspects of what defines the organization's direction. While the vision of every organization is to describe its long-term aspirations and desired outcomes, the mission articulates the organization's core purpose and rationale for its existence. We see here that, in the DHTM of UCC, the long-term goal (vision) is "*to become a centre of excellence and scholarship in hospitality and tourism in Africa*" (*Figure 5.2*). This core value appears to be deeply embraced by a significant number of members of the department. I say this because several times when I engaged with students, faculty and staff of the department during my interviews, several of them would refer to the department's vision and mission as central to their operations. They would explain how its discussion comes up many times in classroom conversations and other departmental events. It appears every member of the department knows what the department stands for. This is particularly clear in the statement of the one of the participants of the DHTM on the vision of the department,

> "…it is this vision that drives our operations, and every one of us [faculty, students, and staff] is committed to upholding it" (Dr. Kofi Anta, 2023).

The mission statement of the DHTM as shown in Figure 5.2 is "*to provide a broad-based training in hospitality and tourism management that produces self-confident, ethical, innovative, and self-reliant graduates for management careers in the hospitality and tourism industry*".

The department's vision and mission statements are guided by some key principles. Deducing from the data from interviews, some of these guiding principles that serve as the foundation for the department include strategic planning, collective decision making, and adherence to the departmental values. Speaking about why a vision and mission statement for the DHTM, UCC is important, one of the faculty members who participated in the study emphasized that,

> "…the vision and mission statement of this department, like you will see in many organizations and institutions, help all of us (I mean stakeholders), including teachers, students, non-teaching staff, past students, and even the university community, to understand and uphold what we stand for. That includes who we are…our identity, what we hold dear…our values…and that is what provides the framework within which we operate, teach, learn, hire, admit new students, and even evaluate whether we are making progress or fulfilling our mandate or not…" (Dr. Yaw Ndebugre, 2023).

When asked to explain how the vision and mission statements of the department are part of the educational culture, several students pointed to the role of the statements in setting the expectations for what everyone must adhere to. Of course, one can argue that the culture of every organization defines 'the way of life' of that organization (Linstead, 2001, p. 1). This way of life is exhibited in the day-to-day operations of the group or community. For student participants, their identity as hospitality and tourism students of UCC, what is expected of them, and the standards they are required to live by, are all shaped by the overall vision of the department. One student noted,

> "Our culture is simply what distinguishes us from other departments in the school. If you take a look at our vision and mission statements, you will realize that it is what defines every expectation our professors have of us and vice versa. For instance, because the mission talks about producing self-confident and innovative graduates for management roles, you can clearly see that every student strives for excellence in and out of class, during our internship programs, and even field trips. These are some of the things that make us different – they make the culture of our department…!" (Kwame Adjei, 2023).

Analyzing the faculty, students, and staff responses that were generated from interviews reveal that the DHTM has a clear expectation of what the departmental culture must be. First, embedded

in the spirit of the departmental educational culture is the aim to position the DHTM as a centre for excellence. Faculty participants revealed that the aim of the department is to be recognized as a leading hospitality and tourism academic institution that is known for exceptional practices, standards, and achievements, not only in Ghana, but across Africa. The department is therefore, as part of its culture, committed to fostering intellectual inquiry, research, and academic pursuits in the domain of hospitality and tourism management. A faculty member pointed to the strides the department is making to knowledge advancement, understanding, and innovation in these fields, especially in Africa, through scholarly activities such as research projects, publications, conferences, and academic programs.

The vision of the department also highlights the desire to contribute to the development, promotion, and advancement of hospitality and tourism within the African continent specifically. This vision, clearly and concisely stated, recognizes the potential and importance of the DHTM, UCC in providing the space for graduates of hospitality and tourism studies to contribute significantly to economic growth, cultural exchange, and sustainable development across Africa. A faculty participant restated the department's unwavering objective of making great strides on the African continent by stating that,

> "Our goal to become a centre of excellence and scholarship in hospitality and tourism in Africa is not just a cliché. Actually, we are the first institution in Ghana to start a formal educational program in tourism management and have remained the best since the department's inception. At the moment, we are competing with top hospitality and tourism academic departments in Africa, and that shows how committed we all are to our collective vision" (Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, 2023).

It is noticeable how the DHTM, UCC is committed to its vision and mission statements. All departmental stakeholders that participated in this study, that is, faculty, students, and staff, have a fairly good understanding of the vision and mission statements. Participants are so well acquainted with the vision and mission statements of the department for several reasons: first, the vision and missions are one of the first visible features you see upon entering the vicinity of the department - they are inscribed on glass notice boards on a wall of the corridor. The other reason is that while not taught verbatim, the vision and mission statements are brought up in most departmental meetings, such as freshmen and women orientation and department seminars, that bring together all members of the department. Even though several of the participants could not

state any of these statements verbatim, they acknowledged that they knew the statements existed, and could describe what the overall implications were, but could just not memorize them. This acquaintance with the department's vision and mission demonstrates a culture that is grounded on shared values and principles.

Additionally, the vision and mission statements of the DHTM also 'direct' the culture of the department to a large extent in a number of ways. Specifically, the DHTM's vision and mission statements shape relationships, approaches to teaching and learning, curriculum design, and how resources are allocated. To elaborate, these aspirational statements have helped foster a shared sense of purpose, providing unity and direction and at the same time encouraging collaborations in the department. Faculty members alluded to the fact that the vision and mission statements have shaped teaching and learning by allowing for professionalism, mentorship and support among members of the department to be nurtured. One faculty participant remarked,

> "…in preparing my lessons and class materials, I always have in mind our overall objective as a department. I know what we hope to achieve globally so that is always guiding me in what I include in my lectures, the approaches I choose, and even the type of discipline I instill. This is the way to go about it. For instance, our mission involves providing training in hospitality and tourism which is able to produce graduates that are self-confident, ethical and innovative, not only in Ghana but globally. This is why everything I do in and out of the classroom must be influenced by this" (Dr. Yaw Ndebugre, 2023).

In essence, the vision and mission statements serve as a relational compass, shaping how relationships are formed, how collaborations are developed, and how operations are managed. Discussions during the unstructured interviews revealed how the core values of the DHTM (described below) are all directed by the vision and mission statements of the DHTM.

5.1.2 Interpersonal Relationships demonstrated as Care for Everyone

Another component of the DHTM's education culture is the interpersonal relationships that exist in the department. The nature of faculty-student and peer interactions, mentorship practices, and informal networks that exist in the department all show how everyone treats everyone else with care. In the department, every member is considered an important part, hence the need to treat everyone with care, respect, and create a sense of belonging for all. This philosophy drives relationships between members in the department. Even in classroom settings, students are trained

to see everyone they encounter as a very important player in the DHTM. This philosophy is guided by some of the principles in the department's mission statement, specifically 'ethics' and 'innovation' (see *Figure 5.2 – Missions*). "Ethical" in this case as explained by a faculty participant describes *"*students' duty and the respect they must show other persons due to shared values and the environments they find themselves in*"*, while "innovative" encompasses the ability of each member of the department in creating and implementing new ideas, and/or processes that bring about positive change (Kabangire & Korir, 2023) while respecting the views and perspectives of other members of the department.

In the semi-structured interviews, participants showed that the bond that exists among all members in the department is one that distinguishes the DHTM from other departments. While all participants took different approaches to explaining in specific terms what "care for everyone" truly looks like, it was clear that the department, in its operations, recognizes that students need to be trained to better treat one another with care and professionalism, and be self-confident, ethical, and innovative in dealing with one another (see *Figure 5.2*). This idea is similar to providing 'ethical service' to everyone in the department. Overall, excellent ethical service is essential for building and maintaining positive relationships with all members, fostering loyalty, and enhancing the reputation and success of the DHTM. When asked to describe what ethical service looks like in practical sense, one of the student participants likened it to a "village elder". She said,

> "…in an African context, ethical service represents the warm embrace of a village elder under the big community tree. As the village elder welcomes travellers or community people by giving a smile and even a hug with open arms, the same way customer service is demonstrated and exhibited when service providers give care, respect, and a genuine desire to meet the needs of customers. Like the shade provided by the big community tree, and the warm, friendly smile and embrace of the village elder, customer service in the African context offers solace, guidance, and a sense of belonging to all who seek its shelter" (Kwame Adjei, 2023).

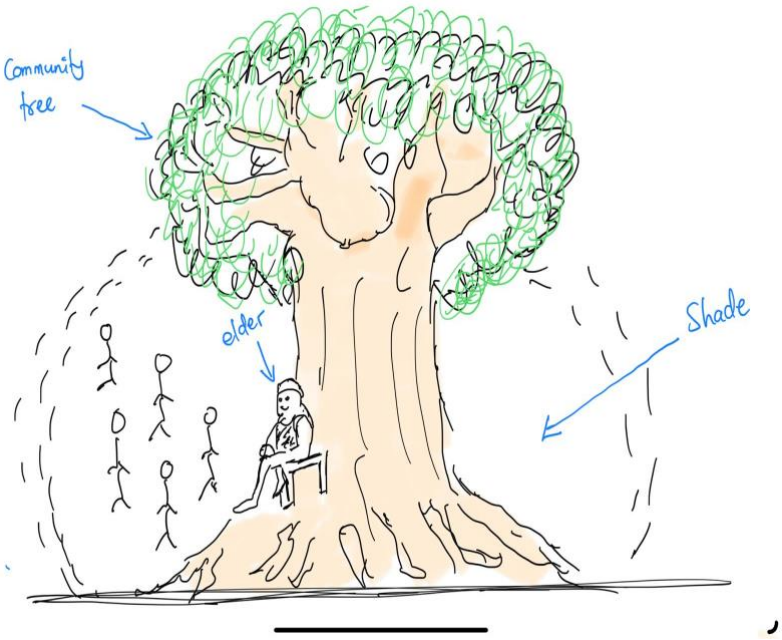


Figure 5.3 *A student participant's drawing explaining what customer service as a value of the department looks like*
Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Participants mentioned ethical service as a value of their department, not in a purely business sense, but contextually as a way of relating and treating one another in the department. To put into words how the spirit of ethical service is demonstrated in the day-to-day relations in the department, one student participant said,

> "In this department, there is a huge sense of belonging! We all, well…at least, my friends and I always feel that we are all connected. There are some lecturers who are like my parents here on campus, while there are also some senior students who always support us. That is what I mean by 'the village elder giving everyone an embrace and a smile'…", (Akua Mensah, 2023).

This sense of belonging, according to participants, is the feeling of being valued or heard. For the most part, it is an intangible component of why a person may prefer one community to another. As Erdly and Kesterson-Townes (2002) argue, this feeling of satisfaction is similar to a business situation, where it is critical for overall success, both as a means of satisfying the ever-increasing customer expectations, and as a way of achieving business profitability. Applying this to educational contexts, particularly in the DHTM, the communal sense of belonging shared amongst members of the DHTM has helped in creating an atmosphere of oneness, cohesion and satisfaction

in the department. This has made almost all members of the DHTM see one another as what one student termed “brothers and sisters” (Kojo Armah, 2023).

Field data also showed that the DHTM periodically organizes several programs aimed at building a sense of belonging among members of the department. Participants described this sense of belonging as a necessary component of the departmental culture. Specifically, the DHTM, as part of instilling the culture of care, does a number of things. For example, roleplays and practical activities are organized during some classroom sessions to teach and model communication and interpersonal skills to ensure students can provide respectful care to one another. These activities engage students in group work, internship programs, and many other departmental student-led activities. Also, the student association of the DHTM, known as Hospitality and Tourism Students’ Association (HOTSA), organizes frequent student-focused activities to keep the bond that exists in the department among all members. HOTSA is led by student representatives who are elected by all students of the department once a year. These representatives are responsible for the design and implementation of programs, educational trips, and many other events for student success.

During my fieldwork, I engaged with some student leaders of HOTSA, who in their discussion alluded to the positive contributions of the student-led activities to the overall sense of belonging in the department. Some of the activities include fieldtrips to notable tourism destinations in Ghana, debate events, and football competitions. One of the student leaders of HOTSA, when asked to comment on the impact of the student-led programs on students’ overall sense of belonging said,

> “…we organize many events during the semester such as excursions to interesting tourism attractions, departmental debates, sports competitions, and even dinner events, and to be honest with you, these programs are the things that keep us connected to one another. We have at least three events every term, making all of us take time away from the busy academic life and to engage in these refreshing activities. These are the times when we get to connect better with all students and even faculty. We don’t always have that opportunity. Most of the friendships I have in this department were made from these student-led events. As leaders of HOTSA, we have seen that students enjoy these activities” (Kojo Armah, 2023).

This point is critical because sense of belonging in communities such as academic departments is influenced by many individual student-led initiatives and school-level initiatives. In a study

conducted in Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan to examine how school experiences contribute to students' sense of belonging, Baek (2021) found that individual student-led initiatives in academic institutions had much more correlation with increased sense of belonging among students than school-level initiatives and programming. In my interactions with students, I asked if they felt a sense of belonging through the activities, programs and initiatives organized by HOTSA and the ones organized by the department itself. The resulting responses are quite interesting. Table 5.1 below shows student responses on a feeling of sense of belonging through student-led events and department-led events.

Table 5.1 *Student responses on student-led (HOTSA) and department-led activities, programs, and events and how each of them contributes to a sense of belonging among students.*

	Creates Feeling of Sense of Belonging													
Activity/ Program/ Event *(HOTSA or Department Organized)*	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3	Student 4	Student 5	Student 6	Student 7	Student 8	Student 9	Student 10	Student 11	Student 12	Student 13	Student 14
Field Trips (HOTSA)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Field Trips (Department)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Seminars (HOTSA)	x	-	-	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Seminars (Department)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Internships (Department)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
General Meetings (HOTSA)	x	x	x	x	-	-	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
General Meetings (Department)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sports Events (HOTSA)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Sports Events (Department	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Note: (x) represents an agreement that an activity creates a sense of belonging, while (-) shows no sense of belonging.

Table 5.1 above shows the relationships between sense of belonging among students and programs and events organized by both HOTSA and the DHTM as a whole. The data reveals that when students organize their own activities, events, and programs, most students like to participate, and this positively influences a sense of belonging. For example, Table 5.1 shows that General Meetings, when organized by students themselves increases the feeling of sense of belonging (12 out of 14 students, representing 85.7%), while interestingly, the same General Meeting, organized by the DHTM, and attended by faculty members and other staff does not contribute to a feeling of belonging among majority of the student participants. Out of fourteen (14) students who responded to this question, only three (3) representing 21.4% experience a sense of belonging when the meetings are organized and attended by other members of the DHTM that are not students. To understand why this difference exists, some students shared their reasons. A student participant mentioned that,

> "…during general meetings, many things happen: we play music, we discuss issues affecting us as students, we play games, and sometimes, just get together to have fun. For the general meetings organized by the department, they are mostly for serious business, [and there is] no time for jokes. The profs all arrive, and they are well-organized, well-dressed, with everything [overly] structured. This way, you do not get the chance to say hello to people or relax a bit. It is a time-bound, official, departmental event that even the Head of Department attends, so it still feels like we are in the classroom and not getting the chance to feel free. For me, this is why the department meetings do not feel any different from lectures and all the other formal gatherings" (Adwoa Nyamekye, 2023).

The stark contrast seen in Table 5.1 shows how student-led programs and events function as a decolonial intervention in tourism education by disrupting the traditional, top-down authority structures that reinforce colonial hierarchies. We see in the example that when students themselves plan and organize events, such as the General Meetings and seminars, they exercise control and agency over the spaces that have historically been regulated by faculty and institutional gatekeepers. Fanon (2007) describes this as "learning by doing". Not only do the students learn by doing through the control they have over their own events, but it also affirms students as legitimate knowledge producers rather than passive recipients of education designed in other contexts. In decolonial terms, these self-organized events enact a "delinking" from colonial epistemologies by encouraging peer knowledge and communal co-creation. It thereby fosters an embodied sense of

belonging that is more than just the formal ritual of faculty-led events (Mignolo, 2003; Chambers & Buzinde, 2015).

On the other hand, 21.4% of students who reported a low sense of belonging teaches us a few things. It reveals to us how institutional events can unconsciously reinforce the very power imbalances decolonial action seeks to dismantle. When the DHTM organizes departmental meetings in a manner that centers staff authority and traditional academic formality, students may perceive these spaces as extensions of colonial modes of operation. This aligns with Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's (1986) critique of Eurocentric pedagogies that marginalize local voices. It also speaks to Mbembe's (2016) call for "negotiated spaces" in which subaltern actors reclaim intellectual ground. When student-led initiatives are given priority, it provides the impetus for tourism education programs to begin to reimagine curricular and extracurricular structures as sites of decolonial possibility rather than as outcomes of colonial power.

Another student is of the belief that once students and faculty members are together in the same event, most students would not be themselves. He said,

> "Any event that is organized for both students and faculty members, you will not get any student to be themselves. It is like, no one wants to be relaxed because you feel that your professor is watching you…" (Adjeley Nortey, 2023).

While students pointed out what makes the difference between the feeling of belonging, faculty members were rather taken by surprise by the response of students to department-wide events. One faculty member expressed his surprise by stating that,

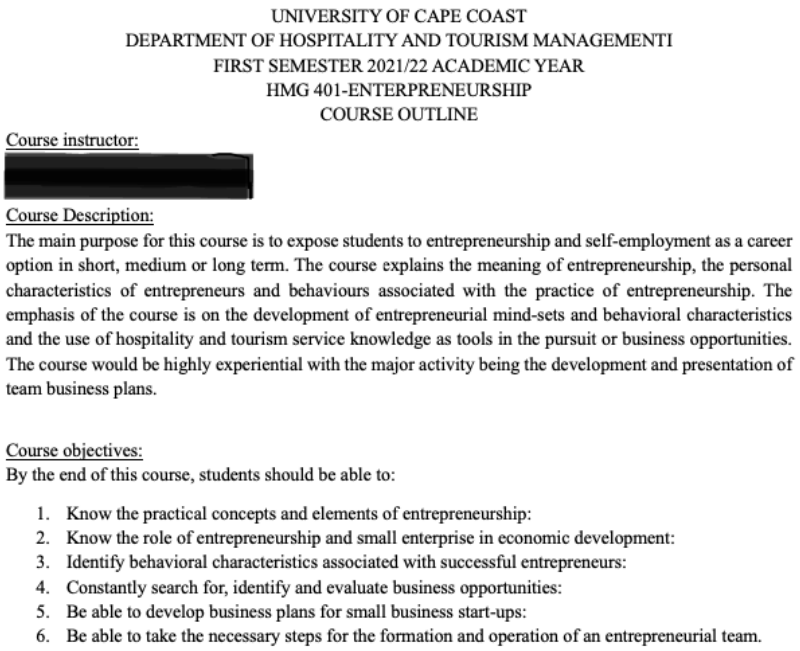
> "…this is very interesting to hear. The goal of these departmental events is not only to engage in departmental official activities, but also to create an avenue for our students to come together to strengthen the existing bonds among them. So, I think it is interesting that these are not meeting the intended expectations. Maybe it is because when we are present in these gatherings, it is a factor" (Dr. Kwesi Danquah, 2023).

5.1.3 Innovation and Entrepreneurship

A summary of other responses from the interviews revealed that innovation and entrepreneurship are other components of the educational culture of the DHTM, UCC. This emphasis directly supports the University of Cape Coast's vision, which states:

> "to be a globally acclaimed institution for innovative teaching, research, outreach, and professional development" (Corporate Strategic Plan, 2023-2027, UCC).

As a department that is committed to excellence and the development of graduates who are self-confident, ethical, innovative, and self-reliant for management careers in the hospitality and tourism industry (see Figure 5.2), DHTM's educational approaches are deliberately aligned with this institutional aspiration. Several pedagogical initiatives are tailored to the development of students in the areas of innovation and entrepreneurship. Apart from specific programming such as creative group assignments, role plays, practicums, and problem-solving opportunities for students to learn and demonstrate innovation, the DHTM also offers several practical courses to complement pedagogical initiatives. Notable among these courses is Entrepreneurship [HMG 401], offered in the fourth year of the Bachelor of Tourism (and Hospitality) program, aimed at introducing students to entrepreneurship and self-employment as a career option in short, medium, or long term. Figure 5.3 below shows the course outline for HMG 401 – Entrepreneurship, showing course description and objectives designed to operationalize the department's commitment to innovation and entrepreneurship.



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
DEPARTMENT OF HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM MANAGEMENTI
FIRST SEMESTER 2021/22 ACADEMIC YEAR
HMG 401-ENTERPRENEURSHIP
COURSE OUTLINE

Course instructor:

[redacted]

Course Description:

The main purpose for this course is to expose students to entrepreneurship and self-employment as a career option in short, medium or long term. The course explains the meaning of entrepreneurship, the personal characteristics of entrepreneurs and behaviours associated with the practice of entrepreneurship. The emphasis of the course is on the development of entrepreneurial mind-sets and behavioral characteristics and the use of hospitality and tourism service knowledge as tools in the pursuit or business opportunities. The course would be highly experiential with the major activity being the development and presentation of team business plans.

Course objectives:

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Know the practical concepts and elements of entrepreneurship:
2. Know the role of entrepreneurship and small enterprise in economic development:
3. Identify behavioral characteristics associated with successful entrepreneurs:
4. Constantly search for, identify and evaluate business opportunities:
5. Be able to develop business plans for small business start-ups:
6. Be able to take the necessary steps for the formation and operation of an entrepreneurial team.

Figure 5.4 *Entrepreneurship course outline showing course description and objectives*
Source: Fieldwork, 2023

The emphasis of this course is to equip students for the development of entrepreneurial mindsets and behavioral characteristics; and the use of hospitality and tourism service knowledge as tools in the pursuit of business opportunities (HMG 401 – Entrepreneurship Course Outline, 2023). In my discussion with one of the faculty members about how members of faculty structure their courses to achieve innovation and entrepreneurial skills among students, he said,

> "In my teaching, I intentionally design assignments and class projects that challenge students to think creatively and to apply their hospitality and tourism knowledge to real-world entrepreneurial opportunities. I encourage them not only to master existing industry practices but also to envision new solutions, ventures, and innovations that could shape the future of the industry" (Dr. Kwesi Danquah, 2023).

Citing this example helps us see how pedagogical approaches and materials such as course outlines and teaching styles convey meanings about the educational culture of the DHTM. With this, deeper insights can be interpreted. For an educational culture that promotes innovation among members of the department, this course outline, and several others are designed to give students hands-on learning where students are encouraged to apply knowledge to real-world scenarios. This

represents an educational culture that positions the DHTM to value its role in shaping future leaders, and to recognize its responsiveness to industry and societal needs.

The emphasis in this course, framed as "equipping students for the development of entrepreneurial mindsets" (HMG 401 Course Outline, 2023), directly reveals how the DHTM's educational culture is shaped around industry-oriented outcomes. From Dr. Danquah's project-based assignments as highlighted in the quote above ("…apply their hospitality and tourism knowledge to real-world entrepreneurial opportunities…"), there is a good attempt to move away from passive learning, while at the same time emphasizing student agency and creativity. From a decolonial standpoint, however, this model also risks reproducing a neoliberal, Western-centric notion of entrepreneurship as the primary pathway to "innovation."

It must be seriously noted that by placing emphasis on market-driven solutions without interrogating whose values and assumptions underlie those markets, such pedagogy may unintentionally marginalize Indigenous and local forms of economic practices and communal reciprocity that don't conform to the promoted entrepreneurial model (Mignolo, 2007; Mbembe, 2016). My view on this is that a truly decolonial tourism education would balance entrepreneurial skill-building with critical reflection on colonial legacies in global tourism economies. It will do so by integrating local epistemologies of tourism and hospitality where care, communal well-being, and relationality are central, rather than treating entrepreneurship as a universal endpoint. In this way, the DHTM could reframe "innovation" not merely as business-creation but as the co-construction of culturally grounded, socially just tourism futures.

5.1.4 Ethical Behaviour

> "Ethical behaviour, especially in a department such as ours is not just a set of rules to follow. It is more about an intentional commitment to creating a supportive and inclusive environment where everyone can thrive intellectually, professionally, and personally. I always tell my students that, to be ethical is to be fair to all, accountable to the department, university, and humanity; and responsible for the choices they make" (Dr. Naana Oforiatta, 2023).

Generally speaking, ethics are the norms or standards for conduct that distinguish between right and wrong. They help to determine the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviors (Miller, Birch, Mauthner, & Jessop, 2012). What is deemed ethical behaviour or not is dependent

on the setting, or the type of group under consideration. This means that acceptable and unacceptable behaviour are similar or different, when being studied in different institutions of learning. In other words, what is considered acceptable or unacceptable behavior in one geographical context, influenced by a particular culture, may be similar or different from another context. What defines how members of an educational department must relate with one another may be similar or different from stipulations for relating with one another in another department. When asked about patterns of behaviour, values, and beliefs that make up the overall educational culture, many participants emphasized "*ethical behaviour*" as a major component of the culture of the department.

For each of the participants of the interviews, I asked them to write on a sheet of paper what they would consider 'ethical behavior' as it relates to the DHTM, UCC. Figure 5.4 below shows a photo collage of the responses.



Figure 5.5 *Participant responses on elements of ethical behavior*
Source: Fieldwork, 2023

As established already, what constitutes ethical behaviour is not the same everywhere. Many personal, group, and institutional policies define what constitutes ethical behaviour. My conversations with participants during the period of my fieldwork showed that ethical behaviour is a core value of the DHTM. When I talked to one faculty member about what 'ethical behaviour' looked like, she described it as representing respect for one another, professional conduct, fairness, and accountability. Ethical behaviour in the department is grounded in the cultural context of Ghanaian traditions. A faculty participant noted:

> "…you must understand that the acceptable and unacceptable behaviour that guide everything we do in this department are the things that are part of the Ghanaian culture. …Remember that our culture is one that admonishes all, especially younger people, to show respect. We here [students, staff, and faculty] understand that we are all from various backgrounds, diverse cultures, and various beliefs, as such, it is essential to respect all and promote inclusivity in all aspects of what we teach and do, including interactions among one another" (Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, 2023).

Dr. Nkrumah's quote demonstrates how "ethical behaviour" in the DHTM is not a neutral, universal standard but a situated practice rooted in Ghanaian norms of respect, reciprocity, and communal accountability. From a decolonial standpoint, the dominance of Western ethical frameworks that often accompany tourism education curricula is unsettled when local cultural codes of conduct function as the core of ethics. By privileging a Ghanaian notion of ethical behavior, respect across hierarchies is emphasized and this empowers the DHTM to enact a form of epistemic decolonization, reclaiming the right to define "ethical behavior" on its own terms rather than through externally imposed lenses (Mignolo, 2003; Ngũgĩ, 1986). In the context of tourism education at the DHTM, ethics that is grounded in Indigenous and local culture can both resist Eurocentric and Western hegemony while reproducing internal hierarchies if not accompanied by ongoing reflexivity. DHTM needs to therefore, continually interrogate which aspects of culture are celebrated, which are silenced, and how those choices shape the kinds of professionals its graduates become.

5.1.5 Global Relevance

Even though the DHTM, UCC is one of the smallest departments in the University of Cape Coast, several values distinguish it from all other departments. According to a faculty participant, one other key element of the educational culture of the DHTM is striving for global relevance. This

value is at the core of everything the department tries to instill. The vision and mission statements specify the geographical lengths to which the department strives to cover, however, there is more to this than is represented. My interview with all five faculty participants revealed that the DHTM strives to be a centre of global academic excellence. The hospitality and tourism industry are by nature a global industry (Camillo, 2015; Conrady & Buck, 2007), and operates at local, regional and national levels, hence the need for academic institutions that specialize in the field of tourism and hospitality to strive for global relevance. Interview sessions with faculty participants revealed that the department is committed to training and raising students to embrace a global mindset in their day-to-day operations. Additionally, faculty members in the development of pedagogy place emphasis on international, global, and contemporary perspectives in hospitality and tourism trends, as an attempt to prepare students for global impact. Aside from a global focus on pedagogy and student development, faculty participants also highlighted the significant work that some faculty members are doing in the area of global research and collaborations. One participant criticized how most Western universities make it challenging for most scholars in Africa, and many other developing countries to contribute their expertise and knowledge to the global debate. He said:

> "Even though it is a value we hold dear, striving for a global relevance is a very difficult thing to do, especially from this part of the world. There are [many] issues also happening in the Western world that serve as a barrier for us to break away from … the colonial structure is not only what people talk about in terms of economic structure and how the world is structured to keep developing countries in a place of constant dependence on Western countries. No! This colonial structure exists in many aspects of development, even in education. Look, there's nothing that you do that your colleagues in the West will think that this is right! No matter what you achieve as an educational institution, there is that mentality that there is nothing good coming out of Africa. In most cases, it doesn't matter the type of rigorous research that you conduct. It doesn't matter what you do; once they [the West] see the name of the institution you are related to, it ends the matter… And sometimes for me as an individual, even when you go for conferences and you are interacting with colleagues from universities from Europe and the West, that is the mentality…even in my writings, in my publication, it is the same thing! What I am telling you is that it would take a lot more for an academic in a university in a developing country to tell the same story, and perhaps even a better one, to get it published in the same journal just because of the institution they are from and where it is located" (Dr. Kofi Anta, 2023).

This quote suggests that, inadvertently, colonial power relations continue to impose on and shape the educational culture of many institutions, particularly, the DHTM. Responses suggested that the global academic community often evaluates the quality of research and education through the lens of the institution's location and perceived prestige, rather than the intrinsic merit of the work.

Consequently, there is an institutional bias, which has the potential of reinforcing a culture of self-doubt within the DHTM. Another thing this quote suggests is that colonial power relations between institutions in the Global North and South create the culture of institutions in the Global South feeling pressured to align their research outputs, educational objectives, and curricula with Western standards in order to be recognized. For the institutions that compromise, they do so at the expense of addressing needs that may be urgent for the Ghanaian context.

This confirms and further reproduces what Winter (2009) described stating that nearly all of the tourism fields' key concepts have been grounded in Western Europe and North America. We see from the submission of the faculty participant that it is still very challenging for institutions in the Global South to meet the 'standards for global relevance'. However, some faculty members view this challenge as the motivation for many to strive for excellence. Like the faculty participant who pointed this key concern out, other faculty participants admitted that the efforts at achieving global relevance are a *fight* that must continue to be fought. Another faculty member described this *fight* as 'the decolonization movement'. She said:

> "…it is true that a lot of what we do as scholars from the Global South is considered not enough by our colleagues in the Global North. We always have to do more than the average person to get the same recognition. It is challenging; however, it means that we have to stand up to 'fight'! To fight means we must undertake the decolonization of our own education culture and system; to fight means we must collectively destroy colonization in as it manifests in any shape or form in the department. We must begin to empower our own journals, we must collaborate more with many more Ghanaian and other African scholars, and our own universities must begin to equally rate our local journals as they do with foreign ones. These are the things we must continue to fight for if we are ever going to gain that global relevance. We must continue to do that until our voices are heard and respected!" (Dr. Yaw Ndebugre, 2023).

Of course, this statement reaffirms the argument that decolonial analyses of epistemology help expose colonization and how it manifests in knowledge production, particularly its role in 'creating, developing, and maintaining a hierarchy of knowledge and knowers particularly adapted for colonialism' (Alcoff, 2007, p. 82). Interrogating and challenging the way knowledge is produced and enacted by and in 'academic powerhouses' of the Global North will help in revealing the ways in which certain forms of knowledge have been privileged over others, thereby reinforcing, and maintaining colonial dominance in the global academy of knowledge.

5.2 DHTM Educational Culture's *Relationships with* Colonization

The next question that guided this study was *how is colonization reinforced and/or resisted by and within the cultural context of UCC's DHTM?* Fieldwork data shows that several relationships exist between DHTM's educational culture and colonization. They manifest as neo-colonial power relations. These neo-colonial power relations in this educational context represent the structures and practices that perpetuate the legacies of colonialism within the DHTM education system which reflect historical, cultural, economic, and social power imbalances. The neo-colonial as used here represents the ways in which colonial-era power dynamics persist after formal political independence often through education, economics, culture, and other institutional frameworks (Nkrumah, 1965; Tikly, 2004). Resistance to neo-colonial power relations, however, encompasses actions, strategies, and movements that challenge and dismantle the structures, practices, and ideologies perpetuating colonial legacies. On the other hand, the reinforcement of neo-colonial power relations involves the practices, structures and dynamics within the DHTM that sustain or perpetuate neo-colonial power imbalances, ideologies and hierarchies.

Against this backdrop, I present a discussion on how colonial power imbalances are produced in the DHTM, and how the educational culture of the DHTM reinforces and/or resists these colonial relations. Specifically, the chapter examines *curriculum and pedagogy*, and the DHTM library as they relate to the discussion on colonial power. The chapter also discusses the role of educators in the DHTM in decolonizing tourism education.

The main justification for this research, as I argue, in tandem with Grosfoguel (2007) and Chambers and Buzinde (2015) is that within the boundaries of what constitutes 'tourism education', there must be a philosophy of 'epistemic decolonization' that drives operations. This means that, for productive change to happen in how tourism education is developed, enacted and carried out, the process must begin with the development of a 'different epistemic grounding', rather than within the context of prevalent Eurocentric paradigms (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015; Grosfoguel, 2007). In other words, academic departments must develop and execute education that fits and is useful for the particular geographical context within which they exist. Academic departments must identify areas of colonial influence and strategize to dismantle them. This

requires what Cameron (2012) describes as turning both toward colonial knowledges (to critique them) and away from colonial knowledges (to amplify other ways of knowing and being).

Throughout my fieldwork in the DHTM, UCC, I guided myself with one major question in an attempt to find specific ways in which the educational culture of tourism education in the DHTM is reinforcing and/or resisting colonialism: "*How do you know a thing, place, process, or person is colonized when you see them?*" This question is relevant to my study for several reasons. It invites critical reflection on both the visible and invisible markers of colonization in the day-to-day operations of the DHTM that may have been taken for granted. During my fieldwork, the question also allowed me to conduct a closer examination of how colonial ideologies, practices, and structures persist in the DHTM's systems, spaces, and operations. Again, it allowed for me to challenge assumptions of neutrality that might be present in the DHTM. To be fair, many things, places and processes in the DHTM appear 'neutral' but a close examination of them revealed deep influences by colonial histories. In effect, asking this question forced me to interrogate whether what is perceived as 'normal' or 'neutral' is in any way shaped by colonial legacies.

5.2.1 Curriculum and Pedagogy

In every academic institution, curriculum and pedagogy are key components of the educational culture and framework that govern all processes of teaching and learning. The terms curriculum and pedagogy are two distinct concepts in educational practice, although they are often used together. The College of Early Childhood Educators (CECE) (2020, p. 1) defined curriculum as the content of learning the sum total of environments, experiences, activities, interactions, and events designed to foster children's development, learning and well-being. According to Wattanacharoensil (2014), tourism curriculum has evolved over the past two decades in order to create well-rounded graduates to contribute effectively to the tourism industry, seen as a fully integrated system. She refers to the curriculum as a structured set of courses and content that encompass the knowledge, skills, and competencies that students need to be effective contributors to the industry.

On pedagogy, CECE (2020) described it as the "understanding of how learning takes place and the philosophy and practice that supports that understanding of learning". Within tourism and hospitality contexts, Farsari (2022) described pedagogy as pertaining to the methods and practices of teaching in tourism education. She further discusses pedagogy in tourism terms as involving all the strategies educators employ to deliver content and to facilitate learning.

In describing curriculum and pedagogy of the DHTM, faculty members identified several elements. Some of these elements include courses, subjects, methods of assessment, evaluation, teaching techniques, experiments, fieldworks, and experiential learning. Overall, curriculum is understood not merely as a collection of prescribed reading materials or course content, but as a dynamic cultural and political site where knowledge is selected, organized, and transmitted in ways that reflect and reproduce particular worldviews, values, and power relations (Apple, 2015; Pinar, 2012). The curriculum embodies decisions about what knowledge is considered legitimate, whose voices are prioritized, and which ways of knowing are validated within the educational system. Similarly, pedagogy extends beyond the technical acts of instruction to encompass the relational, affective, and political dimensions of teaching and learning (Freire, 1970; hooks, 1994). Pedagogy involves not only the methods employed in the classroom but also the assumptions about learners, knowledge, and the purpose of education that undergird teaching practices. As such, pedagogy shapes how students engage with knowledge, how they see themselves as learners, and how they are positioned within broader structures of power.

Within the DHTM at the University of Cape Coast, curriculum and pedagogy represent more than course outlines and assigned readings. They include the ideological frameworks that inform course objectives, the pedagogical approaches that foster or constrain critical thinking and creativity, and the institutional cultures that either challenge or perpetuate colonial legacies in tourism education. Initiatives such as creative group assignments, problem-solving practicums, and entrepreneurship projects illustrate efforts to embed innovation and self-reliance into the educational experience, aligning with the university's broader vision for global excellence. However, the extent to which these initiatives genuinely disrupt colonial knowledge hierarchies remains a critical area for analysis.

While curriculum and pedagogy are widely recognized as encompassing more than just course outlines and instructional strategies—extending into the broader cultural, political, and epistemological dimensions of education, I focus specifically on course outlines and faculty members' approaches to teaching and learning in this dissertation. This focus is intentional, as course outlines serve as formal expressions of curricular priorities, highlighting what knowledge is deemed important, how it is organized, and what competencies are valued within the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management (DHTM). Similarly, faculty members' teaching and learning approaches provide insight into how pedagogical practices either reinforce or challenge existing educational norms and colonial legacies. By examining these tangible elements, the study is able to trace how broader curricular and pedagogical ideologies are operationalized in everyday academic practice, offering a practical lens through which to critically assess the dynamics of innovation, entrepreneurship, and decolonization efforts within the DHTM context.

Going back to the question of "*how do you know a thing, place, process, or person is colonized when you see them"?* I set out to uncover potential ways in which elements of the DHTM's curriculum and pedagogy could be influenced by colonial legacies. The quest to unpack this relationship was borne out of a conversation with one of the faculty members. During a conversation with one faculty member about what they take into consideration in the design of their curriculum and the pedagogical approach they use, she described how a seemingly simple task of deciding what textbooks to choose for the content of a particular course could be highly influenced by legacies of colonization. She noted,

> "…to be honest, colonial influences on something as simple as textbook selection could be subtle, yet pervasive, and this can go a long way to shape the kind of knowledge that we produce and the perspectives and narratives that we prioritize as a department. For example, even without realizing, the kind of textbooks we choose could be neglecting local and Indigenous knowledges…This unintentional, yet significant process of reinforcing colonization through many modes of operations happens in many educational institutions across the globe" (Dr. Naana Oforiatta, 2023).

Similar to the comments of the faculty member, Valenzuela (2021) argued in a study conducted to examine curricula and teaching practices in higher education that aim to decolonize Latin American universities that it was not only in colonial times that colonial ways of thinking about

and developing curricula and teaching practices were present. Rather, colonialism remains evident in the operations of universities across the world till today. Judging by Valenzuela's (2021) assessment, it is not strange anymore to see how colonization's influence on curriculum and pedagogy in universities can be subtle, yet pervasive.

The curriculum and pedagogy, which includes all teaching methods in Ghana's higher education system have been criticized for being based on colonial models of the past. These models have been criticized for not promoting critical thinking and creativity (Adu-Gyamfi & Anderson, 2021; Yeboah, 2023). From the historical account of Ghana's educational development (*see Chapter 3*), one can deduce that the colonial model of education emphasized the transmission of knowledge from the teacher to the student with little emphasis on the student's participation in the learning process. Senekal and Lenz (2020) therefore argued that this colonial approach to education resulted in a relationship that was hierarchical in nature between instructors and students, and does not afford students flexibility to question, challenge and be critical of the knowledge that is presented to them. The resultant effect, they said is "rote memorization and regurgitation of information instead of critical thinking and analysis" (Senekal & Lenz, 2020).

In their examination of the relationship between neoliberal agendas, neo-colonialism and curriculum imperatives in African higher education, Gyamera and Burke (2018) highlighted how colonization and its present-day manifestations have significantly influenced curriculum and pedagogy in the Ghanaian higher educational system. They continued to argue that these neoliberal principles have prioritized individualism, competition, and consumerism over critical thinking, social responsibility, and community engagement.

A faculty participant believes that, like that of his own DHTM, UCC, many other curricula and pedagogies of many universities have several colonial influences. He described how he believes that the foundations of the department's curriculum and pedagogy must change. He noted:

> "It is important for us all, I mean students and faculty, to start from the understanding that the pursuit of leisure here in the Ghanaian context is different from how it is understood in Europe, in the Americas, or perhaps in Canada. I think this is even why our approach to leisure and tourism in general is not seen or recognized by the West…but now when you look at our curricula, we are always talking about what they [Europe, the Americas, and Canada] consider as tourism, or leisure

> and that has become our standard for defining what our leisure and tourism is today…so this actually has huge implications for what we have been measuring as tourism, you know, from a research point of view, or as an academic discipline, and even from the research side of things, for me, that whole operationalization of 'tourism' and 'leisure' is colonial. When the foundations are colonial, everything else will follow suit" (Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, 2023).

This quote reflects a faculty participant's perspectives on the condition of the educational culture of the DHTM, UCC. The quote sheds light on how colonial legacies shape academic discourse, curricula, and the conceptualization of leisure and tourism in Ghana. The quote highlights how the Ghanaian approach to leisure and tourism is influenced by Western ontologies, epistemologies, and paradigms. There is also the assertion that the curricula and research frameworks are based on Western definitions and standards, which have become the dominant measure, sidelining local, culturally specific understandings of these concepts. The quote therefore conveys several meanings. First, though the pursuit of leisure and tourism in Ghana differs fundamentally from Western contexts, these local realities are not necessarily reflected in the department's academic content.

In addition, there is a tension between adopting globally recognized standards and valuing local knowledge systems, however, the faculty participant suggests the urgent need to challenge the dominance of Western epistemologies in defining and operationalizing key concepts like "tourism" and "leisure". This therefore suggests that decolonizing tourism education involves rethinking and restructuring the curriculum to prioritize Ghanaian and African perspectives, values, and experiences. As argued by several scholars, this approach to curriculum and pedagogical design, one that is influenced by colonial influences perpetuates Eurocentrism. Instances where Ghanaian cultural perspectives were sidelined or treated as supplementary in the curriculum reflect what Carnicelli and Boluk (2020) describe as "oppressive pedagogical practices" in tourism education. These practices reinforce a monocultural worldview that privileges Euro-American knowledge systems while rendering Indigenous or African epistemologies invisible.

For example, by embedding Western worldviews, values, and knowledge systems as the default and universal standards in the curriculum design of institutions, local, Indigenous and non-Western

perspectives are systematically marginalized or erased, thereby reinforcing Eurocentric understandings in education. Eurocentrism thrives on the assumption that Europe is the epicentre of knowledge, culture, economy, and power, hence the histories and cultures of non-Western societies are viewed from a European or Western perspective (Fanon, 2007; Hollinshead, 1992; Ravi, 2020; Said, 1978). This might not be intentional but could be as a result of many factors such as limited access to scholarly works that are published by local and Indigenous scholars, cost involved in getting resources, and many other reasons. This notwithstanding, educational institutions have the duty to intentionally curate the content of the curricula to be context specific.

Another faculty participant, recognizing that faculty members have a role to play in the process of decolonizing tourism education through their teaching approaches emphasized the need to teach the 'Ghanaian culture' through approaches and strategies they choose to use as faculty members. He said,

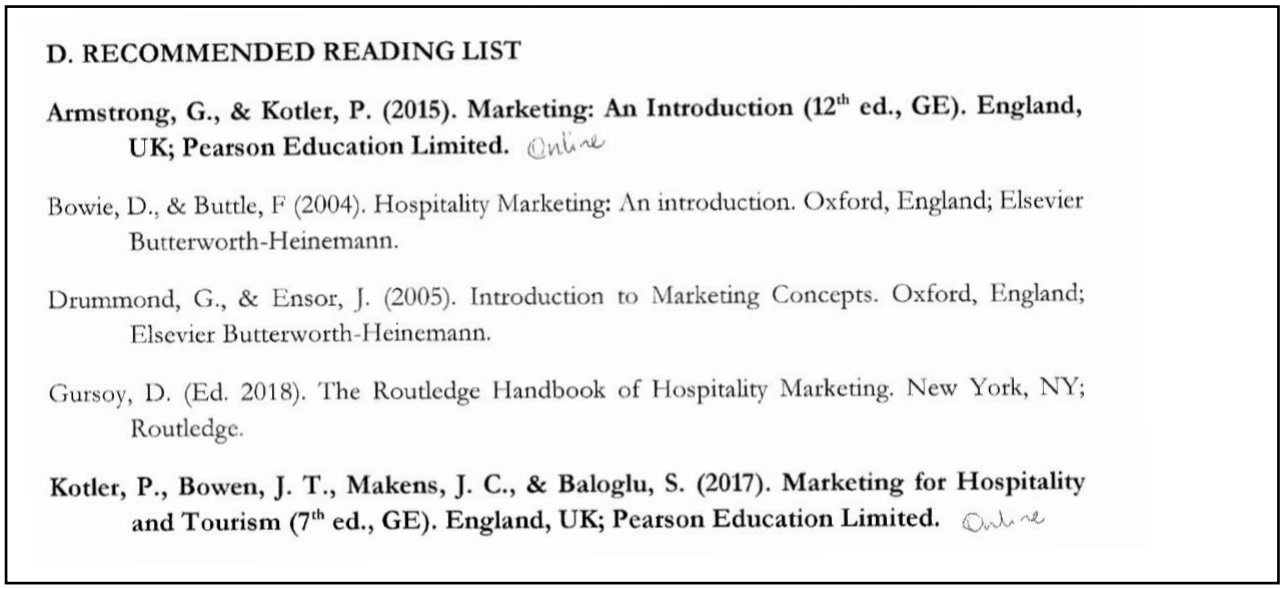
> "I think that we as faculty members try our best to instill the Ghanaian culture in students overall, and in the way we approach our responsibilities in the department. From a philosophical viewpoint, majority of us try to be student centred in our approach. We also bring in the ethics of professionalism, hard work, and discipline in every dealing of ours. What I have not seen yet, and I must also blame myself to begin with, is that we do not teach the Ghanaian cultural way of teaching hospitality and tourism. I think we are falling short in this area. For instance, when you go to other countries, for example, India, you would find that they make sure that their culture finds expressions in their curriculum and general approach to pedagogy. Unfortunately, our curriculum does not reflect our culture" (Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, 2023).

This excerpt implies that despite individual efforts by some faculty members to instill Ghanaian values such as discipline and professionalism in students, there is still a **systemic gap** in ensuring that Ghanaian cultural expressions and Indigenous ways of understanding *hospitality and tourism* are reflected in the curriculum and pedagogy. The faculty participant admits to his own role in not prioritizing the Ghanaian cultural approach, and calls for a deliberate, collective effort by all members of faculty to incorporate Ghanaian cultural knowledge and practices into the curriculum and pedagogy. This self-reflection suggests an awareness of how cultural erasure happens subtly within institutions, even when there is a desire to promote local values.

The example of the curriculum and pedagogy of the department explains how colonial powers historically imposed their educational systems and values on colonized regions, often suppressing

Indigenous knowledges systems and languages. The resulting situation is that even after all the calls for decolonization, traces of colonial education systems may persist, influencing curriculum content and pedagogical practices if deliberate actions are not taken by all stakeholders to challenge colonization.

During my fieldwork, I also engaged several students, both undergraduate and graduate, to share their perspectives on the nature of the department's curriculum and pedagogy. This subject sparked an interesting reaction among the student participants. All fourteen (14) students that were asked to comment on curriculum, pedagogy, and colonization pointed out what they considered was a clear manifestation of colonialism in their curriculum. Students showed me several course materials with reading lists that reflected a disparity in the ratio of local (Ghanaian or African) to Western academic materials. The following pictures show some examples of the reading lists of some selected courses that are offered at the Bachelor of Tourism Management level in the department:



D. RECOMMENDED READING LIST

Armstrong, G., & Kotler, P. (2015). Marketing: An Introduction (12th ed., GE). England, UK; Pearson Education Limited. Online

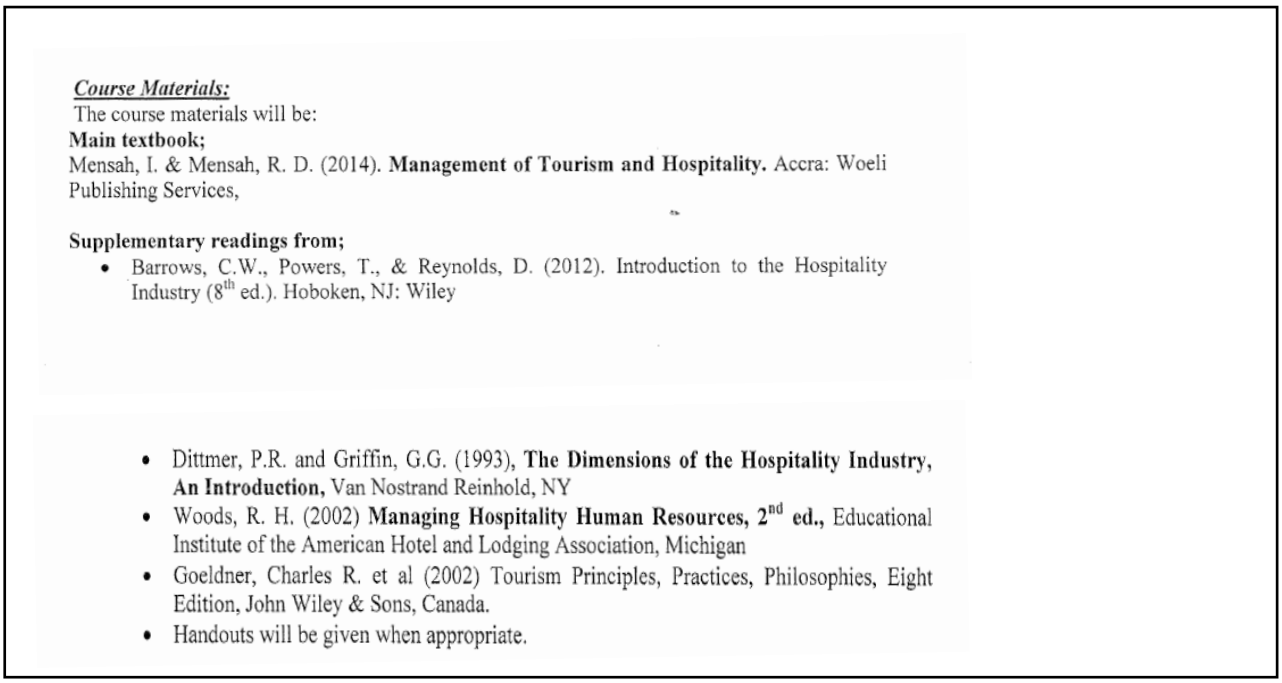
Bowie, D., & Buttle, F (2004). Hospitality Marketing: An introduction. Oxford, England; Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann.

Drummond, G., & Ensor, J. (2005). Introduction to Marketing Concepts. Oxford, England; Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann.

Gursoy, D. (Ed. 2018). The Routledge Handbook of Hospitality Marketing. New York, NY; Routledge.

Kotler, P., Bowen, J. T., Makens, J. C., & Baloglu, S. (2017). Marketing for Hospitality and Tourism (7th ed., GE). England, UK; Pearson Education Limited. Online

Note: Title of Course and Course information not included in order to prevent easy identification
Figure 5.6 *2022/2023 Course outline showing the recommended reading list*
Source: Fieldwork, 2023

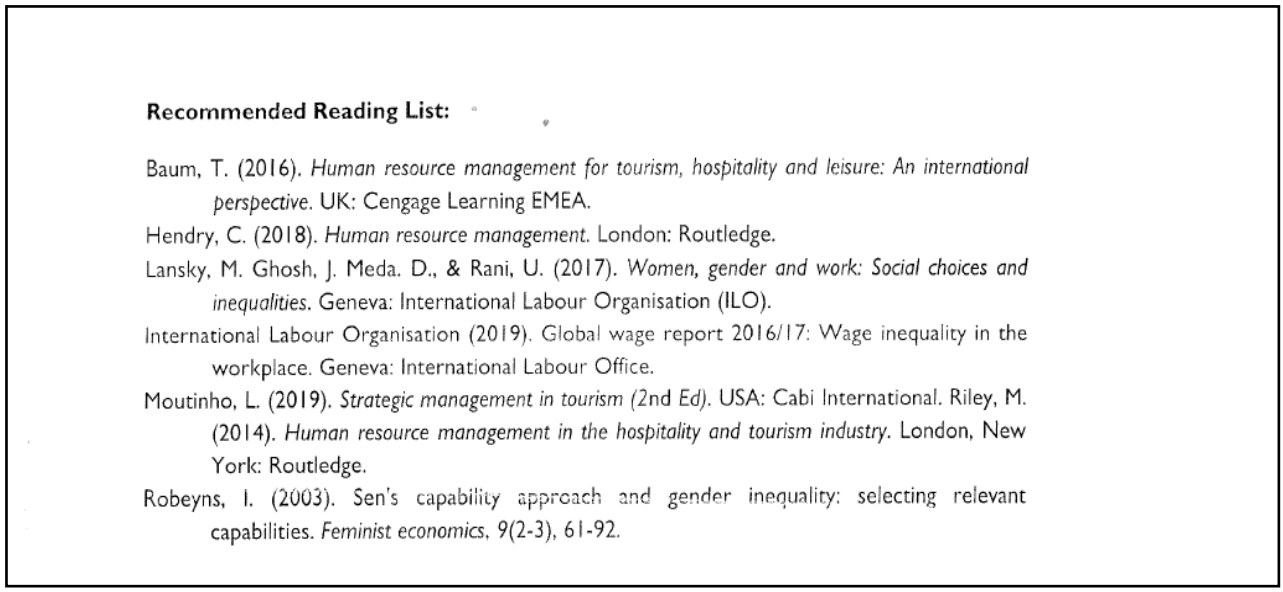


Course Materials:
The course materials will be:
Main textbook;
Mensah, I. & Mensah, R. D. (2014). **Management of Tourism and Hospitality.** Accra: Woeli Publishing Services,

Supplementary readings from;

- Barrows, C.W., Powers, T., & Reynolds, D. (2012). Introduction to the Hospitality Industry (8th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley
- Dittmer, P.R. and Griffin, G.G. (1993), **The Dimensions of the Hospitality Industry, An Introduction,** Van Nostrand Reinhold, NY
- Woods, R. H. (2002) **Managing Hospitality Human Resources, 2nd ed.,** Educational Institute of the American Hotel and Lodging Association, Michigan
- Goeldner, Charles R. et al (2002) Tourism Principles, Practices, Philosophies, Eight Edition, John Wiley & Sons, Canada.
- Handouts will be given when appropriate.

Note: Title of Course and Course information not included in order to prevent easy identification
Figure 5.7 *2022/2023 Course outline showing the recommended reading list.*
Source: Fieldwork, 2023



Recommended Reading List:

Baum, T. (2016). *Human resource management for tourism, hospitality and leisure: An international perspective*. UK: Cengage Learning EMEA.

Hendry, C. (2018). *Human resource management*. London: Routledge.

Lansky, M. Ghosh, J. Meda. D., & Rani, U. (2017). *Women, gender and work: Social choices and inequalities*. Geneva: International Labour Organisation (ILO).

International Labour Organisation (2019). Global wage report 2016/17: Wage inequality in the workplace. Geneva: International Labour Office.

Moutinho, L. (2019). *Strategic management in tourism (2nd Ed)*. USA: Cabi International. Riley, M. (2014). *Human resource management in the hospitality and tourism industry*. London, New York: Routledge.

Robeyns, I. (2003). Sen's capability approach and gender inequality: selecting relevant capabilities. *Feminist economics*, 9(2-3), 61-92.

Note: Title of Course and Course information not included in order to prevent easy identification
Figure 5.8 *2022/2023 Course outline showing the recommended reading list.*
Source: Fieldwork, 2023

E. Recommended Reading List

Atkin, B., & Brooks, A. (2009). *Total Facilities Management* (Third edition). Oxford, United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Barret, P., & Baldry, D. (2003). *Facilities management: Towards best practices.* Oxford, United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Booty, F. (2009). *Facilities Management Handbook* (4th Edition). Oxford, United Kingdom: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Christine Jones, C., & Jowett, V. (1998). *Managing facilities.* Oxford, United Kingdom: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Edwards, J. E. (2012). Applied Facilities Management for the Hospitality Industry, Cognella: San Diego, CA, USA.

Stipanuk, D. M. (2015). *Hospitality Facilities Management and Design* (4th ed.). Educational Institute of the American Hotel & Lodging Association.

Note: Title of Course and Course information not included in order to prevent easy identification
Figure 5.9 *2022/2023 Course outline showing the recommended reading list.*
Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Recommended reading list:

Amuquandoh, F. E., & Amenumey, E. (2008). Tourism distribution channels in Ghana. In Akyeampong, O. A. & Asiedu, A. B. (Eds.), *Tourism in Ghana a modern synthesis* (pp. 106 – 123). Accra: Assemblies of God Literature Centre.

Cooper, C., Fletcher, J., Fyall, A., Gilbert, D., & Wanhill, S. (2008). *Tourism: Principles and Practice* (4th ed). UK: Prentice Hall.

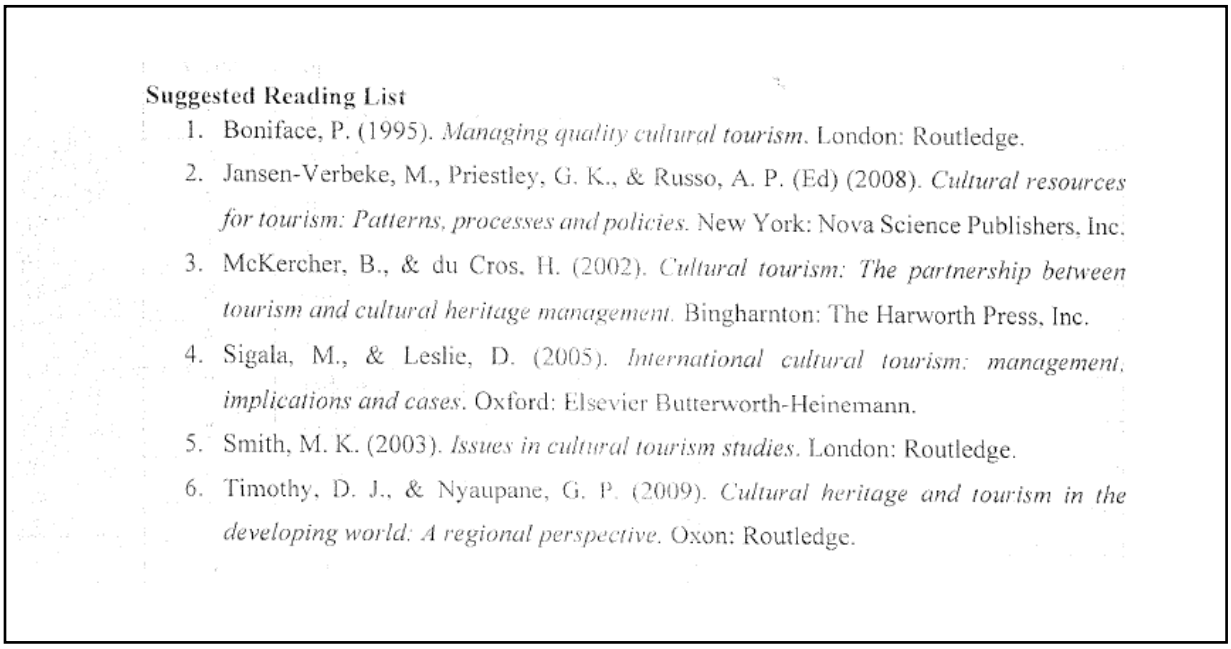
Lew, A. A., Hall, C. M., & Williams, A. M. (2004). *A companion to tourism*. Cornwall: Blackwell publishing.

Page, S. J., & Connell, J. (2006). *Tourism: A modern synthesis*. London: Thomson Learning.

Pender, L., & Sharpely, R., (2005). *The management of tourism*. California: Sage publications.

Tribe, J. (2011). *The economics of leisure, recreation and tourism* (4th ed). Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann

Note: Title of Course and Course information not included in order to prevent easy identification
Figure 5.10 *2022/2023 Course outline showing the recommended reading list.*
Source: Fieldwork, 2023



Suggested Reading List

1. Boniface, P. (1995). *Managing quality cultural tourism*. London: Routledge.
2. Jansen-Verbeke, M., Priestley, G. K., & Russo, A. P. (Ed) (2008). *Cultural resources for tourism: Patterns, processes and policies*. New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc.
3. McKercher, B., & du Cros, H. (2002). *Cultural tourism: The partnership between tourism and cultural heritage management*. Bingharnton: The Harworth Press, Inc.
4. Sigala, M., & Leslie, D. (2005). *International cultural tourism: management, implications and cases*. Oxford: Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann.
5. Smith, M. K. (2003). *Issues in cultural tourism studies*. London: Routledge.
6. Timothy, D. J., & Nyaupane, G. P. (2009). *Cultural heritage and tourism in the developing world: A regional perspective*. Oxon: Routledge.

Note: Title of Course and Course information not included in order to prevent easy identification
Figure 5.11 *2022/2023 Course outline showing the recommended reading list.*
Source: Fieldwork, 2023



References

1. Goldner, C. R., and Brent Ritchie, J. R. (2009), Principles, Practices, Philosophies, John Wiley and Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey.
2. Bearer, A. (2006). A Dictionary of Travel and Tourism Terminology, Oxfordshie, V. K: CABI Publishing.
3. Cook, R., Yale, L; Morqua, J. and McNally R. (2006). Tourism: The Business of Travel, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
4. Shaw, S. (2000). The Delicious History of the Holiday, London: Routledge.
5. Ninemeier, J. and Perdue, J. (2005). Hospitality Operations: Career in the World's Greatest Industry, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
6. Pike, S. (2004). Destination Marketing Organisations, Oxford, U.K.: Elsevier.
7. Travel Industry Association of America (2004). Business and Convention Travellers: Washington, D.C.: TIA.

Note: Title of Course and Course information not included in order to prevent easy identification
Figure 5.12 *2022/2023 Course outline showing the recommended reading list.*
Source: Fieldwork, 2023

The pictures above (*Figures 5.4 to 5.10*) present recommended reading lists for some of the courses taught at the Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management level in the DHTM, UCC. I selected these lists based on their availability and access to them. There were no other inclusion criteria for

selection. Specifically, they were given to me by some of the student participants who took part in the interviews. A simple analysis of the lists altogether revealed that out of the total of forty-one (41) authors listed as main references for all 6 courses selected, only of two (2) of the reference list items were singularly authored or co-authored by Ghanaian scholars, representing 4.9% of the total entries. The Ghanaian authors listed on the lists are "Amuquandoh and Amenumey (2008)" and "Mensah and Mensah (2014)". The rest of the resources included on the reference lists, thirty-nine (39) representing 95.1% of the total were authored by non-African scholars. The dominance of non-African scholars on these reading lists may indicate several underlying issues and broader implications for tourism education and its relationship with colonization in the DHTM. This dominance reflects the lingering influence of colonial educational systems, where curricula and knowledge systems are often imported from Western institutions and perspectives, reinforcing a Eurocentric worldview and prioritizing Western ways of knowing and marginalizing African epistemologies and local contexts. When asked about what this might mean from a student's perspective, an upper year student participant said:

> "…this shows that there is a lack of recognition of Ghanaian and African research and scholarship. This can contribute to the perception that valuable knowledge and expertise come only from the Global North. This is why most of the times, most of us students in African universities, particularly here at UCC rely on external sources for knowledge rather than utilizing local research and academic productions by our own professors…I think that this can undermine the development of critical thinking skills and local solutions to local problems because we are mostly being trained to view issues through an external lens" (Akua Atule, 2023).

Wilson (2022) described what seems to be missing from the debate on reading lists as the discussion of their authority and power. Although reading lists may be created with the benign intent of supporting learning, guiding students through the extensive body of academic literature, and directing them to the most relevant sources, they can become tools that perpetuate existing inequalities and disadvantage marginalized and underrepresented groups (Schucan Bird & Pitman, 2020). It is clear that while reading lists are often designed as tools to support learning, guiding students through the vast academic literature and pointing them to relevant sources, the process of putting together a list is far from neutral. Academic staff may not perceive any inherent issues with how they create reading lists; however, growing evidence suggests bias exists within them, and this bias could be both at the disciplinary level and across academia (Wilson, 2022). This bias is

evident in many disciplines, particularly in African Studies, where a comparison of reading lists from African and non-African universities revealed stark differences in the inclusion of African scholars (Nyamnjoh, 2012; Zeleza, 2006).

For example, a study conducted by Schucan Bird and Pitman (2020) into reading lists in African and UK universities revealed some interesting findings. They found that in African universities, 15% of the reading materials were written by African scholars, whereas this figure drops to less than 2% in UK universities. This suggests that researchers in the UK may be missing out on important regional insights and perspectives that offer alternatives to those of Western scholars. Another study that analyzed reading lists in both science and social sciences provided empirical evidence supporting concerns that university curricula are predominantly shaped by white, male, and Eurocentric authors (Schucan Bird & Pitman, 2020). The case of the DHTM's selected reading lists gives an idea what the situation is. The sample reading lists provided above (Figures 5.4 to 5.10) show a disproportional representation of Ghanaian and/or African research, scholars, and knowledge in the reading lists of some courses in the DHTM. This revelation corroborates Valenzuela's (2021) claim that colonial ways of thinking are still prevalent in universities, and they continue to manifest in curricula design and teaching practices.

It is for this assumption that Naidoo *et al.* (2020, p. 965) advocated that every decolonial project in academic institutions ought to pay attention to curriculum and pedagogy. In commenting about educational institutions in South Africa, Mbembe (2016, p. 32) stressed that there is something profoundly 'wrong' with several institutions of higher learning. He lamented:

> "There is something profoundly wrong when, for instance, syllabuses designed to meet the needs of colonialism and Apartheid should continue well into the liberation era. There is something not only wrong, but profoundly demeaning, when we are asked to bow in deference before the statues of those who did not consider us as human and who deployed every single means in their power to remind us of our supposed worthlessness. There is something perverse to engage in this ritual of self-humiliation and self-debasement every time we happen to find ourselves in such an environment. So, today the consensus is that part of what is wrong with our institutions of higher learning is that they are 'Westernized'. What does it mean 'they are Westernized'? They are 'Westernized' in the sense that they are local instantiations of a dominant academic model based on a Eurocentric epistemic canon. A Eurocentric canon is a canon that attributes truth only to the Western way of knowledge production. It is a canon that disregards other epistemic traditions. It is

> a canon that tries to portray colonialism as a normal form of social relations between human beings rather than a system of exploitation and oppression" (Mbembe, 2016, p. 32).

Basically, Mbembe's (2016) quote critiques the ongoing colonial and apartheid structures that are subtly embedded in educational institutions, particularly in their curricula, symbolic landscapes, and epistemic foundations. He argues that institutions have not sufficiently transformed to reflect the realities, histories, and knowledges of those who suffered under colonialism and apartheid. Instead, they remain "Westernized". In other words, they continue to be shaped by Eurocentric models of knowledge production and intellectual authority. We see this argument made by Grosfoguel (2007) and Chambers and Buzinde (2015) calling for epistemic decolonization.

Clearly, Mbembe's (2016) critique of colonial and apartheid-era epistemic structures in higher education in the South African context resonates deeply with Chambers and Buzinde's (2015) call for epistemic decolonization. It is clear that both perspectives advocate for an urgent need to dismantle Eurocentric frameworks that continue to dominate knowledge systems and perpetuate epistemic injustice. It is noticeable to see that Mbembe critiques the Eurocentric epistemic canon for attributing truth solely to Western modes of knowledge production and for disregarding other epistemic traditions. Similarly, Chambers and Buzinde (2015) argue that the process of epistemic decolonization requires disrupting these Eurocentric narratives, recognizing the value of non-Western epistemologies, and legitimizing Indigenous, local, and other marginalized ways of knowing. Additionally, Mbembe highlights the perpetuation of colonial ideologies in education systems, which is evident in syllabuses, curriculum and pedagogies that are designed to serve colonial objectives. This position aligns with Chambers and Buzinde's (2015) emphasis on identifying and challenging the colonial legacies that are embedded in institutional practices, which continue to frame knowledge hierarchies and silence diverse perspectives. Finally, both Mbembe (2016) and Chambers and Buzinde (2015) make an urgent call for reimagining education. Both perspectives do so by urging scholars and educators to adopt critical pedagogies and methodologies that enable the co-creation of knowledge with communities historically excluded from academic discourse.

For epistemic decolonization to be meaningful, especially as it relates to the design of curriculum and pedagogy in academic institutions, it requires a fundamental rethinking of whose knowledge matters, how knowledge is produced, and the values and symbols that define educational spaces. This calls for a simple move beyond mere political independence to addressing the deeper cultural, psychological, and epistemological legacies of colonialism that manifest themselves in academic departments.

The case of Ghana might be slightly different from many other African universities; however, it behooves on all academic institutions to place importance on bringing about fundamental epistemological change in their respective operations, curriculum design and pedagogical approaches. In the absence of this radical epistemological change, there will continue to be what Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015) refers to as 'having universities in Africa' which continue to poison African minds with research methodologies and inculcate knowledges of equilibrium. The "poisoning of African minds" can be seen as the imposition of Western methodologies and knowledge systems that undermine and devalue African epistemologies, values, and ways of knowing, while privileging Western ways of knowing. This has the potential of perpetuating colonization of the mind, encouraging particularly students to view their own cultures, traditions and knowledge systems as inferior or irrelevant to Western principles. The resultant effect is that knowledge systems are therefore designed to only maintain the status quo rather than challenge it. In essence, Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2015) critique is a call to rethink and transform African higher education into a space for intellectual liberation rather than one of continued colonial domination.

Even though many reasons account for why there is insufficient presence of Ghanaian and/or African scholars in the curriculum of the department, this situation supports the notion by Mamdani (2016, p. 81) that:

> "Colonialism brought not only theory from the Western academy but also the assumption that theory is produced in the West and the aim of the academy outside the West must be to apply that theory. Its implication was radical: if the making of theory was truly a creative act in the West, its application in the colonies became the reverse, a turnkey project".

It is noteworthy to point out that despite the observation with course materials and curricula used by the department, there are several decolonial actions that some faculty members are taking to disrupt this Western hegemonic relationship between the Global North and South in terms of knowledge production. One of the faculty participants, who teaches several courses at each level of the undergraduate study has begun a project, with an agenda of "Africanization" of his syllabus. He describes this as "intentionally making his curriculum and course materials reflect Africa in character, culture, and general outlook". In tackling the question on what can be done to deal with the low percentage of Ghanaian and African authors on recommended lists and course reserves, he had this to say:

> "…For me, I see that all these [colonial structures] have influenced us [department], but I have been very intentional about what I teach...having gone through the department as a student myself tells me that many [teaching] approaches need to change to reflect our context. In my own small way, I am departing from the colonial ties. I do this by structuring my course content and structure to reflect the situation at home! 'Home' here refers to Ghana, it refers to Africa; and those are the things and examples I feature into the topics and lessons that I teach. …For example, take the issue of the 'Metaverse' as the whole technological vibe that is taking place. In teaching about the metaverse in class, I bring that home by asking questions such as, 'what does that mean to us as Ghanaians, and as an industry, or as potential managers moving into that space?' So, you see? I situate that…so even though you see that as the metaverse, I try to decolonize that by fusing the content with what I teach, share, and the questions I present to students. Even in my discussions, in class, this is also where I take out the colonial influences.
>
> If you talk to some of my students, you will find out that even the questions they receive for assignments and discussions always bring them back home. I do not only jump on Western theories and feed students with them. I could say: what do you think say, "Crompton's theory' is the relevance of 'theory A' or 'theory B' to how tourism is organized and practiced in Ghana? In supervising my research students for their thesis and project works, we talk a lot about notions of Africanization, Afrocentrism, etc. in how we are conceptualizing issues. I think this is where the change must begin.
>
> That is why I'm saying that right from what the thoughts are, in terms of what we have been studying, by way of content, what examples we cite [as faculty] and give to them [students], what kind of task we [faculty] give to them [students], and every single thing must be brought back home" (Dr. Yaw Ndebugre, 2023).

It is important to recognize that reading lists are crucial to shaping the curriculum of any institution. The same can be said of influence it has student learning. Brewerton (2014) emphasized that reading lists that comprise a narrow range of authors and perspectives will render student learning both partial and incomplete. Some studies have shown that while students generally agree that reading lists provide guidance and a sense of direction (Beard and Dale, 2008; Stokes & Martin,

2008; Brewerton, 2014; Cameron and Siddall, 2017) they often find them overwhelming (Siddall & Rose, 2014) and then employ a means-to-an-end approach to managing the amount of reading they can achieve (Stokes & Martin, 2008). Overall, students are greatly influenced by, and dependent upon, the titles that faculty members select for their course, hence, a lack of diversity in reading lists directly impacts how students engage with and understand their subject.

It is also worth noting that considerable attention has gone into exploring ways of decolonizing curricula in higher education, and tourism and hospitality education is no exception. Charles (2019) argued that much of the work on the decolonization of curricula began in the 1990s with a focus on an "inclusive curriculum" which later developed into the notion of "decolonizing the university", a new campaign that stemmed from a conference in 2011 in Malaysia. The notion of "decolonizing the curriculum" arose from advocacy campaigns in South Africa in the year 2015 when students at the University of Cape Town called for the removal of a statue of Cecil Rhodes coupled with other demands to recenter education, to make it more inclusive and centered in African culture, history, and thought (Chaudhuri, 2016). The movement which was named "Rhodes Must Fall" was a high-profile push to decolonize universities and challenge white supremacy across South Africa (Cabe, 2023).

Rhodes Must Fall movement was started by Chumani Maxwele when he threw human excrement at the statue of Cecil John Rhodes at the University of Cape Town (Ahmed, 2017; Humphreys, 2022; Laurore, 2016; Steyn, 2019). His actions were inspired by Andile Lile, who in 2013 dumped feces on the steps of the Western Cape provincial legislature in Cape Town to protest the government's failure to provide adequate sanitation for poor Black families (Ahmed, 2020). This protest was directed at Cecil John Rhodes, a figure whose imperialist legacy has arguably shaped the deeply unequal, neo-colonial conditions under which institutions of higher education operate today, both in Africa and globally (Sinnott, 2020).

Like any decolonization movement, *Rhodes Must Fall* was an initiative that was aimed at dismantling the ways in which colonialism has shaped the histories of education, from content to architecture, in ways that reflect and reproduce discriminatory power relations, while exposing and countering the production of neo-colonialism that continues to shape education.

Even though "decolonization of the curriculum" started in a specific cultural and historical context, scholars and practitioners have found the primary tenets to be applicable in a variety of settings. These tenets are also applicable in the cultural context of the DHTM, UCC. The DHTM must begin to question the foundations upon which the school's curricula is built. As Chanelle Wilson (2021) explains, a decolonizing framework must start by acknowledging:

> "…that knowledge is not owned by anyone... it is collectively produced and human beings of all races, ethnicities, classes, genders, sexual orientations, and disabilities have as much right as elite white men to understand what our roles and contributions have been in shaping intellectual achievements and shifting culture and progress" (para. 6).

Such an approach requires that all people must endeavour to validate the voices of "Others" (Aitchison, 2001; Fanon, 2007) and to deconstruct places and cultures in their multiple layers (Woolf, 2021), consequently acknowledging other knowledges and perspectives as equally valuable.

5.3 DHTM Academic Library's *Relationships with* Colonization

> "What is a library? …Who has the right to call it what it is? …Should a library be restricted to a fixed geographical space, like in a room with walls? …What about stories, knowledges and cultural interpretations that are only embodied, and cannot be found in a specific room or location? …Should knowledge keepers be considered as part of the library?"

These were some the questions that bounced back and forth in my brain as I walked on the corridors of the DHTM. Once you enter through the main entrance of the department, the corridor takes you right to the entrance of the main departmental library. It is the fourth room to the right side of the corridor. The size of this library, the wooden shelves holding rows of books on travel, hospitality, cultural heritage, and many other fields of study, made me begin to think about how a place called *a library* could either be a force for colonial reinforcement or resistance.

In the discussion of tourism education in academic institutions, it is critical to examine all areas of operation that make up the educational culture. This includes not only immaterial elements of the institution, but also physical components of the institution such as the site. My research examined the academic library of the DHTM, UCC to ascertain how this particular library space is implicated in the reinforcement and / or resistance of colonization.

Academic libraries have served as knowledge repositories, with a primary mandate of supporting the educational missions of universities and colleges worldwide (Fernández-Marcial, & González-Solar, 2020; Oakleaf, 2010). According to Crilly (2023), however, the Western university plays a crucial role in perpetuating colonialism by upholding Eurocentric ways of knowledge and academic communication. The institutions do so by acting as gatekeepers, ensuring that colonial epistemic hierarchies remain intact. Apart from Western universities often framing knowledge production within a Eurocentric canon, sidelining and sometimes devaluing Indigenous and non-Western knowledge systems, the dominance of English as the primary language of academic communication is another way Western universities perpetuate colonialism. This also marginalizes scholars who operate in other languages, particularly those from the Global South Crilly, 2023). Consequently, academic libraries and archives have emerged as pivotal areas for both theoretical exploration and practical efforts in decolonizing knowledge production and curricula (Clarke, 2020, 2021; Charles, 2019; Crilly, 2019; Wisker 2020). Libraries, the world over, have made efforts to be centres of excellence while making diverse kinds of knowledge available to diverse populations. In fact, in the United States for instance, the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) (2012) mandates libraries, through its professional standards around cultural awareness and diversity, to develop collections and provide programs and services that are inclusive of the needs of all persons within the catchment area of the library.

The DHTM's academic library is also committed to a mandate of developing collections that serve the needs of diverse groups of people. During my semi-structured interview session with the department's librarian, he shared the commitment of the departmental library to the overall mission statements of the department. He said,

> "…as a library, we exist to support the academic work which is happening here in this department. This support includes the professional and research needs of students, faculty, and anybody who is

> interested in the fields of tourism and hospitality management. It is for this reason that we try our best to have resources, books, and other materials that are diverse enough to serve the many needs of different kinds of library users" (Mr. Nii Tackie, DHTM, 2023).

This quote corroborates Clarke's (2021) suggestion that libraries are pivotal to academic institutions' pursuit of theoretical and practical explorations. This is why Posner (2019) refers to libraries as the heart of the university. Management of academic libraries understand that they do not exist as neutral spaces. For this reason, there are many initiatives towards inclusion and diversity. Libraries are increasingly reflecting on their collection development strategies and are putting in much effort in order to address issues of equity, diversity and inclusion (Agee, 2005).

In fact, the notion of libraries as neutral entities has been extensively contested by arguments asserting that bias is intrinsically embedded in the organization of libraries and the production of knowledge (Chiu *et al.*, 2021; Crilly, 2023; Macdonald & Birdi, 2020). Some of the key arguments include the histories within which libraries are rooted, making libraries institutions that were established during colonial periods with their organizational operations such as decision making structures, collection development policies, access policies and user services, and staffing and training models, haven been shaped by colonial power structures and Eurocentric priorities (Chiu *et al.*, 2021). Other arguments include the classification systems adopted by libraries. Systems like the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) and Library of Congress Classification (LCC) only reflect and reinforce Eurocentric worldviews (Camacho, 2023; Frederick, 2022). On the other hand, categories for non-Western subjects are often marginalized or grouped under generalized headings.

This critique by scholars like Camacho (2023) and Frederick (2022) stems from the fact that classification systems such as DDC and LCC are not just technical tools, but ideological instruments that shape access to knowledge. They observed that these systems privilege Western ways of knowing while simplifying non-Western perspectives. Both DDC and LCC were developed in the Western world - specifically the United States and Western Europe - during periods when Western powers dominated global knowledge production (Berman, 1971; Olson, 2002). Frederick (2022) argued that non-Western subjects are often lumped under broad or vague

headings, rather than being given nuanced categories that reflect their internal diversity and complexity. Similarly, Indigenous knowledges, oral traditions, and local epistemologies are often either excluded entirely or misrepresented through inappropriate Western frameworks (Frederick, 2022; Duarte & Belarde-Lewis, 2015).

The critique of library spaces as neutral posits that claims of neutrality effectively perpetuate an inequitable status quo, to the detriment of marginalized communities, and reinforce the predominance of Whiteness within academic institutions. Libraries are deeply embedded within the socio-political contexts in which they exist. In the case of the Hospitality and Tourism Management Department's library, operations take place within the socio-political context of the University of Cape Coast's main library, as well as the Ghana Library Association (GLA).

In the following section, I examine how UCC's Hospitality and Tourism Management's Department's library functions as a site for colonial reinforcement and resistance, exploring its roles in perpetuating colonial ideologies, legacies, and practices while also highlighting its potential as an arena for decolonization and resistance.

5.3.1 DHTM Academic Library: Setting, Context and Physical Space

The DHTM library is located within the new campus of University of Cape Coast (UCC), a mid-sized university in the southwestern part of Ghana. UCC itself is situated on the outskirts of a lively, postcolonial city, where the sounds of market vendors, the sometimes gentle, and sometimes roaring hum of the Atlantic Ocean, and the vibrant local culture paint a vivid backdrop. UCC campus, with its mix of modern and colonial-era buildings, provides a clear contrast to the departmental library's worn and under-resourced interior. The department's library is housed on the first floor of one of the oldest buildings on the south-west part of UCC campus. This building has a nickname called *"Café Rooftop"* (See Figure 5.11 below). In the same three storey building are the offices of some faculty of the DHTM, office of the Head of DHTM, classrooms, a bank [which is accessible to the general public], and a working restaurant, under the auspices of the DHTM (Field Observation, 2023).



Figure 5.13 *showing the front view of the Café Rooftop where DHTM is housed*
Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Upon entering the library, one is immediately struck by its rather small size. The space is compact, with only a few rows of shelves that reach up to the ceiling. These shelves are filled with books that seem to have been there for several years. The library space is well lit, relying on a several fluorescent lights and the natural light that seeps in through the small, louvred windows overlooking the main hallway of the department. The walls are painted in a faded white color, with patches of peeling paint revealing the concrete wall and wooden doors and windows underneath. The library's floor is covered with cream-coloured tiles that have been there for many years. The furniture consists of a handful of wooden tables and chairs, many of which are wobbly and bear the marks of years of use. In the front of the shelves is a small desk, equipped with a desktop computer and a bunch of hardcopy files, where the librarian sits daily to work.





Figure 5.14 **Figure 5.15**

Pictures showing the main entrance of the DHTM's library (Fig. 5.14) and the room showing the librarian's desk (Picture 5.15).

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

5.3.2 DHTM Academic Library: Collection

My personal observation of the DHTM library's collection reveals a composition of predominantly Western textbooks. While there are a few books that are authored or co-authored by Ghanaian and African scholars (see Figures 5.14 below), the vast majority of the collections are Western. In determining whether the books in the DHTM's library are "Western" or by "African or Ghanaian authors", I both examined their bibliographic information and conducted a critical contextual evaluation. Specifically, I identified the author's identities and backgrounds by checking the author's biography, and their potential affiliations. I also checked to see publisher and place of publication information as these reflect what academic standards, epistemologies, and target audiences are may be influencing the books. The books cover a range of topics related to tourism, hospitality, and management.

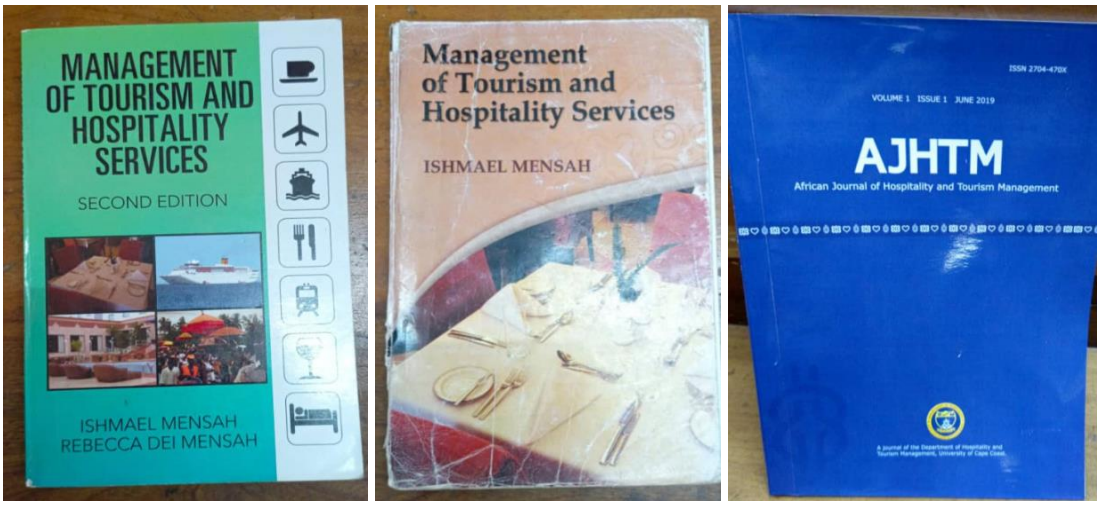


Figure 5.16 *showing two books authored by Ghanaian scholars, and an African Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, edited by African scholars*
Source: Fieldwork, 2023

In a departmental library, one would expect to see a variety of learning materials, support, and other related services that fit the definition of the aims and goals of that academic department. However, from personal observation during my fieldwork, coupled with conversations with the librarian and several other folks who volunteered to participate in the study, it was revealed that the DHTM library of UCC is heavily under-equipped to serve the needs of members of the department. This library is stocked with books and materials from multiple disciplines that relate to the study of hospitality and tourism, student theses and dissertations, and prints of local and sub-regional academic journals within the domain of Hospitality and Tourism.



Figure 5.17 *showing the interior of the DHTM's library with books stacked on the shelves*
Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Titles such as *"Tourism: Principles and Practice, 6th ed.* by Fletcher *et al.* (2017), *"Tourism: Principles, Practice and Philosophies"* authored by Goeldner and Ritchie (1990), *"The Business of Tourism,6th edition"* by Holloway (2001), *"Principles of Hospitality Management", "Ecotourism: A Sustainable Option?"* by Milne (1996) , *"Tourism Planning: An Integrated and Sustainable Development Approach"* by Inskeep (1991), *"Human Resource management in Tourism and Hospitality: International Perspectives on Small to Medium-sized Enterprises"* by Lee-Ross (1999), *"Understanding and Managing Tourism"* by Richardson and Fluker (2004), *"Worldwide Destinations"* by Boniface, Cooper and Cooper (2006), *"The New Urban Sociology"* by Walton (1981), *"Tourism and Recreation"* by Williams (2003), *"Development in Recreation, Parks, and Tourism: A Positioning Approach"* by Kauffman (2010), *"Research Methods for Leisure and Tourism: A Practical Guide"* by Veal (2017), and *"Tourism Management: An Introduction"* by Inkson and Minnaert (2012) were among the array of books that are shelved. I asked the DHTM librarian and a faculty member about how the books in the library are sourced,

and they each confirmed that many of the books the DHTM library houses are through donations made by foreign institutions. Another source of the library's resources is through various international aid programs. The third main source of the books found in the DHTM library the benevolent donations of alumni of the department who are either studying abroad or have entirely relocated abroad. When I asked if the University of Cape Coast's main library is also a source of some of the books in the DHTM library, one faculty participant mentioned that a very insignificant percentage of the books in the DHTM library are financed by the university as a whole. Unfortunately, due to the geographical locations where most of these books are from, many of them are foreign to the Ghanaian and African context, and only reflect Western perspectives on tourism and hospitality, often lacking context or relevance to the local Ghanaian terrain.

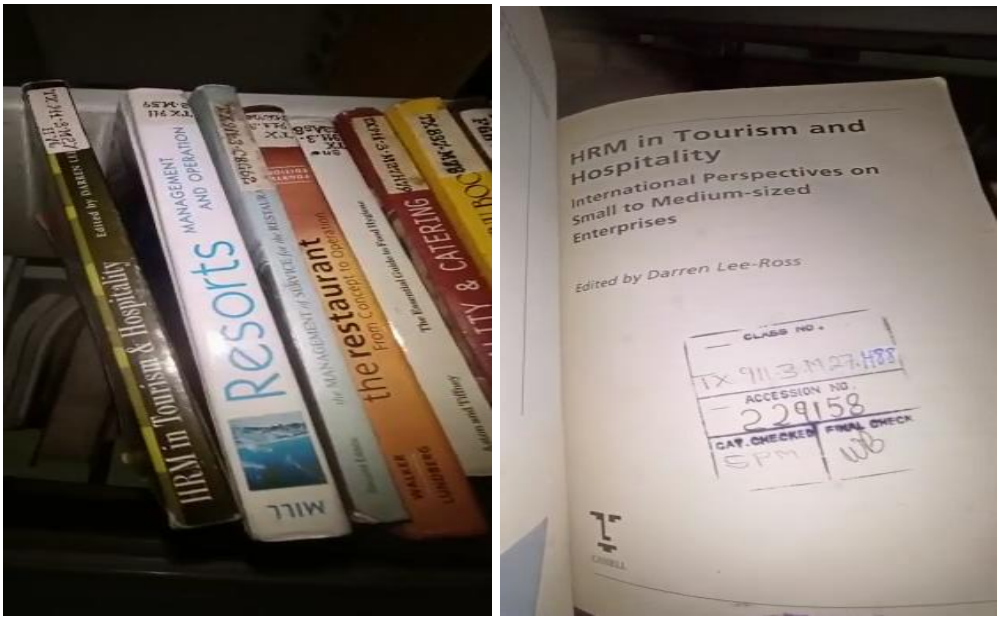


Figure 5.18 *showing titles of some textbooks in the DHTM's library*
Source: Fieldwork, 2023

When you evaluate the predominance of books by Western authors about Western contexts which are found in the DHTM's library through the lens of colonial power and epistemic decolonization, several critical discussions emerge. For example, the dominance of academic materials mostly authored by Western authors and about Western contexts suggest the problem of knowledge hegemony. This idea is the dominance of certain knowledges, perspectives, and ways of being over "Others" (Aitchison, 2001; Fanon, 2007). Knowledge hegemony happens when a particular

group's knowledge is perceived as superior to other ways of knowing. In tourism education, however, knowledge hegemony would mean prioritizing Western perspectives while neglecting or sidelining Indigenous and local knowledges. This is what epistemic decolonization fights. It calls for the rejection of the notion that Western knowledge is superior to all non-Western knowledge (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015; Grosfoguel, 2007). The example we see in the DHTM's library context also suggests institutional power imbalances – where the global academic publishing industry is dominated by institutions in the Global North, reinforcing and reproducing Western-centric perspectives, and dependency of universities in the Global South on those in the Global North. This point corroborates participant responses that revealed that two main sources of the books in the library are donations from foreign (mostly Western) institutions, and donations of alumni of the DHTM studying or living abroad (mostly in the Global North countries). When asked about how the DHTM's library gets its collections, a faculty participant noted,

> "…from my own investigations and the conversations, I have had with our Head of Department and librarian, most of the books you see in the library are books from donations. We have several alumni who are either relocated abroad or have become students abroad, who from time to time send us books from overseas as donations. Most of these books are Western because unfortunately, these past students are in these Western countries…" (Dr. Naana Oforiatta, 2023).

In addition to a lack of content of library materials representing the Ghanaian and African context, some members of the Hospitality and Tourism Department are not entirely satisfied with the lack of resources in the department's library. When asked about how helpful the department's library has been to facilitating faculty and students' academic needs, one of the faculty members shared her dissatisfaction with the state of the library. She said:

> "…in a world overflowing with knowledge, the library sort of stands as a place for curious minds, a place where one can get into the minds of others. Yet, over here in our department, this is an under-equipped library… A library's true power lies not merely in its walls or the number of books it houses, or just the name it bears but, in the potential, it holds to ignite the flames of imagination and sow the seeds of wisdom through the diversity of materials and resources, and support that are readily available and accessible, without any hinderances. Most of the resources here are old, outdated, almost irrelevant (in a number of ways). Tell me, 'Do you see any atlases, any travel guides, even travel guides about Cape Coast? Tell me…!" (Dr. Naana Oforiatta, 2023).

The above statement clearly reflects the unequal power differences that exist between universities in the Global North and those in the Global South (Collyer, 2018; Holmarsdottir *et al.*, 2013;

Luthuli, 2024). These dynamics are rooted in colonial histories and their influence on access to knowledge and resources, particularly in academic spaces like libraries, are so evident as we see in the participant's submission. The quote presents a powerful critique of the material and epistemological limitations of the DHTM's departmental library, exposing the broader tensions between the ideal of the library as a democratic space of knowledge access and the realities of infrastructural inadequacy, as we see in many postcolonial educational contexts. The faculty participant began with a poetic vision of the library as a "place for curious minds," suggesting that libraries should serve as places where diverse worlds of thought and imagination are explored. This aligns with traditional humanistic views of libraries as spaces of intellectual freedom, inquiry, and discovery (Buschman, 2003).

Moving on, however, the faculty participant immediately contrasts this ideal with the realities of the DHTM's library, describing it as "under-equipped" and stocked with "old, outdated, almost irrelevant" resources (Dr. Naana Oforiatta, 2023). This critique reveals a structural inequality. It suggests that while knowledge is increasingly globalized and digitized, the situation in UCC's DHTM library remains epistemically marginalized through a lack of access to current and diverse materials. Lor and Britz (2007) describe a situation as this as informational imperialism. This is where the Global South is systematically denied equitable access to the tools of knowledge production (Lor & Britz, 2007).

The fact that the participant also mentioned the absence of basic resources like atlases and local travel guides, particularly about Cape Coast, highlights another big problem. Even within a region of touristic and historical significance like Cape Coast, locally relevant materials are scarce. This gap suggests a failure to support contextualized learning and teaching—a key aspect of decolonizing education (Smith, 2012). Finally, the participant's final questions evoke a tone of frustration and urgency. They confront the disconnect between the library's symbolic value and its actual capacity to serve students and researchers. This quote is a call for reinvestment in libraries not only as physical spaces but also as sites of decolonial transformation, where a plurality of perspectives—including African and Indigenous knowledges—must be accessible and valued.

Dannecker (2022) argues that these power imbalances, such as in the composition of resources in an academic library, are deeply rooted in colonial histories, and they continue to affect the agency and knowledge production capabilities of institutions in the Global South. A resultant effect includes unequal partnerships between scholars in both the Global North and Global South, hence, limited access to resources. The coloniality of power, referring to how colonial systems of knowledge, power and cultural dominance continue to shape how knowledge is thought, taught, researched and understood, is implicated in most academic contexts in the Global South **(**Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Quijano, 2000).

Several of students who can be considered "faithfuls" of the library [those who use the library at least three times a week] shared their frustration about the lack of materials in their department's library. A graduate student shared their disappointment with the nature of research assistance that is available in the library. He said:

> "…It is very frustrating using this library sometimes because you come here hoping to leave with materials, information, or even research data, only to find nothing. You find nothing because most of the references and lists we receive in class from professors are not even in the library, not even in the school's main library. So, you come and ask a librarian, and they cannot even help you because there is nothing they too can do!" (Mr. Nii Tackie, 2023).

Even though the library is a place meant to be a hub for students and faculty of the DHTM, the space leaves users frustrated over the lack of relevant and up-to-date materials. My personal observation of a student who used his credentials to access materials from the university's library's database revealed some challenging outcomes. Although the university has a few online collections and subscribed databases, access remains significantly limited. These resources are primarily housed within the main university library, leaving departmental libraries under-resourced and disconnected from the digital infrastructure necessary for contemporary academic engagement. Among the available databases are multidisciplinary platforms such as JSTOR, ProQuest Ebooks, Oxford University Press, and Taylor & Francis Online. Subject-specific databases include IEEE Xplore for engineering and technology, HINARI for health sciences, and AGORA for agriculture. Additionally, UCC offers access to resources like Emerald Insight, Project MUSE, and the IMF eLibrary, catering to various academic disciplines (library.ucc.edu.gh). Even within the main library, the range of databases available is narrow,

offering access to only a few platforms—many of which do not include comprehensive or current materials relevant to African or tourism-focused research. This constrained access reinforces existing disparities in knowledge production and further marginalizes students and researchers who rely on localized or specialized materials for their academic work.

For faculty members who rarely use the library, many have taken it upon themselves to supplement the library's collection with personal copies of books and articles, sharing their own resources with students to bridge the gap.

5.3.3 DHTM Academic Library: Challenges

The results of the fieldwork also revealed that the DHTM library is fraught with several challenges. The most pressing challenge is the lack of current and contextually relevant materials. As manifested in my observation of the books, materials and other resources that are housed in the library, and the one-on-one interviews with students, faculty, and the librarian, it is right to say that the predominance of Western textbooks means that much of the tourism knowledge available to the department as a whole is not necessarily tailored to the unique aspects of Ghana's tourism and hospitality needs. According to one faculty participant, this challenge forces students and other members of faculty to rely heavily on external sources and personal networks to find relevant and contextual information. He said,

> "…sometimes, you give your students readings lists and then you realize that those books or journal articles are not even available in the university's main library…what I have done over the years is to connect with my colleagues, friends, and past students in different countries to help with the materials I need…you know what? They get them for me in no time! (Dr. Yaw Ndebugre, 2023).

I argue that there are deeper dynamics of power, knowledge production, and resistance, reflected by the absence of locally relevant books in a local university library, leading to reliance on external sources and personal networks. Truly speaking, the reliance on external and foreign materials makes students and faculty perpetuate a form of epistemic dependence on knowledge systems that may not align with local realities (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015; Mignolo, 2012; Schöpf, 2020; Shizha, 2011). On the other hand, the utilization of personal networks to find relevant and contextual information is resistance. This resistance to the lack of locally relevant materials gives faculty and students the agency in knowledge-seeking. By sourcing materials informally, faculty

and students bypass institutional limitations and actively seek knowledge that aligns with their lived realities. In another light, this reliance on external sources and personal networks could also be interpreted as the institution placing the burden of access onto individuals and respective departments, fitting into neoliberal mechanisms in higher education (Connel, 2013). Personal networks, according to some of the faculty and student participants often include "…local scholars, cultural practitioners, and community leaders" (Fieldwork, 2023).

Even though the lack of contextually relevant materials in the library is a huge challenge, it makes room for the circulation of knowledge outside formal structures. It is a powerful tool for challenging dominant knowledge hierarchies by creating space for localized, contextualized understandings (Jovchelovitch, 2019; Stein, Fitzgibbon & Stren, 2001). The statement suggests that the absence of contextually relevant materials in DHTM's library opens up alternative avenues for knowledge production and circulation. By moving from institutionalized knowledge systems, these alternative pathways challenge dominant epistemologies and hierarchies that privilege Western knowledge as superior or universal (Santos, 2014; Smith, 2012). Finally, informal exchanges of knowledge within personal networks also fosters solidarity and collaborative efforts to address structural gaps in institutional settings. Overall, resistance through personal networks is a meaningful response, however, at both the level of the DHTM and UCC, systemic change is needed to reconfigure the power relations embedded in knowledge production and access to these knowledges.

Another challenge faced by the department's library is inadequate funding and support. Sadly, there are no computers or digital resources available in the department's library, making it difficult for members of the department to access online journals or databases. Even in the school's main library, access to digital resources, including peer reviewed journal articles and book chapters are almost always impossible to get. My conversation with one of the faculty members revealed that many calls on the department and the university to purchase the license for digital materials have yielded no results. In his words, he lamented,

> "You see, this issue of access to digital materials that are relevant to the Ghanaian and African context is a big one. For instance, you come here and even [the] books that were written by us [I mean faculty members in this department], the university does not have copies. Our own university is not ready to even buy copies and stock the library with these books that speak directly about

> tourism and hospitality in the Ghanaian context. This makes it hard for us as a department to effectively function the way we should… unless the published materials are open access, it is just impossible for us to have access to help students with these resources" (Dr. Kofi Anta, 2023).

Here is another statement that highlights the challenges and power dynamics inherent in the *commodification of academic knowledge***,** particularly in contexts like Ghana and broader African regions, where local knowledge is marginalized within global academic and institutional systems (Darkwa, 2024; Kaya & Seleti, 2013; Owusu-Ansah & Mii, 2013; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). The statement clearly demonstrates how knowledge, particularly academic publications, is treated as a commodity. Even locally produced materials (e.g., books written by faculty) are not readily available to the department due to financial or institutional priorities, which reflects broader market-driven dynamics in academic publishing. Even though not fully established in my investigations during fieldwork, the fact that a university does not prioritize purchasing and stocking books written by its own faculty raises concerns about systemic devaluation of local knowledge. This could be an internalization of the idea that external (often Western-produced) knowledge is more authoritative or prestigious thank local and Indigenous knowledges (Alatas, 2000; Alatas, 2003; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013; Sperduti, 2017). To address these challenges, universities require structural reforms in knowledge production, access, and institutional priorities. The DHTM and UCC must prioritize local scholarship by investing in the purchasing and dissemination of locally produced materials, challenging the hegemony of external sources.

These challenges show how difficult it can be for many libraries, particularly the DHTM library of UCC to effectively carry out their mandate of supporting the educational missions of universities and colleges (Fernández-Marcial, & González-Solar, 2020; Oakleaf, 2010). High costs of subscriptions to digital journals, e-books, and databases can be very expensive, putting a strain on library budgets. Additionally, most digital resources come with licensing agreements that have restrictions on how materials can be accessed and used. Part of the access restrictions includes user authentication, especially for off-campus access. While there is a challenge of access to an extensive database of resources, ensuring a secure and seamless access to this limited availability, particularly from off-campus locations, is practically impossible in the case of the department. The statement also sheds light on the value of open access. This type of publishing removes financial

barriers, enabling scholars, students, and institutions, especially in resource-constrained environments to access, share, and build upon academic work. Open access not only democratizes knowledge but also offers a pathway for African-authored research to be more widely disseminated and utilized, contributing to epistemic justice (Chan *et al.*, 2005; Suber, 2012). As in the reflection of the participant, unless materials are open access, it becomes "impossible" to provide students with essential resources, thereby directly impacting the quality and relevance of education.

5.4 DHTM Academic Library: Site for Colonial Reinforcement

Academic libraries, if not intentionally set up and managed, have the potential to become sites for colonial reinforcement. The DHTM's library has a mandate of supporting the works of members of the department, however, the space has rather become a space in the department where only few users patronize its limited services. From the way the library is set up, to the books that sit on the shelves, it is easy for one to question how much of the space supports and amplifies local and Indigenous knowledges. A decolonized library, drawing on de Sousa Santos' (2018) work, represents the reformulation and reconstruction of what makes up knowledge systems and norms. Sousa Santos' (2018) point is that such a library actively rethinks and reconstructs the organization, structure, and practices that define what the library considers 'knowledge' and how that knowledge is organized, valued, produced, and accessed. This includes the careful selection of books, and other academic materials that find themselves shelved in the library. This means that libraries may unintentionally reinforce colonial structures and ideologies, even without knowing.

The first way in which the DHTM's library is culprit to the perpetuation of colonial dominance is in its *Western-centric collections*. As revealed in the observations, field photographs, and one-on-one interviews, collections found in DHTM's library predominantly feature Western perspectives and scholarship, thereby marginalizing non-Western voices and knowledge systems. In a study examining diversification, decentralization and decolonization of academic libraries, Crilly (2023, p. 8) argued that the effects of having a library's collection limited to Western knowledges, authors, and theories can be "erasure, invisibility, mischaracterization, not feeling welcome…". Of course, the aim of diversifying library collections is to broaden authorship and content to account for the histories, cultures and narratives that represent diversity (Meyers, 2021). Diversifying a library's

collection translates into curriculum diversification. This assertion is re-echoed by Darby and Dowling (2021) who described the diversification of library collections as a step toward curriculum diversification.

The evidence in UCC's DHTM library, as shown in the books and collections, reveals that the library has focused primarily on Eurocentric knowledge, to the disadvantage of other relevant non-Western materials and resources, particularly Ghanaian and other African knowledge. It has led to the marginalization and underrepresentation of Indigenous knowledges and perspectives (Crilly, 2023; Cooke & Kitzie, 2021). This bias reinforces the idea that Western knowledge is superior, leading to the marginalization and even erasure of traditional knowledge systems and cultural practices of the people of Cape Coast, Ghana, and Africa to some extent.

The next manifestation of colonialism in the DHTM's library is in the form of *language.* The majority of academic materials and library resources found in the department's library are published in English. For this reason, many important works in other languages have been excluded, thereby limiting the diversity of perspectives that are available to students, faculty, and other users of the library. Although English is the official language of Ghana and the primary mode of instruction at all levels of education, there are over 50 local languages and dialects that are spoken in Ghana (Statista, 2024) representing a wealth of knowledge, cultural heritage and alternative ways of knowing that are absent from DHTM's library. wa Thiong'o (1986, pp. 4, 26) raised the question of language at the base of the debate: "[t]he choice of language and the use to which language is put is central to a people's definition of themselves in relation to their natural and social environment … by our continuing to write in foreign languages, paying homage to them, are we not on the cultural level continuing that neo-colonial slavish and cringing spirit?".

The question posed by wa Thiong'o (1986) highlights how language plays a vital role in shaping people's identity and relationship with their environment and society. Basically, the choice of language and how that language is used are pivotal to the way people define themselves. Additionally, the language of a people influences how they relate to their natural and social environments. This includes knowledge, culture, and various ways of interacting with the world.

One can also argue that, when a nation writes and uses foreign languages, it shows that the said nation is paying homage to those languages, and to the cultures, knowledges, and powers the languages represent. This is wa Thiong'o's (1986) main agenda – calling for a reflection on the implications of language choice for cultural identity and independence. Thiong'o's (1986) position is emphasized by Chambers and Buzinde (2015) in their discussion on the intricate connections between language and colonization through the lens of decolonial theory, particularly in tourism studies. They advocate for the incorporation of diverse languages and perspectives to challenge and transform the dominant narratives within tourism studies.

This dominance of the English language in Ghanaian academic libraries' collections and, particularly in the DHTM's library has created barriers for non-English-speaking researchers and students. One faculty member asked:

> "…Why can't the Hospitality and Tourism Department's library of UCC have a section of materials and resources written in Fante (the local language of the people of Cape Coast) as a way of highlighting the language of the traditional lands on which the school is situated? Sadly, most of our books, as you can see here, are written by foreign scholars, and all of which are in English (Dr. Kwesi Danquah, 2023).

This quote suggests that local and Indigenous languages and other marginalized languages are underrepresented, making it difficult for individuals from these communities to access relevant resources. By prioritizing English-language materials for the most part, DHTM's library inadvertently reinforces linguistic hegemony, thereby marginalizing, and potentially erasing non-English knowledges and sources and the power diverse communities carry. This does not only point to broader colonial prints in the educational foundations of the department but also raises concerns about access and inclusion in academic resources context.

Another way that this library reinforces colonialism is through *access and representation.* The data from the fieldwork revealed that there is the underrepresentation of non-Western scholars, and their works are hugely underrepresented in the library's collections, perpetuating a limited worldview. In another conversation with faculty members, they lamented that even for their own published works, the University of Cape Coast, is for the most part unable, and in some cases unwilling to acquire licensing rights for their works, hence the absence of their own published

works from the library. This brings about a lack of diverse perspectives, thereby reinforcing stereotypes and a monolithic view of knowledge. This negates the spirit carried by tourism's *epistemic de-linking*, an agenda described by Grosfoguel (2007) and Chambers and Buzinde (2015) as a rejection of Western epistemologies about tourism as representing the 'God-eye' view thus enabling spaces to open up for other ways of thinking, being in and knowing about tourism. Representation of the works of local and Indigenous scholars echoes Dussel's (2011) idea of a horizontal dialogue amongst all cultures. In this scenario, every voice becomes important, and not one dominant voice and the 'silenced other' (Dussel, 2011, p. 2).

When asked about the implications of limited access and representation in general, one faculty member noted:

> "…this only perpetuates a hierarchical view of knowledge, where Western knowledge is seen as superior, while Indigenous and local knowledge is devalued or disregarded. This is the case, because often times, you only have access to in most cases, works and books by non-African scholars, that come to us as donations…" (Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, 2023).

Another way in which the DHTM's library reinforces colonialism is through its *influence on curriculum*. Wattanacharoensil (2014) defines the tourism curriculum as a structured set of courses and content that encompass the knowledge, skills, and competencies that students need to be effective contributors to the tourism industry. This includes the sum total of environments, experiences, activities, interactions, and events designed to foster the tourism student's development, learning and well-being. Libraries determine what the content of learning should encompass. In fact, Enyia (1991) and Shao *et al. (*2021) argue that academic libraries play a vital role in the curriculum design of academic libraries in higher education institutions by being key enablers of knowledge acquisition, dissemination, and application. For example, librarians work with faculty to ensure that books in the library's collection reflect the current and emerging trends in the field, enabling the curriculum to be rich with content.

For this reason, it makes sense for an academic course to be planned in such a way that the scope of that course is within the borders of the resources available. In the earlier paragraphs, we see how underrepresented the DHTM's library is in terms of the types of books and resources

available. Unfortunately for faculty in this department, there is a limited pool of resources they can develop their curricula to cover. This way, the departmental library can only support curricula that prioritize Western theories and histories, neglecting non-Western contributions and contexts. The resultant effect of this is that there is the standardization of knowledge, a situation where the emphasis on certain academic standards can marginalize alternative forms of knowledge and epistemologies.

5.5 DHTM: Site for Colonial Resistance

The above discussed ways in which the educational culture of the DHTM, UCC, comprising the values, policies, curriculum and pedagogy, and departmental library reinforce colonization call for transformative practices both at institutional and departmental levels, if decolonial futures are to be fostered. My field data showed that at the DHTM level, some faculty and students have adopted two outstanding social practices that constitute resistance to some of challenges the DHTM faces in its operations. Notable among these practices is one faculty members' approach to curriculum design and pedagogy – a deliberate approach he has put in place to promote the decolonization of the content that makes up his curriculum and teaching methods.

This faculty member, among many things, has committed to developing a participatory curriculum for the courses he teaches. In his words during a one-on-one interview session, he emphasized that

> "…a decolonized curriculum and approach to pedagogy should integrate not only Ghanaian, but African perspectives on tourism and hospitality education. This inclusive approach to developing my content does not only provide alternatives to dominant Western discourses but also legitimizes Ghanaian and African scholars and knowledge. For me, this means that I should continue to encourage storytelling and oral histories as legitimate forms of knowledge transmission, especially in our local contexts… another thing I do is that I am constantly developing critical consciousness in my students. My classes challenge students to examine the history of colonialism and the impacts it has on contemporary tourism in Ghana" (Dr. Yaw Ndebugre, 2023).

As a social practice that is transformational, some faculty members have been engaging with industry practitioners, Indigenous and local groups, and policy makers to co-create and curate course content and materials that not only reflect local realities, but also are context-specific to the Ghanaian context. The faculty member spoken about above explained that his approach to resisting the dominance of Eurocentric and Western knowledge is advocating for the inclusion of Ghanaian

and African case studies, projects, and scholarly works that have been authored by Ghanaian and African scholars. This social practice highlights Mbembe's (2016) position on the inclusion of African scholars' case studies and scholarship in African educational contexts as it resists Eurocentric frameworks on one hand, while promoting epistemic justice and fostering the autonomy and legitimacy of African intellectual tradition. Mbembe (2016) however, warned that practitioners and faculties aiming to do this must avoid tokenism, as it fails to dismantle knowledge production structures. Instead, authentic African epistemologies, case studies, and scholarly works must be included in educational operations, instead of just replacing Eurocentric knowledges and text with African ones.

This way, African universities, such as UCC will begin to develop pathways to true epistemic decolonization. This involves a fundamental shift in how academic knowledge is conceived and legitimized, ensuring that African perspectives are not seen as supplemental but as central to understanding both local and global contexts. I argue, based on this advocacy that, a simple incorporation of local scholarship, case studies, and Indigenous epistemologies does not necessarily constitute epistemic decolonization per se, if they do not bring about transformative changes in DHTM's educational infrastructure, research, and overall educational operations. African universities must recognize that decolonizing education is not merely a matter of "adding" African content to a curriculum that is dominated by Western and Eurocentric epistemologies, but rather involves a deep, structural reimagining and rethinking of what knowledge is, how it is produced, validated, and transmitted (Mbembe, 2016; Wiredu, 1995). Here, we see the deliberate inclusion of Ghanaian and African voices in the content of the curriculum, and this includes several faculty voices in the DHTM. Below are some examples of some scholarly works being integrated in the curriculum development of some courses in the DHTM, UCC.



Figure 5.19 *showing titles of peer-reviewed journal articles authored by Ghanaian and African scholars utilized by the DHTM, UCC*
Source: Fieldwork, 2023

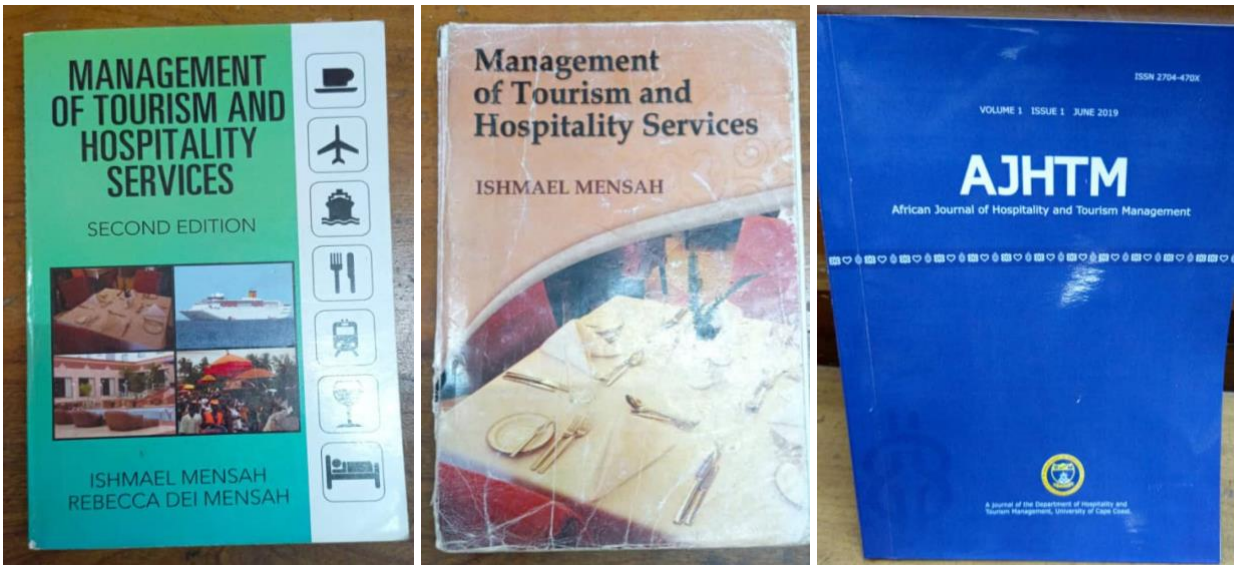


Figure 5.20 *showing titles of books authored by Ghanaian and African scholars utilized by the DHTM, UCC*
Source: Fieldwork, 2023

In addition to engaging with industry practitioners, Indigenous and local groups, and policy makers to co-create course content and materials that reflect local realities, another social practice that the DHTM is utilizing to resist colonialization is the use of participatory and experiential learning approaches to bring students and local communities together rather than simply learning through textbooks. The DHTM designs fieldwork-based activities and courses where students engage with local communities, local tourism businesses, and Indigenous forms of tourism. Hall and Tucker (2004) acknowledged that the colonial legacy of hospitality and tourism education most often than not positions Western concepts, practices and activities as the standard, while neglecting Indigenous and local knowledge systems.

UCC's DHTM is intentional about fieldwork activities, internships, and community engagement programs that serve to augment what happens in the classrooms. During the third year of the undergraduate program, all tourism students are required to undertake a six-week internship program, aimed at giving students practical experiences with local community groups or business in the fields of hospitality and tourism. During this session, students get the chance to serve in multiple roles and capacities that introduce them different knowledge systems and ways of doing things that are relevant to the Ghanaian, African and global contexts.

My own experience of this exercise as a former student took place between June 2014 and July 2014. During this period, I was assigned several tourism-related responsibilities that put me in touch with two local tourism businesses in Ho, a community-led ecotourism project in Amedzorfe, and the Ghana Tourism Authority, Ho all in the Volta Region of Ghana. My internship with all these placement units gave me the opportunity to engage first-hand with industry and community leaders, and to learn local and context-specific ways of tourism development. Till today, the DHTM continues to run this internship program for third-year undergraduate students as part of their degree requirements. Two students, whom I had engaged during my fieldwork recounted their own experiences with the internship program of the DHTM. The first student highlighted his appreciation of the practical skills that the internship program offered to him. He said:

> "…during my internship with the Kakum National Park, where I got the chance to work with the locals and to see tourism for myself in a practical sense, I was empowered to engage with different ways of understanding and doing tourism, which is different from how we see it and understand it in the classroom. The thing is that classroom lessons are good, and all the books we see and read are great, but they mostly do not teach you exactly how things happen at specific tourist attractions. Even for most of the tourism books we use, they mostly only describe tourism in other parts of the world like the US, Europe, and many other parts of the world. During this internship experience, not only did I spend time to get to know more about the communities around Kakum National Park, but I also acquired the ability and knowledge to be able to shape tourism and be a part of tourism that is community-driven and focused…" (Kwame Adjei, 2023).

This quote is powerful, in that it demonstrates how organic encounters with local and Indigenous communities give people different perspectives about the nature and meaning of tourism encounters. In the case of this student, the DHTM's internship experience helped him get to connect with the people in the Kakum area, learn their way of life, while at the same time unlearning narratives that frame Indigenous cultures as passive attractions and knowledge rather than active knowledge holders. When other students hear this, they will be encouraged to be advocates for more local and Indigenous forms of tourism knowledge and practice as it is relevant to the context they find themselves in.

5.6 How Indigenous knowledges are Shaping Tourism Education in the DHTM, UCC

The role of Indigenous and locally grounded knowledges in shaping tourism education within the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management (DHTM), UCC is complex and evolving. The fieldwork data has shown that while historically constrained by colonial epistemologies and Eurocentric curricular frameworks, emerging pedagogical practices within the department indicate a gradual but intentional shift towards the integration of knowledges that are contextually rooted in African, particularly Ghanaian realities. As evidenced in the discussions and observations from my field experience, the shift represents a form of epistemic reorientation that acknowledges Indigenous ways of knowing, local wisdom, and cultural histories as legitimate sources of knowledge in the education of future tourism professionals.

Two faculty participants, Dr. Yaw Ndebugre and Dr. Naana Oforiatta, as captured in the ethnographic data, are actively engaging in what can be described as "epistemological disobedience" (Mignolo, 2009), a concept coined to mean a deliberate moving away from inherited colonial models and reimagination of course content to reflect the socio-cultural and historical context of Ghana. For example, faculty participant, Dr. Yaw Ndebugre expressed how he is embracing epistemological disobedience. He said,

> "…I have been very intentional about what I teach... I am departing from the colonial ties... to reflect the situation at home…" (Dr. Yaw Ndebugre, 2023)

signaling a pedagogical commitment to Africanization. It also includes incorporating examples from local tourism sites, drawing on community-based practices, and prompting students to interrogate how tourism policies and practices affect their own communities. These actions promote what Hoppers (2001) refers to as "endogenous knowledge systems" - knowledge forms that emerge from within, rather than being imposed from outside.

Afrocentric frameworks, as articulated by scholars such as Sakala (2024) and Asante (1991) and reflected in the pedagogical orientations of some educators, also shape how tourism is taught and theorized. These frameworks represent a philosophical and methodological approach to knowledge production that centres African people, their cultures, and worldviews as agents and not objects of historical and intellectual inquiry (Musundwa, 2025; Sakala, 2024). This might take several forms, including, recognizing African agency in history and knowledge production, incorporating African

proverbs, oral traditions, communal values, rituals, and languages into academic discourse, and framing Africans as subjects, not just mere objects, in narratives about themselves.

By centering African values, identities, and worldviews in the way some faculty members organize their classes and encounters with students in the DHTM, we see the concept of Afrocentrism reconfiguring the lens through which tourism phenomena are analyzed and taught in the classrooms. In classroom discussions, students are encouraged to ask questions such as, "What does this theory mean for us as Ghanaians?" and "How does this apply to our local industry?" Such inquiries reposition students not as passive recipients of Western theories, but as active co-constructors of knowledge grounded in their lived realities. Again, these practices embody the "decolonization of the mind" (Wa Thiong'o (1986), challenging both educators and learners to interpret global phenomena through Indigenized, localized, and African frames.

A challenge facing all these initiatives is that these developments remain uneven and often hinge on the initiative of individual faculty members rather than institutional mandates. The integration of Indigenous knowledges and epistemologies is not yet a widespread or systematically embedded feature of the DHTM curriculum. This situation highlights a broader tension between personal conviction and systemic inertia, where progressive pedagogical practices emerge in pockets but are not structurally reinforced. Again, to refer to the argument of Cross and Ndofirepi (2017), decolonial education cannot be reduced to individual action; rather, it requires institutional change, policy alignment, and curriculum reform that explicitly validates and centers Indigenous epistemologies.

In addition to efforts by faculty members, student responses arising from my unstructured interviews revealed a growing awareness of the importance of contextual relevance in their education. Several students expressed appreciation for discussions that addressed local tourism challenges, cultural heritage, and Ghanaian economic contexts. This indicates a readiness among students to engage with knowledge that speaks to their environment and aspirations, and a desire for a curriculum that goes beyond theoretical abstraction to address practical, locally meaningful concerns. For instance, one student remarked,

> "…community elders are the people who have what it takes to guide us in understanding the significance of oral traditions, and even why we must be respectful towards the cultural heritage of our land. You see, when the department gets them involved, it will ensure that we honor them and also integrate Indigenous ways of knowing into our libraries, making them more inclusive and representative of the diverse communities we serve" (Nana Owusu, 2023).

This student participant demonstrates that involving elders not only affirms their value in knowledge production but also supports the inclusion of Indigenous knowledges in academic spaces such as libraries. Studies have long shown the importance of Indigenous and community elders as custodians of oral traditions, which are central to African epistemologies (Battiste, 2002; Dei, 2010). These oral forms such as proverbs, storytelling, songs, and rituals embody historical, ecological, and spiritual knowledge that cannot be fully captured through written texts. In his book, *Decolonizing the Mind*, wa Thiong'o (1986) argued that privileging written, Western knowledge over oral African traditions is a colonial inheritance that perpetuates epistemic injustice. However, recognizing elders as knowledge authorities challenges this imbalance and affirms Indigenous epistemologies as legitimate and authoritative (wa Thiong'o, 1986).

It is clear from the fieldwork that, knowledges Indigenous to place are beginning to shape tourism education in the DHTM, particularly through the Africanization of content, the adoption of Afrocentric pedagogies, and the growing critical consciousness among students. These shifts mark important steps toward decolonizing tourism education in Ghana. However, for these efforts to be transformative and sustainable, they must be supported by deliberate institutional reforms, resource investment, and a formal commitment to decoloniality at the policy and curricular levels. I believe that only then can Indigenous knowledges move from the periphery to the center of tourism education at the DHTM, UCC.

5.7 What Else Could Be Done? Advancing Decolonial Praxis in the DHTM

While my findings demonstrate that there may be some awareness of colonial legacies in tourism education in the DHTM and some actions by students and faculty to resist colonization, more concrete actions are needed to truly resist and dismantle these structures within the department. A growing movement has emerged in recent years to *decolonize* universities by identifying and dismantling all foundations that reinforce colonialism in any shape or form. Most common among

these advocacies has been the advancement of Africanization and Afrocentrism as institutionalized pedagogical commitment and the decolonization of academic libraries, particularly in the diversification of libraries' collections and their efforts at including more works by authors from historically marginalized communities (Cooke & Kitzie, 2021; Jaeger, Taylor & Gorham, 2015; Summers & Buchanan, 2018). This effort involves, but is not limited to acquiring new materials, as well as reassessing existing collections to identify and address gaps and biases. Decolonizing the library is an essential step in challenging the dominance of Western knowledge systems and promoting a more inclusive and equitable representation of global knowledge, a notion advocated by Chambers and Buzinde (2015) as epistemic decolonization.

A major approach to advancing decolonial praxis within the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management (DHTM) is the infusion of Africanization and Afrocentrism into the pedagogical choices made by individual faculty members and the department as a whole. These approaches offer critical tools for epistemological transformation, challenging the Eurocentric orientations that continue to dominate tourism education. By embedding African cultural, historical, and intellectual contexts at the center of teaching and learning, these frameworks contribute to epistemic justice and the reconstitution of tourism knowledge production (Mazama, 2003; Dei, 2010).

The faculty reflections revealed in the field data demonstrate promising strides toward this aim. One faculty participant, for instance, articulated an intentional departure from colonial legacies by embedding locally relevant content. He stated,

> "…In supervising my research students for their thesis and project works, we talk a lot about notions of Africanization, Afrocentrism, etc. in how we are conceptualizing issues. I think this is where the change must begin…I have been very intentional about what I teach... I am departing from the colonial ties... to reflect the situation at home" (Dr. Yaw Ndebugre, 2023).

Africanization is put into action when the department's curricula is reimagined to align with Ghanaian and African realities. Africanization as it relates to tourism education in the DHTM represents transforming course content, assignments, and discussions to elevate Indigenous knowledges systems and promote intellectual sovereignty (Hoppers, 2001; Higgs, 2012). Beyond content shifts, Afrocentrism, as both a worldview and method, guides a broader pedagogical

orientation that centers African agency and subjectivity in the interpretation of tourism phenomena (Asante, 1991). It is a good thing to see that already some faculty members actively invite students to engage global discourses - such as digital tourism trends, through locally anchored inquiries. Another faculty participant described what he has been doing in his class to be as Afrocentric as possible. He noted,

> "I do my best to make my content contextual as much as I am able…I bring that home by asking questions such as, 'what does tourism mean to us as Ghanaians, and as an industry...?" (Dr. Kofi Anta, 2023).

This practice mirrors what Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) describes as a "decolonization of the mind," cultivating students' ability to interrogate dominant narratives from grounded, African perspectives.

While the efforts of individual faculty members and students to decolonize tourism education within the DHTM are both commendable and impactful, it must be stated that real and sustainable epistemic decolonial transformation of tourism education in the DHTM cannot rest solely on personal conviction or isolated practices. Decolonization is not merely a matter of individual pedagogy or student engagement; rather, it requires systemic restructuring that challenges the very foundations of institutional power, policy, and curriculum design. I believe that when the responsibility for decolonial work is placed entirely on individuals, it risks becoming fragmented, inconsistent, and overly dependent on personal initiative. True decolonial praxis demands collective action, institutional commitment, and structural reforms that embed African epistemologies, pedagogies, and priorities into the core of the educational system. Without this broader support, no matter how sincere individual efforts are, they remain vulnerable to institutional inertia and risk being sidelined or reversed (Nyamnjoh, 2012). This call for institutional involvement aligns with Ndofirepi's (2014) position: that institutional decolonization requires structural reforms, that is, inclusive curriculum redesign, supportive policy frameworks, comprehensive faculty development, and the formal recognition of African epistemologies as central to academic inquiry.

In charting the future of decolonial tourism education at DHTM, there is the urgent need to move from isolated pedagogical initiatives to coordinated institutional strategies that sustain

Africanization and Afrocentrism. This shift not only challenges residual colonial knowledge hierarchies but also affirms Africa's rightful place as a producer of tourism thought and practice. In this way, DHTM can become a model of decolonial transformation within Ghanaian and global higher education landscapes.

Secondly, my examination of UCC's DHTM library revealed how the unit is implicated in the perpetuation of colonization. Also, there are no concrete steps, both at the university or departmental level, to address how the library reinforces colonization. Akena (2012, p.601) cautions against that, "…the dominance of Western ways of knowing in Western academies and global social relations should not undermine the value of Indigenous knowledges for continual community existence in a particular Indigenous context". Unfortunately, as revealed in my conversations and observations during fieldwork, the DHTM's library is stocked with literature, scientific works, and records that reflect and reinforce Western ideologies and worldviews, thereby disregarding, misrepresenting, and suppressing Indigenous knowledges systems. There is therefore the need for concrete actions to make room for 'other ways of knowing'. This agenda helps to "…keep Indigenous and other non-Western knowledges alive…" (Dei, 2008).

Like Carnicelli and Boluk (2020), I argue that tourism education must move beyond instrumentalist models focused narrowly on employability and industry needs, toward pedagogical practices that cultivate critical consciousness and empower learners to question power relations in tourism and beyond. Their emphasis on dialogical learning, the inclusion of marginalized knowledges, and the educator's role as a co-learner supports this study's call for more inclusive, contextually grounded, and politically aware forms of tourism pedagogy in Ghana.

In order to reimagine ways in which the DHTM library can foster decolonization in its operations, I asked participants to share their perspectives on strategies the department could adopt to foster a decolonized library. Fieldwork results show that a fundamental transformation is required. Participants emphasized the idea that this transformation should involve not only diversifying collections in the library but also critically reassessing and restructuring institutional practices, both at the university and departmental levels. A faculty member stressed the need for 'prioritizing

local knowledge' in the collection of materials in the library. She is of the view that this would be a good starting point as far as decolonizing the DHTM's library is concerned. She continued that,

> "…libraries in general must actively prioritize works by authors from marginalized communities and integrate these works into the core collection, rather than treating them as peripheral. For example, our university should start by purchasing the license for publications that we [the faculty of this university] contribute to in academia. It should be easy for my students to access their own professors' past, current and on-going academic publications without any hinderance. Unfortunately, this is not the case. We must do better…" (Dr. Naana Oforiatta, 2023).

This statement suggests several key takeaways. To begin, to say that "…faculty publications are not readily inaccessible to students…" suggests systemic barriers within university at large, possibly due to restrictive licensing agreements, paywalls, or budgetary constraints. From a broader colonial administrative point of view, this reveals academic gatekeeping and commercialization of knowledge concerns that many universities in the Global South have had to deal with. The resultant effect of this situation is that the absence of marginalized voices and even local faculty publications makes students to be socialized into Western-dominated academic frameworks, thereby perpetuating a colonial structure of knowledge that continues to recognize Eurocentric perspectives as superior to local or Indigenous ones (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015). Finally, the phrase "…we must do better…" suggests a direct call to action, emphasizing the moral and institutional responsibility of the DHTM, UCC, and universities in general to rectify these gaps by allocating resources toward ensuring equitable access to diverse academic materials, particularly those that challenge colonial epistemologies.

The faculty's position reiterates Brophy's (2007) argument that developing new systems of acquiring and classifying library collections that reflect a more inclusive and equitable representation of global knowledge is crucial to dismantling colonial legacies in academic libraries. For the DHTM, it means that new decolonial actions must go beyond just the acquisition of new materials but must also involve the reassessment of existing collections to identify and address gaps and biases that may have formed age-old colonial scripts of knowledge in the department.

Fieldwork results also point to the training and education of library staff. To dismantle colonization as it manifests in the DHTM library's operations, library staff should undergo periodic training and education that equips them to critically engage with and challenge colonial legacies within their area of work. Within the broader university context, Mbembe (2016) underscores the significance of understanding the historical context of universities as colonial tools and developing strategies to counteract these influences. This can be applied to academic departmental libraries that exist as little arms of universities' operations. The DHTM should examine its vision within the historical context of universities as colonial tools and commit to the training and education of its library staff to be aware of ways in which they could identify colonial relations and be equipped with the appropriate tools for dismantling them. Mhlongo (2018) argues that not only does training of staff encourage them to engage in self-reflection about their own positions and biases to foster a critical awareness of how colonial legacies may manifest in their work, but it also equips them on how to build and maintain partnerships with local and Indigenous communities to ensure that the library's work is informed by and benefits those communities. In agreement with Mhlongo's (2018) point, several student and faculty participants advocated for the need for local and Indigenous voices and knowledge to be represented in the operations of UCC's DHTM library.

I took the time to engage in a one-on-one interview with one of the library staff members, and it was revealed that the DHTM could benefit from the integration of local and Indigenous community and their knowledge in the operations of the library, as an effective tool in the decolonization process. He said,

> "…Indigenous elders have a deep depth of knowledge and wisdom which all of us here [in the library] must receive for training. When we include them in our educational programs it will go a long way to make our resources and even this library a great place to come to because these elders have authentic and powerful perspectives on history, culture, and knowledge systems that most people do not even know…a lot of the students who are Hospitality or Tourism students may not even know some of these things. Do you know why? These powerful histories and stories are not written in any books" (Mr. Nii Tackie, 2023).

A student participant who also emphasized the need for collaboration between the department's library and the local community had this to say,

> "…community elders are the people who have what it takes to guide us in understanding the significance of oral traditions, and even why we must be respectful towards the cultural heritage of our land. You see, when the department gets them involved, it will ensure that we honor them and

> also integrate Indigenous ways of knowing into our libraries, making them more inclusive and representative of the diverse communities we serve" (Nana Owusu, 2023).

The two statements above point to several key considerations that the DHTM should consider. First, they emphasize that Indigenous elders hold deep, authentic knowledge that mostly is not documented in traditional academic texts, hence the need to redefine the borders of knowledge beyond books. This however brings back the question, "should bodies [community elders, knowledge keepers, etc.] be considered part of the library? I argue, based on the results of the fieldwork that, the definition of the word, "library", should be re-imagined and re-thought to encompass "knowledges [mostly embodied, or held in beliefs and values]" that may not necessarily be captured in print, digital, or other formats, accessible in a physical building or room, or a virtual space, or both.

Also, from the statements above, we learn that the discussion of the DHTM library as a space that should include oral traditions and Indigenous knowledges, and perspectives critiques the colonial legacy of knowledge storage and dissemination we see in many academic libraries such as the DHTM's. Also, by advocating for community elders to be included in educational programs and recognized as guides in understanding cultural heritage is advocacy for the re-thinking of who "experts" in tourism studies really are. Obviously, the call for the reframing of community elders as knowledge experts in Tourism Studies unsettles the traditional notion of expertise. It challenges the dominance of Western-trained academics as the primary sources of knowledge in tourism studies and instead positions Indigenous elders as valuable educators who can equally offer firsthand insights into cultural heritage, sustainability, and ethical tourism practices.

Finally, the perspectives of the participants are 'a call to action'. The statements place an urgent demand on the DHTM to take active steps toward inclusion and epistemic decolonization by integrating Indigenous elders and knowledges into academic spaces. Actually, as Mbembe (2016) cautions, this is not just about increasing representation. Rather, the DHTM must reconsider and potentially change how knowledge is produced and shared. This ensures that any efforts at decolonization of tourism education in the DHTM go beyond theory and are actively reflected in

the vision and mission statements, relationships, curriculum development and pedagogical choices, and policy.

Participants also suggested the need for the DHTM to consider and implement *mentorship programs* for all members of the department, particularly library staff and students. Specifically, this recommendation involves practical programs that will enable more experienced library staff to guide and mentor newer staff and students to understand and apply decolonial practices to the use of the library and its resources. This mentorship initiative in the context of the library will create a conducive and supportive learning environment (Earl, 2024; Yomantas, 2023). The librarian of the DHTM suggested that mentorship programs, in order to achieve their goal of decolonization must take the form of events, lectures, and exhibits that show and amplify decolonial themes and also highlight the amazing work of scholars and artists primarily from the Ghanaian and African contexts, then to other backgrounds. The suggestions called for events, lectures and exhibitions that are designed to foster discussions on topics related to decolonization in the design and implementation of Tourism Education, not only in the DHTM but Ghana as a whole.

Participants also recommended that the department could invite Indigenous knowledges holders, Ghanaian tourism practitioners, and scholars from the Global South to serve as mentors in these programs. By these mentorship programs, the DHTM will foster critical thinking and dialogue among students, faculty, and the broader community within which the culture of tourism education in UCC is situated. The initiatives have the potential to equip members of the department with alternative epistemologies and practical strategies for resisting colonial knowledge structures embedded in the cultural context of the DHTM. One faculty member summed up the need for mentorship programs in the decolonization of the department's operations in this quote:

> "…the mentorship programs and activities will not only be a powerful statement for the need for change in policy, practice and operations in our department and the university, but also has the ability to raise awareness of colonial histories and their ongoing impacts, as well as to inspire action toward creating a Hospitality and Tourism Department that serves the needs of Ghanaians, first and foremost and then to other geographical contexts" (Dr. Kwesi Danquah, 2023).

My fieldwork results show a final suggestion that the DHTM could adopt as part of decolonizing tourism education. This suggestion is bilingual or multilingual research and pedagogical practices. One of the challenges facing DHTM's library, which I highlighted was the fact that the majority of academic materials and library resources found in the department's library are published in English. wa Thiong'o (1986) makes it clear that the dominance of English language materials in most Global South contexts, marginalizes Indigenous languages and limits epistemic diversity. Even though the native language of the people of Cape Coast, the city in which UCC's DHTM is located is Fante, there is no representation of Fante in any of the operations of the DHTM. Even for the University of Cape Coast itself, one would think that Fante, would be reflected in its operations. Rather, the motto of the university reads in Latin – *"Veritas Nobis Lumen"* which translates in English to mean: *"Truth, Our Guide"* (Coat of arms | University of Cape Coast).

As a form of resistance to the dominance of English language in the DHTM, faculty, staff, and students can promote bilingual or multilingual research practices by incorporating Fante, Twi, and other Ghanaian languages into the academic work of Tourism Education where possible.

Research participants recommended that true decolonization of language could start from the translation of abstracts of research papers into local languages. This action, they believe, would make for easy access of research being conducted by faculty and students of the DHTM, to diverse audience in and outside of Cape Coast. Field data also suggests that the DHTM should encourage oral presentations organized and led by the department to be conducted allowing for local Ghanaian languages to be used in addition to the dominant language, English. Finally, apart from actively acquiring library resources that are representative of both local authors and languages, participants suggested that the DHTM could also consider incorporating local knowledges, proverbs, and idioms into the educational academic discourse as it reflects in the classroom, assignments, meetings, and day-to-day operations of the department.

To actively turn both toward colonial knowledges (to critique them) and away from colonial knowledges to amplify other ways of knowing and being (Cameron, 2012), UCC's DHTM requires a huge fundamental shift in its operations, management, and policy directions. The decolonization

of academic institutions and specific departments is a critical and ongoing process that should be the priority of all universities in order to better position them to address and rectify the legacies of colonialism embedded within the overall educational cultural contexts. Decolonization in universities represents a resistance to colonial power and the resurgence of Indigenous culture (Strega & Brown, 2015).

5.7.1 Connecting My Findings to the TEFI Framework

Some portions of the fieldwork data has shown locally rooted decolonial practices that are taking place in the DHTM, and revisiting the Tourism Education Futures Initiative (TEFI) demonstrates how these decolonial actions map onto, and extend, TEFI's core values of stewardship, ethics, mutuality, knowledge and professionalism (Sheldon *et al.,* 2014).

In Chapter two of this dissertation, I discussed each of the core values of TEFI and how relevant they are to tourism education, particularly within the educational context of the DHTM, UCC. TEFI frames all five core values, demonstrating how each of them can be incorporated into the tourism student learning process. For each of the core values, TEFI identified the content that should be included in the learning experience of tourism students, along with specific learning objectives. For example, TEFI defines *stewardship* as caring for people and place in tourism curricula. In other words, it represents the responsibility to nurture and care for something or someone, coupled with the obligation to act accountably (Sheldon *et al.,* 2013). According to TEFI, the value of stewardship is deeply rooted in the notion that the Earth is a divine gift, which we are permitted to use and take care of for the benefit of future generations. This understanding is deeply rooted in Indigenous Ghanaian knowledge that "the Earth is a gift and must be taken care of". Participant responses regarding participatory curriculum development resonates directly with stewardship. As shown in the responses, co-designing syllabi with community elders and local practitioners will position the DHTM to move from "tokenism" (Mbembe, 2016), toward genuine stewardship of Ghanaian heritage, resources, and worldviews.

Apart from stewardship, TEFI identified another core value of tourism education as *ethics*. Ethics serve as the foundation for moral conduct and offers a structure for evaluating behaviors (Jamal &

Menzel, 2008; Sheldon *et al.*, 2013). In other words, it is the basis for good action and provides a framework for judging actions that are questionable. The emphasis TEFI places on ethical responsibility challenges us to reflect on the power relations embedded in course materials, library collections, and others ways that knowledge is disseminated in the DHTM. As shown in section 5.2.1, recommended reading lists remain overwhelmingly dominated by scholars outside of Ghana and the African region making it lacking in local and Indigenous representation. Using TEFI's core values' model means that an ethical TEFI-informed strategy would be to rebalance these lists so that core texts used by the DHTM are balanced and representative of the context within which they are used.

Another core value identified by TEFI is *mutual respect.* By mutual respect, TEFI refers to a value grounded in human relationships that requires attitudinal developments that are evolving, dynamic and involve acceptance, self-awareness of structural inequalities, open-mindedness, empowerment, and ability to revisit one's cultural understanding of the world (Sheldon *et al.*, 2013). Dredge *et al.* (2015, p. 42) describe 'mutual respect' as "a process that is evolving and dynamic, emphasizing that achieving mutual respect is a long-term and even lifelong learning process that can be developed at different levels, starting from the individual to the society and global levels". This is why TEFI calls for fair access and outcome in all tourism educational efforts. Apart from gaps that I identified from discussions with participants of the study, my own observation about the Anglophonic barriers such as the imported textbooks, and even the use of only English language as the medium of communication in the DHTM highlight a concrete equity gap. This value of mutual respect and the aims of tourism's epistemic decolonization (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015) both seek to dismantle hierarchical knowledge orders by centering marginalized voices. In the DHTM context, mutual respect translates into curriculum and pedagogical practices that value diverse epistemologies, foster collaborative knowledge production, ensuring equity and inclusion.

Additionally, field data has revealed the DHTM's efforts at striving to be a leading example in the African sub-region, if not one of the best on a global scale. This is one of the aspects of TEFI's core value – professionalism. Dredge *et al.* (2015) characterize professionalism as aspiring to

uphold the highest professional standards, supported by elements such as relevance, leadership, practicality, timeliness, partnerships, teamwork, service, and reflexivity. It is clear that professionalism mandates ongoing questioning of assumptions. This is exactly what the results of the fieldwork are showing. Faculty, students and staff of the DHTM continue to ask relevant questions that interrogate tourism education and its relationship with colonial power within the department. Some faculty have deconstructed reading lists to question why Western-authored textbooks dominate courses and have proposed the inclusion of case studies and materials that are authored by Ghanaian and other African scholars. Students and staff are also questioning departmental library collections, thereby exposing gaps in local-language materials and advocating for acquisition strategies that rebalance what knowledge is assessable. These actions show how the DHTM is enacting professionalism not as a passive endeavor, but as active engagement in epistemic decolonization.

In practice, this also means that courses are designed to require learners to lead real-life projects, for example, community-based tourism audits. Furthermore, students are enabled to collaborate in interdisciplinary teams and engage with industry and Indigenous community partners on time-sensitive deliverables, all while reflecting critically on their roles and impact. Faculty and staff of the DHTM can also model this value – professionalism - by continuously undergoing decolonial training programs, professional development programs, and mentorship programs in order to keep forging partnerships that keep curricula relevant and responsive to the local Ghanaian context.

These explicit links, not only demonstrate how DHTM's emergent decolonial practices embody TEFI's core agenda, but also offer a clear, actionable roadmap for aligning Indigenous and local transformation with a globally recognized framework such as TEFI's. The DHTM, in its attempt at decolonizing tourism education should consider the integration of TEFI's core values in its operations. By embedding the TEFI's core values - stewardship, ethics, mutual respect, knowledge and professionalism - into its curriculum, pedagogy, and overall operations, the DHTM stands a great chance at actively dismantling colonial legacies and fostering a truly decolonized tourism education. This is the mandate of tourism's epistemic de-linking. Overall, it is obvious that TEFI's core values mirror epistemic decolonization's core agenda, that is to interrogate and redress the ways in which colonial power privileged Eurocentric and Western epistemologies, and to

reconstruct educational sites where diverse and marginalized knowledges are held in mutual respect.

It is imperative to mention that the effectiveness of the numerous strategies and decolonial attempts being undertaken in the DHTM depends, to a large extent, on the active engagement of educators who serve as key agents of transformation. As discussed earlier, a crucial step in advancing the decolonization of tourism education within the DHTM, UCC, is to examine not only departmental and individual level social practices that have been undertaken so far but also what more can be achieved. As facilitators of knowledge production and dissemination, educators play a pivotal role in shaping curricula, pedagogical approaches, and institutional cultures in ways that either reinforce or challenge colonial legacies. For this reason, understanding their contributions, perspectives, and challenges is essential in assessing the feasibility and sustainability of decolonization efforts. The following section delves into the role of educators in this decolonization process - the ongoing reimagination of tourism education in the DHTM, UCC.

5.8 The Role of DHTM Educators in Decolonizing Tourism Education

As already established in this chapter, it is clear that like in many postcolonial contexts, tourism education in Ghana, particularly in the DHTM, UCC has complex relationships with legacies of colonialism that have shaped both the content and the structure of educational programs. My field data has shown that these colonial legacies have often resulted in curricula that prioritize Western perspectives, disproportionate percentage of local and Western collections in the library, marginalization of Indigenous knowledges systems, and a perpetuation of narratives that position the Global North as the primary source of tourism expertise (Akyeampong, 2011; Amoah & Baum, 1997; Chambers & Buzinde, 2015). As Ghana continues to develop its tourism and hospitality industry as a key driver of economic growth, there is a growing recognition of the need to decolonize tourism education to ensure that it aligns with the country's cultural values, local knowledge, and developmental goals.

Within the boundaries of the DHTM, UCC, several educators are committed to programs and initiatives that actively adopt Cameron's (2012) approach to decolonization as turning both toward

colonial knowledges to critique them, and away from colonial knowledges in order to amplify other ways of knowing and being. It sets the tone for how the future of tourism education in the DHTM should look like. It becomes the responsibilities of all, particularly educators, to champion the agenda of decolonization. In academic institutional contexts, "educators" are individuals involved in teaching, guiding, mentoring, and supporting the learning process of students. The term "educators" encompasses a broad range of roles and titles, each with distinct responsibilities and areas of focus. When participants were asked which group of people could be considered "educators" in the department, a number of people in several capacities were identified. These include professors (assistant, associate, and full), lecturers and instructors, teaching and research assistants, student support staff such as academic advisors and librarians, counselors and mentors, and other senior students.

A faculty participant noted that the current state of approaches to tourism education in the DHTM requires holistic re-imagining. To put this into perspective, he said,

> "…when you look at our curricula, we are always talking about what they [Europe, the Americas, and Canada] consider as tourism, or leisure and that has become our standard for defining what our leisure and tourism is today…so this actually has huge implications for what we have been measuring as tourism, you know, from a research point of view, or as an academic discipline, and even from the research side of things, for me, that whole operationalization of 'tourism' and 'leisure' is colonial. When the foundations are colonial, everything else will be colonial" (Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, 2023).

When asked what roles educators have to play in the decolonization process, he said,

> "…as educators, our roles involve, but not limited to redefining traditional paradigms, addressing historical injustices, promoting cultural sensitivity, and preparing our dear students, who are future professionals to navigate an evolving global landscape" (Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, 2023).

As an active project, decolonization in this context encompasses all the processes of critically engaging with and dismantling colonial structures and ideologies that continue to influence the educational culture, structure, and system within the DHTM. For tourism and hospitality education in the DHTM, Cape Coast, Ghana, this means reimagining the department's curricula to reflect Indigenous knowledges systems, promoting local cultural heritage, and empowering educators to challenge colonial narratives (Mbembe, 2016; Smith, 2012). These ideas support several of the perspectives of participants who shared their views. It is very clear that educators play a crucial

role in this process of decolonizing tourism education, as they are the primary agents through whom knowledge is transmitted and cultural values are upheld.

According to a faculty participant, "…re-imagining the future through the decolonization of tourism education involves rethinking the content, pedagogy, and the general approach to our educational programs to ensure they empower local communities, recognize Indigenous knowledges, and promote sustainable development" (Fieldwork, 2023). Here also, educators have a critical role to play in this process, as they are the agents through whom transformative changes in curriculum and pedagogy can be implemented.

> "…Here at the DHTM at the University of Cape Coast, I would say that the movement towards decolonizing our [hospitality and tourism] education is gaining momentum and this is being driven by a recognition of the need to create a more inclusive and culturally relevant educational experience for students. I know individual lecturers who are asking all these critical questions…", said a faculty participant (Dr. Yaw Ndebugre, 2023).

The following section discusses the role of educators in the decolonization process of tourism education, drawing on the ethnographic field data to explain how they can challenge existing paradigms, integrate Indigenous perspectives, and foster a tourism education system that is both reflective of the Ghanaian cultural knowledge systems and responsive to the needs of Ghanaian students and local communities.

5.8.1 Student Empowerment as a tool for decolonizing Tourism Education

Educators within tourism educational contexts have the role of empowering students for the decolonization process. The concept of empowerment emerged as a crucial element in various political and educational agendas of oppressed and colonized groups, aimed at creating alternative paths for building democratic and citizenship-based projects (Amariles-González *et al.*, 2021). This suggests that the discussion of empowerment cannot be well understood when it is done without first understanding power. Conceptualizing power, however, presents many difficulties, hence the idea that it is a contested concept. Reed (1997, p. 567) defined power as an "ability to impose one's will or advance one's own interest". Power relations have profoundly influenced colonized education in Ghana, shaping the educational system in ways that reflect and reinforce colonial hierarchies and ideologies.

In the DHTM, several educators, in their own ways, have engaged in several student empowerment initiatives. When asked what "student empowerment for decolonial action" looks like within the cultural contexts of the DHTM, a faculty participant described it as

> "…giving students the tools, agency, and amplifying their voices to challenge and transform existing educational structures, content, and practices that have colonial roots and still perpetuate colonial legacies" (Dr. Kofi Anta, 2023).

The process of empowerment can happen both actively, passively, and relationally. This is similar to Foucauldian notion of power as "a relationship rather than an entity, and flowing in multiple directions" (Foucault, 1978, p. 93). The field data revealed that empowerment of students happens both in and out of the classroom. It goes beyond the instructions received by students in class from their teachers to engagements with student support staff, counsellors and mentors, and even senior students. Specifically, some faculty members have empowered students through student-led research practices. Students are constantly being encouraged to choose their own research topics, enabling them to challenge dominant tourism narratives. In addition, there is support for some students by their respective supervisors for collaborations for publications, and conference participations, making it possible for students to critique and reimagine tourism to reflect Ghanaian realities. There is also the Hospitality and Tourism Students' Association (HOTSA), the student club of the department, that has the agency and platform to organize and implement several activities and events for students to engage in, giving students the platform to demonstrate their abilities and expertise in many respects. Some of the events include seminars, debates, field trips, mentorship and guidance programs, and many more. This gives students the opportunity to contest for leadership roles for service in the department and representation on university-wide groups. In one of the classrooms where I conducted my participant observation, the faculty member designed his lesson in a manner that encouraged students to advocate for policy changes at institutional and governmental levels to support more Afrocentric and decolonial tourism frameworks. This he did by allowing students to lead discussions in the class, suggest reforms, and brainstorm ideas together as a group for the improvement of the course for subsequent semesters.

The empowerment of students as an approach to decolonizing tourism education in the DHTM is a conscious process that encourages all students to actively participate in reshaping their educational experiences to be more equitable, inclusive, and representative of diverse cultures, knowledge systems and histories.

The data also revealed that specifically, student empowerment could take the form of developing inclusive curricula, a situation in which students are given the necessary tools not only to critique and challenge curricula that prioritize Western or Eurocentric perspectives, but also to help in the advocacy for the inclusion of diverse voices, Indigenous knowledges systems that pertain to tourism in Cape Coast and Ghana, and non-Western or non-Eurocentric philosophies that have been marginalized in history. When asked how student empowerment helps in the decolonization process, a student participant who took part in my one-on-one interview stated:

> "…an empowered student is the one who is equipped to engage in critical thinking about the content and structure of their education. To me, to be empowered means the ability to question what we I am being taught, and to analyze how colonial legacies continue to shape knowledge production in our department and even the entire university. This means that every student, no matter the department they are in are able to ask very critical questions…!" (Afia Bempong, 2023).

As a former tourism student of the DHTM, my own academic journey was shaped by both the rich Ghanaian cultural heritage and the presence of colonial legacies in tourism education. I remember sitting in classrooms where Western theories and epistemologies dominated lectures and discussions. As a matter of fact, I did not necessarily see anything wrong at the time. But now, having started this journey of unravelling "epistemic decolonization" (Chambers & Buzinde (2015; Grosfoguel, 2007) I now feel a disconnect between the general curriculum and the realities of Ghana's tourism landscape. Actually, it was this discomfort that propelled me to question, challenge, and ultimately conduct this doctoral study, advocating for a decolonial approach to tourism education. One of my main motivations is to provide current students the awareness and tools to reimagine the industry from a perspective rooted in local knowledge, African epistemologies, and critical consciousness.

One of my experiences was in a course on tourism management, where we extensively studied Western tourism models, Eurocentric customer service expectations, and global tourism trends

that largely positioned African destinations as sites of consumption rather than cultural agency. Like I highlighted in earlier sections, most course materials rarely referenced African tourism scholars or locally driven tourism initiatives. At the same time, a few faculty members, during my time as a student would encourage many of my peers and me to constantly challenge dominant narratives in tourism. I remember I would always ask some of my peers this question: Where do we, as Ghanaian students and future tourism professionals, fit into all these narratives?

Looking back now, I understand that the exclusion of Ghanaian and African epistemologies was the outcome of the deeply entrenched colonial legacies that continue to shape education in Ghana overall, and tourism education in the DHTM and across most parts of Africa. A lot of the training we received emphasized and prioritized many Western standards set by Western hospitality institutions, often neglecting many powerful local and Indigenous knowledges systems and the historical and cultural complexities of Ghana.

Today, I examine my socialization into the Canadian system of education and my past experiences as a former student of the DHTM. This examination has led me to see the value in why student empowerment is central to the decolonization of tourism education in my beloved DHTM.

As I went to the field, I noticed how things seem to be changing gradually. I observed how some students are seeking ways to engage beyond the formal classroom setting. Alongside a few like-minded peers, students are initiating conversations with faculty members about incorporating African tourism perspectives into coursework. When I talked with one faculty member particularly, he underscored how these discussions have led to small but significant changes. In his class for instance, he has had guest lectures from local tourism practitioners, assignments that encouraged students to analyze Ghanaian tourism policies critically, and the inclusion of literature from African scholars. My own experience was when he gave me the opportunity to lead a guest lecture of his class while I was in the field. My guest lecture was to engage with students to brainstorm decolonial practices that could be integrated into the syllabus, pedagogy and the cultural context of the department in general.

One of my own most transformative moments in my student journey was when I, together with some student leaders of HOTSA planned and executed a field trip to selected local community-based tourism initiatives in three regions of Ghana for the tourism students of the DHTM. A total of 28 students participated in the 5-day tour of three regions in Ghana. When we visited the selected community-based tourism locations, it enabled us to engage with local tourism stakeholders and offered us the opportunity to see firsthand how Indigenous tourism knowledge and practices happen. We found that most of these communities had their own sustainable tourism models, deeply rooted in local governance and traditional practices, which taught us those alternative narratives existed, but were mostly being ignored in the classroom. When we engaged in this student-led field trips and research, while pushing for the inclusion of local knowledge, I personally came to see how student empowerment is an active and intentional decolonial tool. While the critique of the curriculum is a good step in the decolonization process, I understood from my past student experience that we also had to actively seek out and amplify Ghanaian perspectives within tourism studies.

Another way by which student empowerment for decolonizing tourism education takes place in the DHTM is through skills and capacity building. Some faculty members, while preparing their lessons for students, prioritize equipping students with critical skills such as ethical leadership, sustainable management, and community engagement through fieldtrips, internships and departmental seminars. According to one faculty participant,

> "Sometimes, some of us try to build into our courses activities that develop certain critical skills in students. Personally, I stress the need for ethical leadership, and I do that when I break my students into groups for projects. When this happens, you begin to see students taking many great initiatives on their own…these capacity building programs and initiatives empower the students to be well-equipped and grounded to shape the tourism industry in socially responsible ways" (Dr. Yaw Ndebugre, 2023).

Skills and capacity building play vital roles in decolonizing tourism education in institutions of higher learning. In the DHTM, several initiatives have been put in place to develop vital skills in students in areas such as community-based management approaches to tourism development, cultural heritage preservation, and sustainable tourism. These efforts align with Tribe's (2002) advocacy for tourism curriculum to balance vocational competence with critical and ethical reflection. Tribe's (2002) framework points to the fact that students should not just be trained for

employment but should equally be equipped with the intellectual and ethical tools to challenge and reshape tourism's impact on society. The goal of these programs is to position students as ethical stewards of tourism, ensuring that local communities can assert greater control over their own cultural and natural resources - a shift that helps counteract the dominance of external Western or Eurocentric perspectives that typically characterize tourism education and the tourism industry.

Tribe (2002) also critiques the narrow focus of tourism education, which is solely on economic efficiency. He argues that this leads to broader ethical and socio-political dimensions of tourism to be ignored. What we see in the case of the DHTM, that is, the emphasis on community-driven approaches demonstrates an attempt to move beyond Eurocentric, market-driven tourism models to more inclusive, locally rooted frameworks.

"To empower students is to encourage critical thinking skills…," said another faculty participant (Fieldwork, 2023). This statement underscores the importance of 'liberal action' - the application of critical reflection to transform tourism for the betterment of society (Tribe, 2002). The field data shows that these skills enable students to question and deconstruct colonial narratives that have shaped tourism education in the department, as seen in recommended textbooks, library collections, course outlines, and several other departmental practices. It also empowers them to engage in critical reflection about the tourism industry's broader impacts on society and the environment.

When asked about how critical thinking skills are helpful in identifying areas where colonialism manifests in the department's educational culture, several students alluded to critical thinking as a means of questioning the status quo and moving beyond surface-level understandings. A student participant, in describing the power of critical thinking as a tool for decolonizing knowledge, said:

> "…by fostering critical thinking skills, I have been able to now think more critically about things, going beyond just face value of things. For example, one of my favorite professors always encourages me to think more critically about everything because this skill can help me and other students recognize the biases and power imbalances that are mostly inherent in traditional tourism models, most of which are foreign to us, you know… they are mostly Western models. Critical thinking will help us to dig deeper into different and equally powerful and more inclusive local and Indigenous approaches to tourism education" (Fiifi Aikins, 2023).

Tribe (2002) provides a useful framework for advancing such decolonial efforts, as it calls for tourism educators and students to not just strive to be efficient professionals, but also active agents in reshaping the tourism industry to be more just, ethical, and inclusive.

Overall, to empower students is to provide the enabling factors needed to resist power. As a strong tool for decolonizing tourism education in the DHTM, student empowerment, as it manifests in the development of critical thinking skills and consciousness, promotion of inclusive and locally driven curricula, and developing the skills necessary for advocacy and leadership, will help students to dismantle the colonial legacies that have long shaped tourism education in the DHTM.

I believe that true student empowerment extends beyond individual action. Institutions such as universities must be willing to support to create space that allows for students to be able to freely challenge dominant narratives without fear, the incorporation of more African-centered tourism studies into the curriculum, and the support of student-led initiatives that seek to decolonize tourism education from within. Reflecting on my own journey as a former student, I see student empowerment as a powerful tool in dismantling colonial structures within tourism education. By questioning, engaging, and actively participating in reshaping the narratives that are taught, the DHTM students hold the potential to transform how tourism is studied and practiced in Ghana. In addition to the institutional support, all this call for decolonization will only be more than a theoretical discussion when institutions recognize students as co-creators of knowledge rather than passive recipients. Only through this type of student empowerment can tourism education at the DHTM, UCC and beyond truly reflect the diverse histories, cultures, and aspirations of the local and Indigenous communities it seeks to serve.

5.8.2 Restitution as a tool for decolonizing Tourism Education

The second role of educators in the DHTM, UCC in decolonizing tourism education is *restitution*. "To *restitute*", simply means the restoration of something lost or stolen to its proper owner. Within the (de)colonization discourse, restitution is much broader than simply restoring a lost or stolen item to its original owner. It encompasses the process of "the return of cultural material to an

individual, group or nation with the overall aim of doing justice for a past or ongoing wrong" (Herman, 2021, p. 65).

In the context of this study, restitution is not used, strictly speaking, as a legal term, though it does evoke notions of justice, equity and fairness. Rather, I use it to refer to the process adopted by educators in the DHTM, UCC in addressing and rectifying historical and ongoing injustices, biases, and power imbalances within the field of tourism education at UCC. As a consequence, the act of restitution attempts to put things back in order, into proper harmony. During my fieldwork, I engaged with faculty, students and staff to discuss how 'restitution' can be used as a tool for decolonizing tourism education. In the interactions, many perspectives were brought forth. A faculty participant believes that restitution as a decolonizing tool involves dismantling colonial narratives, practices, and structures that have shaped how tourism and hospitality have been taught, researched, and practiced at the DHTM over the years. She continued to establish, this process is not a one-sided project, rather, there is a productive part to it. She said,

> "…it also involves creating a more just, inclusive, and equitable framework that acknowledges and actively addresses past injustices and ongoing imbalances in power and representation that have for far too long influenced tourism and hospitality education in our department" (Dr. Naana Oforiatta, 2023).

Specifically, restitution as a tool for decolonizing tourism education at the DHTM, UCC will involve two initiatives: first, the collaboration of the department with local and Indigenous communities and second, centering marginalized narratives and knowledges in course outlines and syllabi. Cape Coast is the administrative capital of the Central Region of Ghana, and the natives of Cape Coast Metropolis are of the *Fante* tribe, but due to its unique geopolitical relevance to Ghana, the city is now a diverse and multicultural community with several suburbs, where other settlers from different parts of the country have come to reside and work (Yafetto & Osei-Bonsu, 2017). Even though the city is multicultural to a large extent, it is also home to Indigenous knowledges keepers who have been custodians of the history and culture of Cape Coast. A collaboration between the DHTM and these Indigenous communities will help in the integration of Indigenous and local knowledge systems, philosophies, and practices into the curriculum. A faculty member believes that when these collaborations are fostered,

> "…it will allow for a more authentic understanding of how tourism affects different communities and environments" (Dr. Kwesi Danquah, 2023)

As a tool for decolonizing tourism education, restitution also means amplifying the voices and displaying images of marginalized authors and / or groups in tourism education materials, such as course readings, lectures, and guest speakers. This action will help reclaim their narratives and lived experiences that may have for far too long been overlooked. This includes the promotion of the research and academic work by scholars from diverse backgrounds, particularly from marginalized and Indigenous communities, as a way of helping to balance the knowledge production within tourism studies.

5.8.3 Industry Engagement as a tool for decolonizing Tourism Education

Field results also show that in addition to the above roles educators play in decolonizing tourism education, educators have also utilized industry engagement as a decolonizing tool. Just by examining this approach on face value, one can argue that industry engagement can help in fostering partnerships between academia and local tourism practitioners, ensuring that the knowledge imparted in classrooms is relevant, context-specific, and reflective of Ghanaian realities. In the DHTM, several faculty members have partnerships with locally owned tourism businesses, community-based tourism (CBT) initiatives, and Indigenous hospitality operators to develop case studies and internship programs that prioritize Ghanaian and African tourism models over Eurocentric frameworks. Mbaiwa (2016) underscored the importance of partnerships in local tourism development and education, describing it as essential for reducing dependency on foreign influence in investments and ensuring that tourism education and development benefits local communities.

Throughout my fieldwork, I spent time with faculty, staff, and upper-level students, investigating the current practices that show that the department is actively engaging with local and Indigenous community members. The field results demonstrate that there are several initiatives that engage the services of industry experts and community leaders as co-educators. One student noted that, over the course of his study, several local tourism practitioners and community leaders have been invited to engage with students in guest lectures, seminars, and workshops. My own past

experience as a former student of the DHTM brings back memories of times when local tourism practitioners, heritage site managers, and community leaders were invited as guest lecturers and speakers on departmental workshops and seminars that addressed many key subjects. In my opinion, I believe that educators in the DHTM are doing their best in bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and lived experiences. As Scheyvens and Russell (2012) argue, community involvement in tourism education fosters a deeper understanding of local realities, empowering students to critically assess dominant tourism paradigms.

I believe that by integrating industry engagement into DHTM's pedagogy, tourism educators at the DHTM, UCC can challenge Western-centric knowledge systems and develop a tourism curriculum that is rooted in Ghana's socio-cultural and economic contexts. Industry engagement in the operations of the DHTM enables educators to instill decolonial ethics in students by exposing them to sustainable, responsible and context-specific tourism knowledge and epistemologies. This is vital in challenging neoliberal and neocolonial tourism practices that marginalize local communities (Jamal & Camargo, 2014).

5.8.4 Advocacy and Policy Influence as tools for decolonizing Tourism Education

Another tool for decolonizing tourism education in the DHTM by educators is advocacy and policy influence. It is important for the educational frameworks that shape the understanding and practices of tourism and hospitality education in the DHTM to prioritize Indigenous perspectives and promote a more inclusive and culturally responsive approach to tourism and hospitality education in Ghana. My field data shows that educators in the DHTM have played the role of advocating for Indigenous perspectives and participation in the formulation and implementation of tourism and hospitality educational policies. In some instances, students, faculty and staff of the DHTM have made efforts in recommending Indigenous knowledges keepers for consideration for roles involving policy making and implementation at departmental and university-wide levels.

Advocacy work for policy influence is an essential tool in the transformative process of decolonizing in educational context (Darkwa, 2024; Shahjahan, 2011), offering pathways to reframe the curriculum, prioritize Indigenous perspectives, and promote a more inclusive and

culturally responsive approaches to tourism and hospitality education in the DHTM and Ghana as a whole. When asked what advocacy looks like, several responses pointed to the idea of awareness creation about best practices. A faculty member outlined what advocacy work in his role aims to achieve. He said:

> "…in my role as a faculty member, advocating for decolonizing tourism and hospitality education involves raising awareness among my colleagues, university-wide decision makers, and scholars over the world [and that includes what I write for publications] about the colonial underpinnings of current educational practices and advocating for the deliberate integration of Indigenous knowledges systems and perspectives. We must begin to question the educational policies and ask questions like 'where is indigeneity in this? How much of this knowledge is local knowledge? And many other questions. … and I think we can achieve through various means, including public campaigns, publications, international and domestic conferences, community engagement programs, and our individual engagements with the general public, … and that includes our friends, children, basically, anyone that we have tourism and hospitality conversations with" (Dr. Yaw Ndebugre).

To be effective in advocacy work, stakeholder engagement is key. He continued by saying:

> "…stakeholders at all levels, including educators, students, policymakers, and community leaders must be equally and fairly represented in the discussions surrounding what it means to 'decolonize' tourism and hospitality education. I believe that for any real change to happen, all these stakeholders must be willing to have a dialogue and collaboration about the need for change. This way, we can be sure that the voices of marginalized communities will be heard and that their perspectives will be treated with importance and urgency and incorporated into educational reforms that need to happen" (Dr. Yaw Ndebugre, 2023).

Additionally, advocacy efforts should highlight the importance of culturally responsive pedagogy in tourism and hospitality education. It involves envisaging and developing curricula that reflect the diverse cultural heritage of Ghanaian societies, while promoting a more holistic understanding of tourism in Ghana. This will enable educators the opportunity to provide students the tools they need to critically engage with tourism practices and policies, fostering a generation of professionals who are capable of advancing decolonization discourse and what it represents in tourism and hospitality education in Ghana.

Educators, particularly faculty, have a duty to advocate for and influence the revision of the department's curricula to incorporate Indigenous knowledges systems and perspectives. Influence on policy influence should also call for the development of training programs for tourism educators

that equip them with the skills and knowledge needed to deliver a decolonized curriculum. The training programs should include activities designed to utilize culturally responsive teaching methods, as well as expose educators to Indigenous knowledges and practices. By empowering educators in this way, policy reforms can ensure that decolonization is not just a theoretical goal, but a practical reality in the DHTM, UCC.

It is intriguing to see that DHTM's educational culture enables decolonial cation in some instances. Based on faculty participants' quotes, we see a culture of critical inquiry and reflexivity. For example, the faculty member's call to question educational policies and frameworks suggests that the educational culture allows for and encourages critical questioning. The field data shows that while it may not be a department-wide occurrence, some faculty, in their approach to teaching and learning, make it possible for students to feel empowered to interrogate the colonial legacies embedded in curricula, pedagogies, and research methodologies. The fact that some faculty are also actively engaging in self-reflection about their teaching practices and knowledge production processes speaks to the culture of the department enabling that reflexivity.

Again, one faculty member emphasized the fact that dialogue and collaboration occurs between educators, students, policymakers, and community leaders, suggesting that the DHTM's educational culture is flexible and collaborative. The culture encourages all voices to be recognized and heard. Though the field data shows that there is no real structural support from the university leadership, or through policy reforms that recognize and promote decolonial work, there is a rising shift in academic norms and practices in the DHTM to value and legitimize decolonial perspectives. The culture in the department has allowed for partnerships between faculty and industry professionals, policymakers, and grassroots organizations as seen in the field report.

While this section emphasizes the role of educators in decolonizing tourism education in the DHTM, UCC, it also acknowledges that the road to decolonization in educational contexts is not an easy one. In fact, the fieldwork data reveals several challenges that educators might face in committing to the process of decolonization. In examining the challenges educators might face in the decolonization process, a faculty participant wrote:

> "…One of the major challenges we [teachers] face and might continue to face for a long time is resistance to change. You know, once people are used to a particular way of doing things, be ready for pushbacks when you call for change. This is because of two things: change is just hard to make, and people always would have entrenched interests. You see, this is why I suspect that we will have resistance" (Dr. Kofi Anta, 2023).

He continued to point out that decolonization of tourism and hospitality education is also an expensive process and requires lots of resources. He laments the status of the department's financial standing and its ability to fund decolonial campaigns. He continued:

> "…even though these are amazingly great initiatives and reforms, a lack of resources makes it rather difficult for these ideas to materialize. Unfortunately, money is a big challenge for most of these things. For example, it is a great idea to engage with the local community in collaborations to rethink tourism and hospitality education. These are great men and women with so much knowledge that needs to be passed on to students. The problem however is that it is not free to engage with these communities. We need to pay for their time, their wisdom, and that is just the right thing to do…but let me ask you, where is the money for all that?" (Dr. Kofi Anta, 2023).

While other faculty members supported the fact that a lack of resources could be a major obstacle to decolonial efforts, one member suggested that the challenges also present opportunities for innovation and collaboration. She noted that by leveraging the tools of advocacy and policy influence, all tourism and hospitality education stakeholders in the DHTM and the university at large can address the challenges that may hinder decolonization and drive the agenda forward.

She noted that the growing calls for decolonizing education in general, of which tourism and hospitality education are a part of, holds the opportunity for addressing the problems. Specifically, coming up with decolonial initiatives will bring about the already increasing support from international organizations, NGOs, and other academic institutions that are already championing decolonial actions in education.

5.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented the results and discussion of my fieldwork, which a critical ethnographic study of the relationships between tourism education and colonization within the cultural context of the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management (DHTM) at the University of Cape Coast (UCC). After a careful analysis of faculty, staff, and student perspectives

alongside relevant literature, several key revelations have stood out. Overall, the results and discussion have shown that embedded in the department's educational culture, curriculum, pedagogy, and institutional structures are colonial legacies that have existed for long. The chapter also identified existing practices, reforms, and actions that have championed decolonial transformation in the DHTM. Additionally, the chapter shows potential avenues for further decolonial transformation. The chapter also revealed that ethical considerations in tourism education in the DHTM are often shaped by global industry norms rather than local values, raising concerns about whether current training adequately prepares students to navigate and challenge the ethical dilemmas inherent in Ghana's tourism landscape.

We must recognize that the role of educators ultimately remains key in driving decolonial changes within the operations of the department. Departmental stakeholders, including faculty members, staff, and students must move beyond passive recognition of colonial legacies in the department to actively engage in curriculum reform, pedagogical innovation, and public advocacy that centers Indigenous and African ways of knowing and collaborations on all fronts. By championing contextually relevant, ethically grounded, and community-centered tourism education, the DHTM's stakeholders can contribute to dismantling colonial epistemic dominance and fostering a more inclusive and decolonized approach to tourism education in the DHTM, UCC.

I believe that through this chapter, I have shed some light on foundations for rethinking tourism education through a decolonial lens. Moving forward, the challenge lies not only in identifying colonial residues but in taking concrete, actionable steps toward a transformative educational framework that truly tries to dismantle colonial and Western dominance in educational contexts and reflecting Ghanaian and African tourism realities.

Chapter 6

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

6.0 Summary

In the beginning of this doctoral work, I stated the purpose of my critical ethnographic study as: *to describe and interrogate relationships between colonization and tourism education within the cultural contexts of the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management (DHTM), University of Cape Coast (UCC).* This aim led me to read, engage with members of the DHTM, have multiple meetings and discussions with my supervisor, and spend countless days and nights with participant responses – synthesizing and analyzing, in order to contribute to the ongoing discourse on decolonizing tourism education.

Now, at the final stage of this journey, I return to the core questions that guided my inquiry, reflecting on what has been learned, what remains unsettled, and what possibilities emerge for the future. In this final chapter therefore, I present a summary of some of the insights I gained through this study. I also examine the implications of these insights for the field of tourism education and point toward the work that lies ahead in reimagining a tourism education that is critically reflexive, locally situated, and epistemically just and decolonial (Grosfoguel, 2007; Chambers & Buzinde, 2015).

I employed critical ethnography to examine how colonial and neo-liberal power relations are woven into the pedagogical structures, curricula, library resources, and everyday interactions of the DHTM. Through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis, the study has shown that the department's educational culture - guided by the department's mission statements places value on "excellence," "innovation," and "ethical behaviour". The irony though, is that these remain deeply entangled with Western-centric epistemologies (Abdi, 2019; Mbembe, 2016).

On the other hand, the data also identified counter-currents with the capacity to disrupt this colonial heritage. A profound culture of care, cordial interpersonal relationships, vibrant student- and department-led initiatives that nurture belonging, and an explicit commitment to global relevance

collectively constitute resources for re-imagining tourism education on decolonial terms. By critically interrogating the dominance of Western and European authors on reading lists and showing how faculty and students themselves identify this imbalance as an obstacle, the study details concrete starting points for replacing neoliberal, colonial logics with Ghanaian and broader African and Indigenous knowledges (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018; Boakye, 2021). In doing so, it moves beyond merely "promising" insights to outlining actionable pathways that are grounded in the department's own values and relational practices. These initiatives will assist in transforming tourism education into a site of meaningful resistance to neo-liberal, colonial paradigms.

Fieldwork results also revealed that decolonial praxis inside the DHTM is no longer confined to well-meaning gestures; instead, several faculty are strategically re-designing syllabi so that Ghanaian and African worldviews, local industries, and community knowledges are treated as starting points, rather than add-ons, for theorizing tourism. By reading concepts such as "tourism education" through Ghanaian cultural philosophies of reciprocity, embedding field excursions in sites of heritage co-creation, and weaving Indigenous and local languages into classroom discourse, asking students to critique neoliberal 'best-practice' models against everyday tourism work in Cape Coast and Ghana as a whole, educators in the DHTM are beginning to decolonize the Western and Eurocentric canon and the market-first logic that still underpins most professional programmes. In practice, students are partnering with Indigenous and local communities and businesses to document and interpret traditions as living tourism resources. We see therefore, that some faculty in the DHTM are not merely putting measures in place to decolonize the syllabus in form, but enacting an intentional praxis that recentres Ghanaian and African knowledges as both the means and the ends of tourism education.

It was also clear from fieldwork findings that the DHTM library's catalogue remains dominated by Western and European resources, while Indigenous journals and African-authored textbooks are either pay-walled or absent, thereby re-colonizing the epistemic space at the point of access (Acheampong, 2022). Students and staff therefore called for a deliberate re-allocation of acquisition budgets, open-access mandates, and partnerships with Ghanaian publishing corporations. When these reforms are paired with the faculty-led syllabus overhaul, such structural

changes hold the potential to mount a sustained challenge to the neoliberal, colonial architecture of tourism education, thereby transforming it from a system that exports managerial templates into one that cultivates historically grounded, socially just, and contextually relevant tourism knowledge. As a result, graduates of the DHTM come out not as consumers of imported neoliberal models but rather as critical practitioners – graduates who are equipped to design, theorize, and be good stewards of tourism in ways that prioritize Indigenous and local values, community well-being, and Ghanaian epistemologies.

Through this dissertation, I have also illuminated the institutional set ups within the DHTM, and by implication, many programmes across the Global South, that continue to suppress and erase African intellectual work. Findings of this study reveal a persistent epistemic violence, that is, faculty are required to publish in journals that privileges Western and Eurocentric paradigms, while work grounded in African worldviews is routinely dismissed as "regional" or "anecdotal." Such academic gatekeeping denies African scholars of their full participation in global knowledge economies and perpetuates a hierarchy in which Europe and North America remain the unchallenged deciders of scholarly value. To confront this injustice, there is the need for more than incremental reform. It requires building autonomous, trans-African knowledge systems that honour Indigenous philosophies, local languages, and community-based methodologies. This means that epistemic sovereignty is not merely desirable but non-negotiable. African institutions and scholars have the task of initiating publishing cooperatives, citation networks, and mentoring alliances that refuse colonial metrics of impact, and instead measure scholarship by its capacity to serve African peoples and landscapes. I therefore argue that by institutionalizing such counter-hegemonic spaces, there is the chance to transform tourism education from a conduit of colonial continuity into a site of resistance, liberation and intellectual self-determination, not only in the DHTM but also in several institutions of education in Ghana, Africa, and the Global South overall.

6.1 Conclusions

As detailed in Chapter 1, this dissertation work was guided by four questions. From the start of this work until the final moments of analysis, I kept going back and forth to the research questions

in order to be guided within the boundaries of my dissertation's scope. For reference, my research questions state:

1. What constitutes the educational culture of UCC's Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management?
2. How is colonization reinforced and/or resisted by, and within the *educational cultural context* of UCC's Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management?
3. How are Indigenous knowledges about tourism in Cape Coast shaping tourism education in the UCC's Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management?
4. What is the role of educators in UCC's Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management in decolonizing tourism education in Ghana and beyond?

Based on the descriptive and critical analyses of participant perspectives, policy documents, and my immersive field observations, this study concludes that while the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management (DHTM) at the University of Cape Coast has cultivated a distinct institutional culture grounded in values such as innovation, ethical conduct, and service orientation, its educational foundation remains structurally entangled with colonial legacies. The continued reliance on Western and Eurocentric curricula and pedagogical models signals the enduring influence of neocolonialism within tourism education, where colonial ideologies are reproduced not through overt dominance but through epistemic habits and institutional inertia (Andreotti, 2011).

This reality reflects broader patterns of epistemic injustice - what Biko (2013) and others have warned against, that is the situation where African and other subaltern epistemologies are marginalized within global academic structures. In this system, Western and Eurocentric knowledge continues to be positioned as universal, objective, and superior, while locally grounded, Indigenous, and African perspectives are rendered invisible, less rigorous, or irrelevant (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015). Faculty frustrations over the lack of recognition for African scholarship in high-ranking journals reveal how colonial power relations remain embedded in systems of academic validation and publication. This scholarly exclusion is not merely symbolic, rather, I think it

actively undermines the legitimacy of alternative knowledges and reasserts dependency on Western and Eurocentric epistemic authority.

However, as the findings of this study illustrate, there is also a rising countercurrent. This is the critical consciousness among faculty and students that is calling for epistemic decolonization. This consciousness, though now emerging and uneven, signals the potential for transformation. I argue, however, that individual will is not enough. For real epistemic justice to be achieved, all hands must be on deck. This demands institutional courage – a deliberate commitment to dismantling the inherited structures that continue to regulate what counts as legitimate knowledge. It requires structural reforms that span curriculum redesign, pedagogical reorientation, hiring practices, resource distribution, and knowledge production frameworks.

Kincaid (1988) calls us to action - to see tourism not as benign cultural exchange, but as a vehicle that carries the possibility to *recolonize* places, communities, knowledges, and ways of life, by commodifying people and their landscape to serve external imaginaries. This was what she wrote about her home country – Antigua. She writes, "…the visitor becomes an unwitting agent of renewed subjugation…" (Kincaid, 1988, p. 4) - mirroring how, in Cape Coast, and in many other places in the Global South, visitor-oriented management often sidelines community stewardship and reasserts colonial hierarchies. My findings in this research reiterate Kincaid's caution that without structural reforms in curriculum, pedagogy, and library collections, tourism education in the DHTM risks reinforcing the very inequalities it seeks to dismantle. This means, therefore, that a huge demand is placed on the DHTM to move beyond surface-level inclusion toward what Kincaid would call a deeper "moral reckoning" with tourism's new enactments in formerly colonized spaces. In summary, Kincaid (1988) is calling all to acknowledge historical violence, own contemporary complicity, and actively engage in ethical redress in whatever way we are able. What this means for the DHTM is that it should not only teach about Ghanaian history and tourism through a Ghanaian lens but also embed critical reflections and accountability mechanisms in tourism education.

As a major contribution, this research extends epistemic decolonization framework specifically to tourism education. The study shows how epistemic decolonization theory can be embedded at the heart of tourism education to reconfigure tourism education in the Ghanaian context. It has highlighted the value of embedding oral histories, Indigenous and local epistemologies and philosophies into the core syllabus. This framing not only diversifies reading lists but also redefines what counts as "legitimate" in tourism research (wa Thiong'o, 1986). Additionally, rather than just adding onto Western modules on "Tourism in Ghana", this research provides the impetus for reconstructing courses in such a way that every concept, whether tourism ethics, sustainability, etc., is taught first through a Ghanaian cultural philosophical lens, and only then compared and differentiated with other global epistemologies. Overall, this research proposes innovations that offer tourism-specific extension of epistemic decolonization – one that is not just an abstract call for epistemic de-linking - but translates the call into actionable institutional policy, pedagogy, and curriculum design. By this the DHTM provides a replicable African model for other tourism institutions who seek to prioritize Indigenous and local epistemic sovereignties into their teaching and research.

I strongly believe that the DHTM has a unique opportunity to lead this change. The department's growing embrace of innovation and ethics can serve as catalysts for developing curricula and pedagogies that are deeply grounded in Ghanaian and African epistemologies. This means moving beyond tokenistic inclusion of African content toward the meaningful co-production of knowledge with Indigenous communities, particularly those in and around Cape Coast, whose lived experiences and histories are vital to any truthful account of tourism in Ghana.

Furthermore, by reimaging and reconceptualizing the DHTM's library as an active agent of epistemic redistribution rather than a neutral repository, this dissertation has demonstrated how libraries can advance knowledge justice by consciously diversifying collections, decolonizing operations, and prioritizing and investing in the acquisition of non-Western knowledge systems (de Sousa Santos, 2014). It provides the guidelines for ensuring that marginalized voices gain equitable visibility. Furthermore, by embedding open-access mandates and partnering with Indigenous community groups, the DHTM library exemplifies the principle that true knowledge

justice requires both access and authorship rights to be shared with local knowledge holders. In doing so, these initiatives not only disrupt traditional power relations within academia but also model how academic libraries can function as decolonial spaces for context-relevant pedagogy and research across tourism education.

Finally, tourism education in Ghana must experience not a slow evolution, but a radical epistemic shift. This evolution must refuse the reproduction of coloniality and reclaim the power to define, teach, and research from the standpoint of Ghana's cultural, intellectual, and historical realities. This dissertation therefore affirms that the future of tourism education must be forged through epistemic decolonization, curricular insurgency, and a deep ethical commitment to justice, not just for the sake of students and scholars in Ghana, but for the global rebalancing of knowledge itself.

6.2 Recommendations for Future Directions

As I wrap up this study, it has become clear that its implications extend far beyond the walls of the DHTM and even the borders of Ghana. The insights from the narratives of students and educators, policy analysis, participant observation, and decolonial theory, expose how colonial legacies embedded in curricula, pedagogies, and institutional structures still dictate whose knowledge is privileged, how it is validated, and who ultimately benefits. These patterns are not unique to one department or country; they resonate across tourism-education programs throughout Africa and the wider Global South.

At the same time, the findings place an urgent call on policymakers, university leaders, and scholars worldwide to rethink the very foundations of tourism education. Findings highlight the transformative power of educators and students who, by resisting inherited frameworks, can reimagine knowledge production and professional formation on their own terms. I am not in any way writing this dissertation to conclude with definitive answers but rather, I use this to open up new questions and possibilities for further inquiry and action as far as tourism education in Ghana and colonization relationships is concerned.

I now turn to my recommendations for future decolonial directions, aimed at providing guidelines for a more decolonial and contextually relevant approaches to tourism education in the DHTM, Ghana as a whole, and the world beyond the borders of Ghana.

6.2.1 Curriculum and Pedagogy

In line with Carnicelli and Boluk's (2020) advocacy for critical tourism pedagogy, this dissertation calls for a radical rethinking of tourism curricula not only in the DHTM and in Ghana, but also in the Global South. I emphasize the need for educators to engage in dialogical and transformative practices that center Indigenous knowledges, challenge neoliberal norms, and foster emancipatory learning environments.

1. While some faculty are making efforts to incorporate local examples and local scholars into their teaching approaches and curriculum, small-scale efforts are not able to make the meaningful transformation that is needed. The DHTM should, for that matter, *institutionalize support mechanisms that enable and encourage faculty to incorporate Ghanaian and African scholarly works into reading lists and course materials.* This can involve providing better access to appropriate African-related scholarly resources, finding ways to improve library collections, subscribing to regional databases, and collaborating with African academics and institutions. Without change at the structural level, the incorporation of local views within tourism education will remain partial and mediated by a network of personal connections or external groups.
2. I also recommend that the DHTM *undertakes a comprehensive review of its curriculum, by critically assessing course contents, required readings, and pedagogical approaches in order to disrupt any colonial legacies that may have historically shaped the department's educational experience, particularly, the curriculum*. This extends the Tourism Education Futures Initiative's values framework – ethics, stewardship, knowledge, mutuality and professionalism (Sheldon & Dredge, 2017). The study is calling for a curriculum values-audit, prioritizing readings, case studies, and field sites that speak to Ghana's contested landscapes. In line with Tribe (2002), the revised syllabi should not only equip graduates for management careers in the hospitality and tourism industry, but to arm them with the tools to interrogate the socio-historical power relations that tourism both reflects and

reproduces. I hope that by institutionalizing such changes through national accreditation benchmarks, the DHTM can position itself as a regional example, pioneering similar reforms across the country and beyond, contributing new voices to TEFI's global conversation.

3. The DHTM should also *invest in strengthening access to contextually relevant materials and resources by expanding its library collections to include local and Indigenous systems and other African scholarship.* This initiative can take the form of building partnerships with local and Indigenous knowledges keepers, enhancing access to African-centred digital databases, and the provision of institutional support for the production and distribution of Ghanaian and African tourism research. To supplement these efforts, the department can also consider capacity building initiatives, such as training of faculty on decolonial pedagogy and knowledge systems to accompany curriculum reform. This will ensure sustainable change.
4. As far as language is concerned, another recommendation for the DHTM to consider is the *intentional incorporation of local Ghanaian languages, particularly Fante, into course discussions, where appropriate, to make learning more relevant to the Ghanaian context.* Language is not only a tool of communication but also a carrier of culture, epistemology, and worldview. The exclusive use of English in tourism education often reinforces colonial legacies and alienates students from Indigenous ways of knowing and expressing reality (wa Thiong'o, 1986). Structurally, this requires more than an unofficial encouragement for multilingualism. The DHTM should consider developing language-inclusive teaching policies, offering training for bilingual pedagogical strategies, and supporting resource development by providing materials such as glossaries, translated materials, and audio-visual aids, that include key tourism concepts in local languages. This would also involve rethinking course design to cater for linguistic diversity and providing institutional support for staff who want to incorporate local languages into their teaching. The DHTM, UCC, can learn from great examples such as University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa are integrating local and Indigenous languages as language of instruction.

5. Another recommendation of my study for the DHTM is for *academic courses to be designed to incorporate partnerships with local industry and community leaders in Cape Coast and surrounding towns and cities.* These partnerships should extend beyond occasional guest lectures to become embedded, ongoing collaborations that offer students meaningful, practice-based learning grounded in local realities. By formalizing these relationships, the department can structurally anchor Ghanaian knowledge systems and socio-economic contexts within the curriculum. Involving local actors will also strengthen epistemic pluralism, where knowledge from community leaders such as chiefs, Indigenous knowledges keepers, local entrepreneurs, and tour guides is placed alongside academic theory. This structural reconfiguration of pedagogy and curriculum contributes meaningfully to decolonial praxis.
6. Last, but not least, with regard to curriculum and pedagogy, the *DHTM should prioritize the development and institutional adoption of Indigenous and locally grounded approaches for classroom use.* This could take the form of replacing lecture-centric delivery with dialogic, problem-based and place-based learning in tourism sites such as castles, slave-routes, and heritage villages. This approach extends TEFI's call for "changing how we teach" rather than just adding electives" (Sheldon & Dredge, 2017). Such approaches and case studies should capture the diverse socio-cultural, historical, ecological, political dimensions of tourism in Ghana and Africa more generally. This would not only add value to learners' learning by supplying contextually related scenarios, but it would also counteract the hegemony of westernized materials which often represent tourism through Western and European eyes. Tribe (2002) taught that this approach cultivates action that is vocational and is informed by critical reflexivity. When this happens, students confront ethical dilemmas in situ and brainstorm alternatives. However, for such integration to be sustainable and impactful, the department must address the structural challenges that hinder the creation and dissemination of Indigenous case materials. This includes investing in faculty development on Afrocentric and decolonial pedagogies, research funding for development of case studies, partnerships with local communities and tourism stakeholders, and avenues, including open-access repositories, to share these resources across institutions. I believe that these steps will reduce dependence on foreign content and

allow educators to tap into the lived experiences and intellectual traditions of African peoples.

6.2.2 Institutional and Structural Reforms

Aside the need for reforms in the curriculum and pedagogy of DHTM, there is also the urgent need for institutional and structural reforms if tourism education in the department stands any chance at epistemic decolonization. The manifestation of colonization in curriculum design, pedagogy and several other administrative structures revealed by the findings of this study prove a need for transformation that goes beyond isolated reforms. The following are key recommendations that the DHTM should consider as necessary for restructuring institutional frameworks to support a more critically engaged and decolonized approach to tourism education.

1. To align with the University of Cape Coast's Corporate Strategic Plan (2023–2027), particularly Strategic Theme 1 – "Build Resilient Teaching and Learning Culture" which emphasizes enhancing the quality of teaching and learning through curriculum review and staff development, UCC, in collaboration with the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management (DHTM), should *implement structured faculty development programs focused on decolonial pedagogies.* Carnicelli and Boluk (2020) note that critical tourism pedagogy is "scarcely operationalized", leaving educators to individual initiative. It is for this reason that I recommend the development of structured decolonial pedagogies. These programs should aim to equip faculty members with the tools and knowledge necessary to critically assess and revise curricula, teaching methods, and course content to reflect Indigenous knowledges systems, African histories, and local epistemologies. Existing scholarship critiques colonial curricula but admits a persistent implementation gap, that is the absence of structured staff development models that are able to translate decolonial theory into day-to-day teaching practice (see Wright *et al.*, 2023). Based on this gap in literature, this recommendation addresses this gap, and at the same time activating UCC's strategic Theme 1, which focuses on commitment to staff development. This way, it offers a blueprint for tourism institutions across the Global South that face the same capacity challenges.

2. Complementing recommendation 6, UCC should *integrate decolonial education training into its staff development policies and allocate resources accordingly*. This is consistent with the goal in the Strategic Plan to build staff capacity and promote innovative teaching strategies. Through the institutionalization of such training, I believe that UCC will be poised to drive systemic and sustainable change in attempts at decolonizing the curriculum that is inclusive of a variety of communities UCC serves. This recommendation not only addresses the immediate need for faculty training in decolonial methodologies but also embeds these activities within the strategic framework of the university and that will result in structural and long-term transformation in line with UCC's commitment to academic excellence and inclusivity.
3. Consistent with the UCC's Corporate Strategic Plan (2023–2027), which highlights the need to support responsible research, innovation and knowledge transfer, I recommend that the university, in collaboration with the DHTM, *initiates policy that gives practical backing for research on African epistemologies.* This support should include prioritizing funding opportunities for faculty conducting research rooted in Indigenous knowledges systems and encouraging publication in African-based journals. This will ensure not only greater epistemic diversity in Tourism Studies but will also contribute towards the decolonization of tourism education by respecting and incorporating African ways of knowing into academic conversation.
4. In addition to encouraging faculty research and publications, the University of Cape Coast (UCC) should *create a South-South tourism-knowledge consortium* with the aim of actively fostering international academic collaborations with scholars from other Global South institutions. Higgins-Desbiolles, Scheyvens and Bhatia (2022) emphasize that global tourism knowledge still flows predominantly from the Global North to the Global South, thereby perpetrating the knowledge hierarchies that continue to reinforce power imbalances. Creating this consortium will facilitate the exchange of knowledge and contribute to building a robust network of scholars dedicated to decolonial approaches in tourism education not only across the African region, but globally. The DHTM and UCC should attempt to bring together African, Asian, and Latin-American partner universities to co-design open access teaching cases, dual or multi-way degree pathways, and even joint

field schools that are centred on Indigenous and Afro-diasporic epistemologies. These partnerships are consistent with UCC's strategic aim to increase its international profile and diversity as set out in the Corporate Strategic Plan (2023–2027). Hopefully, this recommendation, if implemented, would bring about the pluriversality of knowledge circulation in practice, thereby challenging the entrenched dominance of Western and Eurocentric exchange models.

5. In accordance with UCC's commitment to promoting responsible research, innovation, and knowledge transfer as spelled out in the Corporate Strategic Plan (2023–2027), my recommendation for the university is *the revision of its faculty performance appraisal metrics.* Stein and Andreotti (2016) critiqued the hiring, tenure, and promotion criteria of several institutions, highlighting that Western and Eurocentric epistemic authority is always reproduced through academic reward structures, however, only few tourism programs have altered those structures. The DHTM for that matter revise performance appraisal by placing equal value on community co-authored outputs, African language publications, and practice-oriented scholarships as with impact factor articles. This initiative will help diversify scholarly recognition. It also aligns with the strategic objective of enhancing international visibility and diversity by embracing a broader spectrum of academic contributions. This recommendation transforms decolonization from an extra-curricular passion into a career-sustaining pathway, thereby modelling structural change for other Global South institutions. Practically, UCC should consider updating its appraisal guidelines to reflect these expanded criteria, ensuring that faculty members are assessed fairly and comprehensively. There should also be training programs for appraisal committees and faculty members to understand and implement the revised criteria effectively. Finally, UCC should also establish mechanisms to monitor the implementation of these changes and evaluate their impact on faculty performance and research diversity.

These policy changes will enable UCC to foster an inclusive academic environment that values diverse research contributions, thereby advancing its strategic goals and reinforcing its position as a leader in innovative and culturally responsive scholarship.

6.2.3 Student Engagement and Participation

Another area of the DHTM's operations that is critical as far as the decolonization of tourism education is concerned is student engagement and participation in departmental operations. A critical aspect of decolonizing tourism education is ensuring that students are not passive recipients of knowledge but active participants in shaping their learning experiences. From this study, it is clear that greater student involvement in the process of curriculum development, and decision-making processes that pertain to pedagogy, assessments, and student well-being within the DHTM are needed for decolonial outcomes to happen. Below are specific recommendations that could be considered as part of efforts to decolonizing tourism education within the cultural context of the DHTM, UCC:

1. The DHTM should consider *developing mentorship and support networks outside of the department for their students.* These mentorship programs should be intentionally designed to connect students with tourism industry professionals who are engaged in community-centred, sustainable, and decolonial tourism practices, rather than those solely embedded in capitalist or colonial systems. By connecting with professionals who advocate for socially just, culturally respectful, and locally grounded approaches to tourism, students will therefore get the opportunity to receive practical insights and alternative perspectives on tourism as a phenomenon. Augmenting classroom knowledge with practical experience will help students to challenge some dominant epistemologies they encounter in class and be equipped with both theoretical and practical knowledge about tourism.
2. Like we saw in some of the student perspectives, the DHTM should *consider creating a platform for students to be able to have meaningful engagement with faculty and other members of the department to discuss opportunities for revisions to dominant narratives of knowledge hegemony.* This platform should be a structured series of workshops where students, faculty, librarians, and community knowledge holders critically interrogate the Western and Eurocentric narratives that dominate tourism theory and practice. These platforms will encourage student agency and foster critical dialogues that go a long way to cultivate diverse value and knowledge perspectives. These platforms should make space for mixed working groups to analyze reading lists, case studies and assessment criteria to identify any colonial biases and to propose concrete decolonial alternatives. I believe that

these recommendation moves beyond 'engagement' toward actionable mechanisms for dismantling knowledge hegemony and embedding diverse epistemologies at the core of tourism education.

3. The student unit of the department, Hospitality and Tourism Students' Association (HOTSA) should be *encouraged to take the active roles in shaping their own learning experiences by periodically organizing research discussions, forums, seminars, and other student events which are focused on decolonization in tourism educational contexts.* When student representatives hold voting rights on committees such as curriculum committees, it can help to ensure that proposed changes are enacted rather than merely discussed.
4. UCC and the DHTM should seriously *consider encouraging students to conduct their academic research on African issues.* This will employ both students and faculty to base their research projects on African tourism issues instead of relying solely on Western frameworks and theories. The DHTM can revise the research proposal approval rubric so that every project addresses a tourism issue that is situated in an African context or in a Global South context, and /or applies an Indigenous or Afrocentric theoretical lens that advances local and Indigenous epistemologies.
5. Another important recommendation is for the DHTM and HOTSA to *consider the creation of a Student Research Journal,* which will be a student-run academic journal concentrating on Ghanaian and African tourism research and this will offer young scholars an opportunity to share their work in the field not only as authors but as editors and reviewers. I believe that this will give the students an opportunity to experience the practical aspects of contributing to journals and also participating in review and editing processes.

6.2.4 DHTM Library

Findings of this decolonial dissertation suggest that the DHTM library needs to examine its own operations and engage in an *epistemic de-linking* (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015; Grosfoguel, 2007), an agenda that rejects Western epistemologies about tourism as representing the 'God-eye' view thus enabling spaces to open up for other ways of thinking, being in and knowing about tourism. Specifically, the DHTM library must consider the following decolonial recommendations:

1. The DHTM library and its staff should *critically reassess and restructure institutional practices regarding how collections are sourced, funding for locally published materials, and training of staff on decolonial action.* Hopkins *et al.* (2023) noted that library collections remain colonial even when the syllabus changes and have therefore called for co-created acquisition strategies that diversify a library's collections. The DHTM library should be deliberate about allocating a big part of its annual acquisitions to African and other Global South publishers. This initiative will extend decolonization work beyond the classroom into knowledge infrastructure that forms the basis of all teaching and research. The DHTM library should not only be relying on donations from Western and European universities and alumni of the department in the diaspora. Diversifying collections does not only challenge colonial power imbalances but also enriches the academic and cultural life of the university community.
2. For true decolonization of tourism education to happen, the DHTM should also consider the *training and education of library staff to critically engage with and challenge colonial legacies within their area of work.* Library staff should be trained on decolonial knowledge organization methods to ensure that African perspectives are adequately represented in classification systems. This should include the establishment of periodic classification audits, where cataloguers, faculty, students, and community knowledge holders can identify colonial biases in existing records and track progress towards inclusive, multilingual subject vocabularies.
3. Additionally, the DHTM library should consider the *expansion of its borders to include Indigenous knowledges holders.* Specifically, the definition of what constitutes the "DHTM library" should be reconsidered beyond the walls of the physical site. This means that the library's resources should include on-site or off-site demonstrations such as storytelling circles, and craft studios, and these can all be recorded and catalogued as digital objects. Also, the library in collaboration with the Ghana Library Association (GLA) should consider assigning Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs) to these performances, validating oral and performative modes of knowledge representation as citable scholarship. This also means that people (bodies) who are considered Indigenous knowledges keepers should count as part of the library.

4. Finally, the DHTM should also consider *adopting Indigenous-led thesauri, or where none exists, actively engage the local and Indigenous knowledges keepers in the co-creation of vocabularies in diverse Ghanaian and African languages.* This reform stands to resist English-only dominance in DHTM's library.

6.2.5 TEFI's Core Values

1. I present a final recommendation, building on TEFI's existing pillars of stewardship, ethics, mutual respect, knowledge, and professionalism, that *TEFI should consider the formal adoption of epistemic decolonization as a sixth core value*. As established throughout this dissertation, epistemic decolonization demands the active dismantling of colonial knowledge hierarchies within tourism curricula, research, and practice by centering Indigenous, local, and Afrocentric epistemologies (Grosfoguel, 2007; Chambers & Buzinde, 2015). As a TEFI value, it would require programs to systematically audit and reconfigure syllabi to be representative of all voices; establish community–academic partnerships that treat Indigenous and local stakeholders (e.g., traditional authorities, heritage practitioners, grassroots guides) as equal collaborators in research design, content creation, and assessment; integrate diverse modes of knowing, including oral histories, performative storytelling, community mapping, alongside conventional lectures, thereby placing value on embodied and place-based knowledge. I strongly believe that by adding epistemic decolonization to TEFI's core values, DHTM and other institutions will not only align with international best practices in tourism education but will also signal a genuine commitment to knowledge justice. This starts the process of transforming tourism education from a site of inherited coloniality into a platform for emancipatory education.

6.3 Final Thoughts

I must wrap this critical ethnographic work up by emphasizing that this is not an endpoint but a provocation. It is an invitation from me to all to extend the discussions about decolonization within tourism education beyond this point. Through this piece, my supervisor, myself, and the kind participants of this study have provided essential insights and recommendations, but we also recognize the process' inherent complexities and challenges. Of course, the process of

decolonization remains an active struggle that demands continuous reflexivity, commitment and collaboration. Yes, it is a process that goes beyond dismantling the "Western" and the "Eurocentric". This is what Mignolo and Walsh (2018) describe as an ongoing relational process that works to undo the "colonial matrix of power". The fight must continue, because we are just getting started!

As I conclude this dissertation, I do so with a deep sense of physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion – a culmination not only of the demands of academic work but also of the journey of life in all its unpredictability, including the disruptions and reflections that the COVID-19 pandemic brought to us. The pandemic, with its impacts, both small and large scale, served as both a disruption and a catalyst for me, reshaping and guiding my research trajectory, my thought processes, and most importantly my resilience. I am more convinced of the urgent need to transform tourism education by dismantling colonial power structures and prioritizing both Indigenous and local knowledge to empower students, faculty, staff, and all who care about this subject, to critically engage with the world around them. The future of tourism education in Ghana - and in the broader global context - must be one that resists epistemic erasure, fosters critical consciousness, and actively contributes to more just and equitable societies. The upcoming work requires us not only to critique existing systems, but also to strive to offer innovative alternatives.

In the spirit of HOPE, may this dissertation become an initial step toward the extensive shared mission of creating an education that truly transforms people.

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Appendix A - University of Waterloo Ethics Clearance

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO
Notification of Ethics Clearance to Conduct Research with Human Participants

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Principal Investigator: Bryan Grimwood (Recreation and Leisure Studies)
Student investigator: Victor Agbo (Recreation and Leisure Studies)
File #: 44123
Title: Towards decolonial futures: A critical ethnography of Tourism Education in Cape Coast, Ghana.

The Human Research Ethics Board is pleased to inform you this study has been reviewed and given ethics clearance.

Initial Approval Date: 09/13/22 (m/d/y)

University of Waterloo Research Ethics Boards are composed in accordance with, and carry out their functions and operate in a manner consistent with, the institution's guidelines for research with human participants, the Tri-Council Policy Statement for the Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS, 2nd edition), International Conference on Harmonization: Good Clinical Practice (ICH-GCP), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA), the applicable laws and regulations of the province of Ontario. Both Boards are registered with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under the Federal Wide Assurance, FWA00021410, and IRB registration number IRB00002419 (HREB) and IRB00007409 (CREB).

This study is to be conducted in accordance with the submitted application and the most recently approved versions of all supporting materials.

Expiry Date: 09/14/23 (m/d/y)

Multi-year research must be renewed at least once every 12 months unless a more frequent review has otherwise been specified. Studies will only be renewed if the renewal report is received and approved before the expiry date. Failure to submit renewal reports will result in the investigators being notified ethics clearance has been suspended and Research Finance being notified the ethics clearance is no longer valid.

Level of review: Delegated Review

Signed on behalf of the Human Research Ethics Board



Joanna Eidse, Research Ethics Officer, jeidse@uwaterloo.ca, 519-888-4567, ext. 47163

This above named study is to be conducted in accordance with the submitted application and the most recently approved versions of all supporting materials.

Documents reviewed and received ethics clearance for use in the study and/or received for information:
file: R3_Recruitment Script for Student Participants.docx
file: Email_Script_for_Course Instructors.docx

file: R2_Email_Script_for_Staff&Faculty.docx
file: R1_Potential Interview_Guide.docx file: R2_Letter of Information to Head of Tourism Department.docx
file: R3_General_Information&Consent Letter_All_Participants.docx
file: R1_Feedback&Appreciation letter.docx

Approved Protocol Version 4 in Research Ethics System

This is an official document. Retain for your files.

You are responsible for obtaining any additional institutional approvals that might be required to complete this study.

Appendix B - General Information and Consent Letter

Title of Study: *Toward Decolonial Tourism Education in Ghana: A Critical Ethnography*

This letter will provide you the information you need to make an informed choice about participating in this doctoral study. It will explain what the study is about, the possible risks and benefits, and your rights as a research participant. If you do not understand something in the letter, please ask one of the investigators prior to consenting to the study. Please note that you are receiving this letter to provide you with more information about participating in a one-on-one interview with Mawutor, the student researcher from the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, University of Waterloo.

Background and Project Information

This study was developed from the need to better understand Ghana's tourism education and its colonial relationships. Informed by decolonization theory, this critical ethnographic study aims to describe and interrogate relationships between colonization and tourism education within the cultural contexts of the University of Cape Coast's Tourism Department. My goal is therefore to collaborate in order to understand, critique and deconstruct power-laden social and cultural processes that have existed in Cape Coast's tourism's entanglements with colonialism. The study will be guided by four research questions:

5. What patterns of behaviour, belief, and meaning emerge within the educational culture of UCC's Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management? How are these patterns established and circulated?
6. How is colonization reinforced and/or resisted by, and within the *educational cultural context* of UCC's Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management?
7. How are knowledges Indigenous to place shaping tourism education in the UCC's Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management?
   What implications could decolonial action within the educational culture of the UCC's Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management have for community tourism development in Cape Coast, Ghana, and beyond?

My expectation is for data generation to take place in this Department from October 2022 to mid-December 2022. Kindly note that I will take on the role of participant observer to observe proceedings from selected tourism classes, and in common places shared by members of the tourism department such as the departmental study rooms, departmental lecture halls, departmental library, lunchrooms, and any other place that is commonly shared. The observations in all common spaces, and tourism lecture sessions will not focus on individuals and their behaviors for data generation; rather, the researcher's expectation of engaging with participants is only to be part of the cultural context of the department. For in-person classroom observations, the focus will only be on the content of the lectures (that is language, techniques, and materials that are used), general discussions, and the general themes. No individual will be the focus of the observations.

Participation

Participation in this study is voluntary and will involve an invitation for students, faculty, and staff of this department to participate in interviews and a potential feedback session for each participant. These interviews will aim to enable participants to share their perspectives on tourism education-colonization relationships. Through this creative project, possibilities for resistance to tradition while allowing for imagination of alternative possibilities of ways of knowing about tourism that unsettle and generate more just, liberatory, and locally meaningful developments, benefits and educations for local communities will be developed. The aim of the feedback session is to invite study participants to a one-on-one briefing session (in-person or virtual) in order for me to present the preliminary findings generated from the analysis process to them. Study participants will have the opportunity to provide feedback, contributing additional layers of analysis.

Interviews

This section involves students, faculty, and staff of the Department of Tourism at the University of Cape Coast who volunteer to participate in one-on-one interviews. After you have agreed and signed the consent forms, you will be invited to participate in a 30 – 60-minute interview depending on each case. Please note that interview sessions will be audio recorded. The goal of the interviews will be to offer the opportunity for participants to discuss their individual and group experiences and perspectives on the educational culture of the department, share their perspectives on colonization and potential manifestations in tourism education, among others. For participants who may not feel safe or protected to share their perspectives on the key issues on the premises of the department, I will arrange for the interviews to be conducted in a safe location on the University of Cape Coast campus at a time which is most convenient for the participants. The following core areas, instead of specific interview questions, will inform the discussions during the unstructured interview sessions:

a. Participants' understandings of patterns of behaviour, belief, and meanings within the educational culture of the department.
b. Participants' perspectives on colonial, neo-colonial, postcolonial and decolonial as they show up within educational contexts.
c. Participants' perspectives on Indigenous knowledges and their role in shaping tourism education.
d. Participants' perspectives on colonial power relations and how they are either reinforced and/or resisted within the educational culture of the department; and
e. Participants' perspectives on implications for decolonial actions within the educational culture for community tourism development.

Ethnographic Data Analysis and Theorization

After all the data generation methods and first level of analysis, I will invite study participants to a one-on-one briefing session (in-person or virtual) in order to present the preliminary findings generated from the analysis process. Study participants will have the opportunity to provide feedback, contributing additional layers of analysis. During the feedback session, I will take notes of, and/or audio-record the discussion. This feedback session is expected to span 1 hour to 1.5 hours.

Activities, Time Commitment and Proposed Timeline

Activity	Approx. time commitment (hours)	Proposed Timeline
Review of information letter and consent form	0.5	October, 2022
Interviews	1	October - December, 2022
Feedback	1.5	May, 2022
Departmental participant observation**	48 (2 hours per day; 3 days a week; for 8 weeks)	Mid-October to mid-December, 2022
***Participants are not expected to commit 48 hours, as this will happen in the most natural situation over a period of 8 weeks*		

Consent

You have the option to provide written or verbal consent. You will be asked to sign a consent form for the one-on-one interview session before the commencement of data generation. Though you may agree to participate in the one-on-one interview, you may choose to withdraw your consent at any time.

Participants' Rights
You have the right to withdraw participation at any point in the study by informing either me, via email at vmagbo@uwaterloo.ca or the University of Waterloo faculty investigator, Dr. Bryan Grimwood at bgrimwood@uwaterloo.ca of this decision at any time until the final submission date of the PhD dissertation. Kindly note that the anticipated date for the submission of this PhD dissertation is the end of August 2023. You have the right to refuse answering questions you do not feel comfortable answering. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may also decline the inclusion of your responses.

The individual interviews will also be audio recorded, and video recorded (if this happens virtually on Zoom). All identifying information will be removed from the data that is collected and stored separately. After the interviews have been transcribed, the video and audio recordings will be deleted. If the interview is conducted and recorded online, I will download the video and audio files, create a verbatim transcript, and then delete the audio and video files from our records, as they will contain identifiable features. The transcript will be retained for analysis for a minimum of 7 years. Only my advisor, Dr. Bryan Grimwood in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo and I will have access to these materials. Participants' names will not appear in any paper or publication resulting from this study, however with the permission of participants, quotations may be used with a pseudonym in place of their real names. Participants also have the option of being identified by name only if they agree to attribution, and this will be asked about in the consent form that follows this information letter.

Risks to Participating
It is also important to note that as this study intends to critically interrogate the relationships between colonization and tourism education and their implications for tourism development in the Cape Coast Metropolis of Ghana, there might be a possibility of encountering negative stories associated with colonization in any shape or form as it relates to tourism. Even though this entire process may bring about the discussion of discomforting topics, all participants are encouraged not to focus on them, but rather on the opportunity to unpack how these stories explain tourism education and colonization relationships and how these conversations can help dismantle colonial influences on tourism education and development in Cape Coast, Ghana.

Confidentiality Issues
Participation in this study is considered confidential, although there is still a risk of identification mainly because all data generation activities will mostly take place in the physical location of the department. Some demographic information will be collected as part of the data collection process. This will include age, gender, race, occupation and education. This demographic information will only be used to describe the study sample and make inferences based on certain characteristics as they relate to the research questions. All information you provide will be de-identified and only these will be used in any publication resulting from this research. Also, with your permission, quotations may be used with a pseudonym in place of your real name. All research data (i.e., transcripts, and photographs) will be retained for minimum of 7 years. Only myself and my advisor, Dr. Bryan Grimwood in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo will have access to these materials. Also be informed that the data generated may be used in the future for other research studies, for example in future research projects that are either an extension of this original project or that are in the same general area of research, that is tourism education and colonization relationships. If you do not wish for your responses to be used in future research projects, kindly let me know either verbally or through the consent forms. If you choose to take part in the interview(s) using an online platform, please note that Zoom has implemented technical, administrative, and physical safeguards to protect the information provided via the Services from loss, misuse, and unauthorized access, disclosure, alteration, or destruction. However, no Internet transmission is ever fully secure or error free.

Remuneration
All participants will only be remunerated for participating in interviews. To thank you for your participation in the interview, you will receive a 10 CAD (or its Ghana Cedi equivalence) gift card redeemable in your university's library or store. Should you choose to end your participation, you will still receive remuneration for your participation.
**The amount received is taxable. It is your responsibility to report this amount for income tax purposes.*
If you have other questions regarding this study, please do not hesitate to contact me. You may certainly also contact me if you would like to receive any reports or publications that are produced as a result.

Contact information
Facilitator and Researcher
Victor Mawutor Agbo, PhD Candidate | Recreation & Leisure Studies, University of Waterloo; vmagbo@uwaterloo.ca

Research Advisor
Bryan Grimwood, PhD | Recreation & Leisure Studies, University of Waterloo
bgrimwood@uwaterloo.ca

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Board (REB #44123). If you have questions for the Board, contact the Office of Research Ethics at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or reb@uwaterloo.ca

Appendix C - Consent Form

Title of Study: *Toward Decolonial Tourism Education in Ghana: A Critical Ethnography*

Contact information

Facilitator and Researcher
Victor Mawutor Agbo, PhD Candidate | Recreation & Leisure Studies, University of Waterloo; vmagbo@uwaterloo.ca

Research Advisor
Bryan Grimwood, PhD | Recreation & Leisure Studies, University of Waterloo
bgrimwood@uwaterloo.ca

Consent to Participate in the Study

I have read the information presented in the information letter about the *"Towards Decolonial Futures: A Critical Ethnography of Tourism Education in Cape Coast, Ghana"* study being conducted by Victor Mawutor Agbo from the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo in Canada under the supervision of Dr. Bryan Grimwood at the University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada.

I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I wanted. I am aware that I may withdraw from the study without penalty at any time by advising the researchers of this decision.

I am aware that I have the option of allowing myself to be audio recorded (in in-person, phone, and online interviews) to ensure an accurate recording of my interview responses. I am also aware that in an event of a virtual interview, I have the option of allowing myself to be video recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my interview responses. I am also aware that for the interviews, pseudonyms will be used to identify all participants and my quotations will be completely anonymous and will only be referenced using pseudonyms unless I agree to attribution.

I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in the dissertation and/or publications to come from this research, and future research projects that are either an extension of this original project or that are in the same general area of research with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous unless I agree to attribution. I have also been informed that in some instances, participants may waive anonymity (e.g., if they wish to be identified for their contributions to the research, however, the researcher may accept the waiver of anonymity by the participant as long as such a waiver does not compromise the welfare of other participants. Also, in some cases, the researcher may decide to maintain the anonymity of the participant in publications or dissemination of research results to ensure confidentiality of the data and anonymity of other participants.

I was informed that I may withdraw my consent without penalty by advising the researcher of this decision.

I have been informed this study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Board (REB *#44123*) and if I have questions for the Board I could contact the Office of Research Ethics, at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or reb@uwaterloo.ca and that questions we have about the study may be directed to Victor Mawutor Agbo by email at vmagbo@uwaterloo.ca.

I have also been provided the contact information for the research supervisor, Dr. Bryan Grimwood at bgrimwood@uwaterloo.ca.

a. With full knowledge of all foregoing, I consent, of my own free will, to participate in (*please check*)
   An interview: □ Yes □ No
   A Feedback session □ Yes □ No

b. During the interview sessions, I give permission to be (*please check*)
   Audio-recorded (for in-person and phone interviews): □ Yes □ No
   Video-recorded (for online interviews via Zoom only): □ Yes □ No

c. In the papers and presentations resulting from this study, I agree to the use of (*please check*)
   Anonymous quotations using pseudonyms only: □ Yes □ No
   Directly attributed quotations (i.e., you will be identified by name): □ Yes □ No

d. In future research projects that are either an extension of this original project or that are in the same general area of research, I agree to the use of my (*please check*)
   Anonymous quotations using pseudonyms only: □ Yes □ No
   Directly attributed quotations (i.e., you will be identified by name): □ Yes □ No

_____
Name & Signature of Participant

_____
Dated at University of Cape Coast, Ghana

_____
Witnessed

Note: By signing this consent form, you are not waiving your legal rights or releasing the investigator(s) or involved institution(s) from their legal and professional responsibilities.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Board (REB #44123). If you have questions for the Board, contact the Office of Research Ethics at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or reb@uwaterloo.ca

Appendix D - Recruitment Script

*** Script for recruiting student participants for the interviews (Email / Verbal) ***

Hello, my name is Victor Mawutor Agbo, a PhD candidate working under the supervision of Dr. Bryan Grimwood in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. I am emailing you because you are either an undergraduate or graduate student of the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management here at the University of Cape Coast.

I am conducting a study exploring tourism education in Ghana and its colonial relationships. My goal is to collaborate with members of this department in order to describe, unsettle, critique and deconstruct power-laden social and cultural processes that have existed in Cape Coast's tourism's entanglements with colonialism. I'm currently seeking volunteers to participate in this study. As long as you are a tourism student of this department, you are eligible to participate. Our expectation is for data generation to take place in this Department from October 2022 to mid-December 2022.

I'd therefore like to invite you to participate in a one-on-one interview to share your perspectives on tourism education and colonization relationships. Questions for discussion will centre around your perspectives on patterns of behaviour, belief, and meanings within the educational culture of the department, perspectives on colonial, neo-colonial, postcolonial and decolonial as they show up within educational contexts.

For your information, I will also assume the role of participant observer in common places such as the departmental study rooms, departmental lecture halls, departmental library, lunchrooms, and any other places that are commonly shared. With the permission of the Head of Department, I will also participate in some live lecture sessions. The specific lecture sessions to attend will be selected with the help of the course instructors, and this will be based on the lessons that directly relate to tourism in the course syllabus. Both the observations in classrooms and common spaces will not focus on individuals and their behaviors for data generation; rather, my expectation of engaging with participants is only to be part of the cultural context of the department. Classroom observations will specifically focus only on the content of the lectures (that is language, techniques, and materials that are used), general discussions, and the general themes.

I anticipate the time commitment involved for you would be between thirty (30) and sixty (60) minutes for the interviews. I am able to provide you with an Information and Consent Letter, which contains more details about this study.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Board (REB #*44123*).

[Email Script]

If you are willing to participate in this study, kindly contact me via email at vmagbo@uwaterloo.ca to schedule a date for the signing of consent and information letter, and the subsequent date setup for the interviews. Please know that the final decision about participation is yours, and also that you can end the interview at any time. My full contact information, as well as the contact information of my supervisor, is available in the Information and Consent Letter.

[Verbal Script]

I can give this to you now, as a paper copy, or send it to you via email. If you are interested in participating in this study, please complete the Consent of Participation form as outlined. I am available such that we can schedule a date and time that work best for you to conduct your interview, should you choose to participate. We can plan to do this interview either via phone, or in person. Please know that the final decision about participation is yours, and also that you can end the interview at any time. My full contact information, as well as the contact information of my supervisor, is available in the Information and Consent Letter.

Thank you,

Victor Mawutor Agbo, PhD Candidate,
Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, University of Waterloo.
vmagbo@uwaterloo.ca.

Appendix E - Observation Protocol

Note: *Observation Protocol generated using ChatGPT*
Objective: To observe and document practices, materials, and interactions in the DHTM, UCC that reinforce and/or resist colonization.

1. **Setting and General Environment**
    a. **Description**: Note the physical and cultural environment within the department, including office spaces, classrooms, bulletin boards, and decor.
    b. **Indicators to Observe**:
        - Visual displays, posters, or other materials that may reflect or challenge colonial perspectives in tourism (e.g., maps, photos of destinations).
        - Presence or absence of materials or symbols that represent diverse, Indigenous, or local cultures.
    c. **Notes**: Record specific items, symbols, or quotes observed in the department.
2. **Curriculum and Course Materials**
    a. **Description:** Observe teaching materials, syllabi, textbooks, and resources used in classes.
    b. **Indicators to Observe**:
        - Course content: Identify references to colonial or decolonizing perspectives in tourism.
        - Representation: Look for the inclusion or exclusion of diverse perspectives, Indigenous knowledges, and local cultures.
        - Language used in course materials that may suggest a colonial or decolonial lens (e.g., "discovery," "exotic," "authentic experience").
    c. **Notes**: Record specific instances where content reflects or challenges colonial narratives.
3. **Teaching Approaches and Instructor-Student Interactions**
    a. **Description**: Observe classroom dynamics, teaching styles, and interaction patterns between instructors and students.
    b. **Indicators to Observe**:
        - Pedagogical styles: Note whether teaching methods encourage critical thinking about colonial histories in tourism (e.g., discussions, debates, or questioning standard narratives).
        - Instructor language: Observe language that may perpetuate or challenge colonial perspectives.
        - Inclusivity: Note whether the instructor references a variety of cultural perspectives and engages in respectful discourse regarding diverse populations.
    c. **Notes**: Document examples of inclusive or critical approaches to colonial narratives and any resistance or reinforcement of such narratives.
4. **Student Engagement and Reactions**
    a. **Description: Observe students' responses to the material, their questions, and any group discussions.**
    b. **Indicators to Observe:**
        - Engagement level: Note whether students actively engage with critical or decolonial perspectives.
        - Types of questions asked: Look for questions that suggest curiosity or skepticism about colonial narratives.
        - Group discussions: Note whether students challenge or support colonial representations in tourism.

c. **Notes:** Record any notable reactions, group dynamics, or themes that arise during discussions.

5. **Departmental Events and Activities**
    a. **Description:** Observe any department-led events, seminars, guest lectures, or extracurricular activities that may influence perceptions of colonialism in tourism.
    b. **Indicators to Observe**:
        - Topics of events: Identify if topics address colonization or decolonization in tourism.
        - Guest speakers: Observe the diversity of speakers and the perspectives they bring.
        - Event language and promotional materials: Note any language or themes that reinforce or challenge colonial narratives.
    c. **Notes**: Document the nature of events and any explicit connections to decolonial perspectives.
6. **Overall Departmental Culture**
    a. Description: Observe the overall culture within the department, including policies, attitudes, and interactions that may reflect or counter colonial ideologies.
    b. Indicators to Observe:
        - Inclusivity: Note the department's efforts toward inclusivity and recognition of diverse cultures.
        - Policy language: Observe departmental statements, missions, or goals for any colonial or decolonial elements.
        - Informal interactions: Observe faculty and student informal conversations and interactions for any reinforcement or critique of colonial perspectives.
    d. **Notes**: Record general impressions and specific examples of departmental culture regarding colonialism.

Additional Notes

- **Date and Time**: Record the date and time of each observation session.
- **Observer's Reflections**: After each session, note any biases, reflections, or insights.
- **Privacy and Confidentiality**: Ensure observations are recorded in a way that respects the anonymity and privacy of students and faculty members.

Appendix F - List of Pseudonyms

Faculty Pseudonyms

1. Prof. Kwame Nkrumah – *(inspired by Ghana's first president and anti-colonial leader, symbolizing resistance to colonial knowledge structures in education.)*
2. Dr. Kofi Anta – *(derived from Kofi Antubam, a Ghanaian educator and artist committed to African identity in education.)*
3. Dr. Kwesi Danquah – *(inspired by J.B. Danquah, a scholar who challenged British colonial narratives in Ghanaian history.)*
4. Dr. Naana Oforiatta – *(inspired by Yaa Asantewaa's lineage, referencing the powerful queen mother who resisted British rule.)*
5. Dr. Yaw Ndebugre – *(Gurunsi name, reflecting Northern Ghana's academic presence.)*

Student Pseudonyms (Undergraduate and Graduate)

6. Adwoa Nyamekye – *(Adwoa—Monday-born; Nyamekye means "God's gift" symbolizing hope in education.)*
7. Kojo Armah – *(Kojo—Monday-born; Armah is a Fante name reflecting coastal heritage and tourism's impact.)*
8. Yaw Bansah – (*Yaw—Thursday-born; "Bansah" is an Ewe name.)*
9. Nana Owusu – (*Owusu is a common Ashanti name.)*
10. Kwame Adjei – *(Kwame—Saturday-born; Adjei is often used in Ghanaian academia.)*
11. Akua Mensah – *(Akua—Wednesday-born; Mensah means "third-born.")*
12. Kofi Buah – *(Kofi—Friday-born; Nzema name, related to notable Ghanaian figures.)*
13. Adjeley Nortey – *(Adjeley—common Ga name; Nortey symbolizes heritage in Accra, where tourism thrives.)*
14. Yaw Sarpong – *(Yaw—Thursday-born; Sarpong means "supreme," often given to scholars.)*
15. Afia Bempong – *(Afia—Friday-born; Bempong means "a place of rest," referencing hospitality.)*
16. Akua Atule – *(Upper West Region - "Atule" is a Dagaare name.)*
17. Fiifi Aikins – (*Fiifi—Friday-born, Fante name; Aikins is tied to coastal communities engaged in tourism.)*

Staff Pseudonyms (Representing Administrative & Support Roles in the Department)

18. Mr. Nii Tackie – (*Nii is a Ga title meaning "prince," often associated with Accra's history.)*

Appendix G - Potential Interview Guide

** *Note to Ethics Board:*
In the spirit of decolonization and my expectations for using semi-structured interviews, these questions only aim to show the types of questions that would be asked under each of the broader research questions guiding the study. Not all the questions will be asked; selection of questions will also be dependent on individual's expertise, knowledge and willingness to be interviewed from the beginning to the end. There is also the expectation of follow-up questions, and new questions depending on whatever the case might be.

Title of Study: *Toward Decolonial Tourism Education in Ghana: A Critical Ethnography*

Student Investigator: Victor Mawutor Agbo (vmagabo@uwaterloo.ca)
University of Waterloo, Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies

SECTION A: *Participants' understandings of constituents of the educational culture of the DHTM*

1. How do you define the term 'culture'?
2. How do you describe the educational culture of the Tourism Department?
3. What attributes do you think define this department?
4. In your opinion, what makes up the education culture of this department?
5. How do you define tourism education?

SECTION B: *Participants' perspectives on colonial, neo-colonial, postcolonial and decolonial as they show up within educational contexts.*

1. What do the following concepts mean to you: (de)colonization, neo-colonization, post-colonization?
2. Do you think that these concepts manifest in tourism in general? How?
3. Do you think that these concepts manifest in tourism education in general and in this department? How?
4. Do you think tourism education and colonization have relationship? How?
5. Describe for me how you can say a thing/place/concept/person is 'colonized' when you see it.
6. In which aspects of tourism education in this department can we identify these relationships?

SECTION C: *Participants' perspectives on Indigenous knowledges and their role in shaping tourism education.*

1. Describe what you understand by Indigenous knowledges
2. Who do you think are custodians of Indigenous knowledges in Cape Coast? Why?
3. Do you know about any Indigenous knowledges in Cape Coast? What are they?
4. Describe for me what you think is the role of Indigenous knowledges in tourism, tourism education, and tourism development.

SECTION D: *Participants' perspectives on colonial power relations and how they are either reinforced and/or resisted within the educational culture of the department.*

1. Describe what 'power' means to you

2. Do you see colonial power relations in this department? How?
3. How does the educational culture of this department reinforce or resist colonization?

SECTION E: *Participants' perspectives on the role of educators in decolonizing tourism education*

1. Have you heard of the concept of decolonization? What have you heard?
2. Describe what decolonization in tourism education contexts looks like
3. Do you think this department is decolonial in its culture? Explain?
4. Within the context of tourism education, who is an "educator"?
5. What roles do educators have in decolonizing tourism education in the DHTM?

SECTION F: *Demographics*

1. In which year were you born?
2. What is your highest level of education?
3. Can you tell me about your occupation?
4. What is your gender?
5. What is your ethnic / racial origin?