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Vicky Katsoni  
Kathy Velandar *Editors*

# Innovative Approaches to Tourism and Leisure

Fourth International Conference  
IACuDiT, Athens 2017

 Springer

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Editors

# Innovative Approaches to Tourism and Leisure

Fourth International Conference IACuDiT,  
Athens 2017

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# Preface

The current book of proceedings is the outcome of the effort of a number of people, who participated at the *4th International Conference organized by the International Association of Cultural and Digital Tourism (IACuDiT)* in Athens, May 25–27, with the theme “Innovative Approaches to Tourism and Leisure: Culture, Places and Narratives in a Sustainability Context”. The chair of the Conference, i.e. IACuDiT, is a global network of people, who bear on a wide range of issues of concern and interest in cultural and digital tourism, in an era of major global changes. IACuDiT is a non-profit international association, which values creative, ethical, and progressive action, aimed at the improvement of global hospitality and tourism research on cultural and digital issues. IACuDiT brings together a wide range of academics and industry practitioners from cultural, heritage, communication, and innovational tourism backgrounds and interests. It mainly promotes and sponsors discussion, knowledge sharing, and close cooperation among scholars, researchers, policy makers, and tourism professionals. The Conference was co-chaired by the Kapodistrian University of Athens; the Peloponnesian University of Greece, the Aegean University of Greece, the University of Applied Sciences, Austria; and the National Technical University of Athens (NTUA), Greece.

The *scope* of the Conference was to shed light on the latest developments in the tourism sector, a sector considered as a key driver for many national and regional economies, cross-cutting cultural, environmental, political, economic, social, and technological aspects of contemporary societies. In this respect, the ultimate goal was to provide a step motivating an interdisciplinary, fruitful, and challenging dialogue that could promote further understanding and interaction among a multidisciplinary academic audience, tourism industry professionals and key practitioners, as well as decision-makers. Towards this end, the Conference is touching upon a range of key themes affecting both the tourism sector per se and also sustainable tourism development, in order scientific knowledge but also practical experiences to be creatively shared and synergies to be created.

Based on the nature of the tourism sector and its interaction with many different dimensions of tourist destinations, an interdisciplinary audience of academic researchers and scholars, industry professionals, governmental officials, and other

key industry practitioners have contributed to the 4th IACuDiT Conference. Their valuable contributions have formed the content of the current book, enriching through the perspectives, the context, the approaches, and the tools that can be used for a thorough understanding, planning, and promoting local assets along the lines of sustainability in environmental, economic, and social terms.

To all these people who have helped and supported the realization of the 4th International Conference of IACuDiT and have brought to an end the current editorial effort, we would like to express our gratitude. Special thanks and sincere appreciation are due to all our keynote speakers, for providing valuable input that has enriched discussions and argumentation of the Conference: Dr. Edith M. Szivas, from the UNWTO Themis Foundation, an expert in tourism strategic planning and tourism human capital development; Dr. Kathy Velandar, Director of the Centre for Ecotourism and Wildlife Management, Edinburgh Napier University; and Mr. Peter Wilson, Director of Timber Design Initiatives, Edinburgh.

We would like to hope that our ambition to add value to such a complex and intriguing issue as the one of tourism, by emphasizing its interdisciplinary nature as well as tools and approaches to cope with it, was fraught with success. We hope that the 4th IACuDiT Conference has contributed to the creation of a fertile ground for interdisciplinary work and new ways of thinking and above all, has helped us all, by exchanging our ideas and expertise to see in what a tiny place we occupy in the world and to try to be modest.



Athens, Greece  
Edinburgh, UK  
May 2017



Vicky Katsoni  
Kathy Velandar

# Contents

## **Part I Cultural Heritage Tourism Management**

<b>Portuguese Heritage in the UAE: Authenticity in Archaeology and Tourism</b> . . . . .	3
Adriaan De Man	
<b>Routes and Itineraries as a Means of Contribution for Sustainable Tourism Development</b> . . . . .	17
Giusy Cardia	
<b>Human Development Tourism: Utilizing Cultural Heritage to Create a Universal Culture</b> . . . . .	35
Anastasia Moira	
<b>Importance of Indoor Aerial Filming for Creative Industries (CIs): Looking Towards the Future</b> . . . . .	51
Virginia Santamarina-Campos, Blanca de-Miguel-Molina, Marival Segarra-Oña and María de-Miguel-Molina	
<b>Museum Tourism: A Comparative Study on the Royal Museum of Greenwich and the Ironbridge Gorge Museum</b> . . . . .	67
Ahmad Zuned	
<b>Cluj-Napoca European Youth Capital: Why to Attend a Major Event</b> . . . . .	89
Cristina Fleşeriu, Smaranda Adina Cosma and Marius Bota	
<b>Tourism Impacts of International Arts Festivals in Greece. The Cases of the Kalamata Dance Festival and Drama Short Film Festival</b> . . . . .	101
Vasiliki Georgoula and Theano S. Terkenli	
<b>European Policy on Culture and Prospective Synergies: A Mission not so Impossible</b> . . . . .	115
Sofia Boutsiouki	



<b>Tourism and Ethnic Identity Development: The Impact of “Heritage Greece” Program</b> . . . . .	133
D. Gavriili-Alexandris and G. Katsas	
<b>The Perception of European Identity Through the Cultural &amp; Educational Tourist Experience of Greek Students</b> . . . . .	145
Savvas Makridis, Vasiliki Papageorgiou and Spyridon Alexiou	
<b>‘Extremely Far and Incredibly Quiet’ Block 27—The Jewish Pavilion—Shoah: Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, Poland</b> . . . . .	159
Architect Tal de Lange	
<b>Part II Smart Tourism—Current ICT Developments of Tourism in a Sustainability Context</b>	
<b>How New Technologies Influence the Perception of Athens as a Tourist and Cultural Destination</b> . . . . .	169
Efthymia Sarantakou, Paris Tsartas and Christina Bonarou	
<b>Evaluation of E-Service Quality in the Hotel Sector: A Systematic Literature Review</b> . . . . .	173
Anna Kourtesopoulou, John Kehagias and Alkistis Papaioannou	
<b>The Impact of Website Persuasiveness on Luxury Hotels Financial Performance</b> . . . . .	193
Konstantinos Koronios, Panagiotis Dimitropoulos and Athanasios Kriemadis	
<b>The Importance of Search Engine Optimization for Tourism Websites</b> . . . . .	205
Agisilaos Konidaris and Erato Koustoumpardi	
<b>Multi-Criteria Decision Making in the Evaluation of the Thematic Museums’ Websites</b> . . . . .	219
Katerina Kabassi and Aristotelis Martinis	
<b>The Impact of Social Media on the Lodging Performance of Five Star Hotels in Malta</b> . . . . .	223
Simon Caruana and Gabriella Farrugia	
<b>Augmenting Urban Places’ Identities with Novels</b> . . . . .	245
Dimitrios Makris and Maria Moira	
<b>The Importance of Customer Relationship Management and Social Media in the Greek Wine Tourism Industry</b> . . . . .	249
Dimitrios Belias, Efstathios Velissariou, Dimitrios Kyriakou, Labros Vasiliadis, Christos Mantas, Labros Sdrolias, George Aspridis and Nikolaos Kakkos	

<b>How Does the Spanish Hospitality Industry Envision Its Eco-Innovation Orientation?</b> . . . . .	261
Marival Segarra-Oña, Angel Peiró-Signes, Maria De-Miguel-Molina and Blanca De-Miguel-Molina	
<b>The Interest of Sport Tourism Enterprises in Green Practices</b> . . . . .	275
Georgia Yfantidou, Eleni Spyridopoulou, Alkistis Papaioannou and Panagiota Balaska	
<b>Sustainability in Sport Tourism Education—Theoretical Impact and the Tourism Sector Reality</b> . . . . .	289
Ourania Vrontou, Panagiotis Dimitropoulos, Yiannis Douvis and Vasiliki Avgerinou	
<b>Sustainable Tourism in Costa Rica: Supporting Rural Communities Through Study Abroad</b> . . . . .	301
Linda Heyne, José Rogelio Vargas and Susana Matamoros Mendoza	
<b>Intelligent Management of Outdoor Cultural Events Promoting Exploitation in Smart City Environments</b> . . . . .	303
Zois Koukopoulos and Dimitrios Koukopoulos	
<b>Part III Frameworks, Tools and Approaches for Innovation and Development of Tourism</b>	
<b>Moroccan Gastronomy as a Key Factor of Tourism Attractiveness in Morocco</b> . . . . .	323
Mohamed El Hafid, Hasnaa El Assri and Aziz Sair	
<b>Enhancing Hospitality Services Through the Engagement of Visitors in Local Gastronomy Experiences: A Marketing Perspective from the Supply-Side</b> . . . . .	339
Alexios-Patapios Kontis and Sofoklis Skoultzos	
<b>Cittaslow Philosophy in Yedi Bilgeler Winery—Turkey</b> . . . . .	351
Alev Dünder Arıkan and İrfan Arıkan	
<b>Financial Analysis of Municipal Sport, Tourism and Cultural Organizations</b> . . . . .	363
Panagiotis E. Dimitropoulos, Ourania Vrontou and Vasiliki Avgerinou	
<b>Marine Animals' Ethology as a New Product in Recreational SCUBA Diving Market</b> . . . . .	377
George Skoufas, Anastasia Tsirika and Christian Michel	
<b>Impact Factor of Development of Entertainment Tourism in Macau—Industry Perspective</b> . . . . .	391
Iok Teng Kou, Jian Ming Luo and Ka Yin Chau	

<b>Profitability Determinants of the Greek Hospitality Industry: The Crisis Effect</b> . . . . .	405
Panagiotis E. Dimitropoulos	
<b>Customer Oriented Strategy and Business Performance in Tourism and Hospitality Industry.</b> . . . . .	417
Alkistis Papaioannou, Thanos Kriemadis, Panagiota Kapetaniou, Georgia Yfantidou and Anna Kourtesopoulou	
<b>General Travel Behavior in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace</b> . . . . .	433
G. Yfantidou, A. Dalakis, G. Costa and G. Tzetzis	
<b>A Scientific Modeling of Factors of Human Motivation in Organizations</b> . . . . .	447
Theodoros Stavrinoudis and Christos Kakarouggkas	
<b>Tourism Consumer Behavior and Alternative Tourism: The Case of Agrotourism in Greece.</b> . . . . .	465
Dimitrios Belias, Efstathios Velissariou, Dimitrios Kyriakou, Konstaninos Varsanis, Labros Vasiliadis, Christos Mantas, Labros Sdrolias and Athanasios Koustelios	
<b>Governmental, Entrepreneurial and Social Dysfunctions and Responsibilities in Terms of Tourism Development Strategy Implementation in Greece: Quo Vadis?</b> . . . . .	479
Aglaiia Nousia, Labros Sdrolias, Alina Xyz, Dimitrios Belias, Dagmar Škodová-Parmová, Zuzana Dvořáková-Líšková, Ladislav Rolinek, Stefanos Koffas and Dimitrios Kyriakou	
<b>Individual Budget Travels as a Form of Leisure Among the Polish Citizens</b> . . . . .	493
J. Zawadka and J. Pietrzak-Zawadka	
<b>Greece as a Sports Tourism Destination</b> . . . . .	507
Dimitrios Belias, Efstathios Velissariou, Dimitrios Kyriakou, Labros Vasiliadis, George Aspridis, Christos Mantas, Alexandros Roditis and Athanasios Koustelios	
<b>Rural Residents' Tourist Activity in the Context of Socio-economic Changes in Poland</b> . . . . .	521
Agata Balińska	
<b>Hosted Buyers Program (H.B.P.)—Tourism Development and the City TIF-HELEXPO H.B.P. for the Period 2014–2016</b> . . . . .	537
Dimitris Kourkouridis, Vicky Dalkrani, Kyriakos Pozrikidis and Ioannis Frangopoulos	

<b>The Innovative Tourism Enterprises Assessment Capability . . . . .</b>	<b>553</b>
Leszek Koziol	
<b>Tourists' Precautions in an Unsafe Destination: The Case of Agadir, Morocco . . . . .</b>	<b>573</b>
Nisrine Cherkani and Pedro Quelhas Brito	

# Editorial

In 2015, international tourist arrivals reached 1184 million people, a growth of 4.4% on 2014 (CREST, 2016). This contributed US\$7.2 trillion (9.8%) to world GDP. Twenty countries rely on tourism for 25% or more of their GDP. When looking at the countries represented in this conference, the UK has the lowest percentage at 2.8%, Macau far outstrips all others at 57.2%, while in Greece tourism income represents 18.6% of GDP (Knoema op. cit.). Hence, tourism is an important part of all of our economies, not only because it brings foreign currency, but also because of the distribution of tourism businesses within our countries. Financial and societal benefits reach out into the countryside and rural tourism; particularly, adventure tourism is growing in demand. The Adventure Travel and Trade Association estimates that in 2013 income from adventure travel was valued at \$163 billion and between 2009 and 2012 had an annual estimated growth of 65% in Europe, North America, and South America (ATTA, 2013). Tourism income is critical to many of these rural economies by providing jobs, but equally important are the opportunities for locals to meet new people and engage in the activities developed to support tourism. However, with this demand come additional pressures on the community, infrastructure, services, and environment. Community engagement and good planning can reduce or mitigate these, and hence, consultation along with good management practices and ongoing monitoring and revision is essential.

The IACuDiT conference in Athens addressed many aspects of tourism specifically around the management of cultural tourism, developments in information and communication technologies (ICTs), and how innovation and development could improve the tourism offering. Underlying all was sustainability, more heavily weighted to economic and social, but environmental and cultural were also covered in some presentations. The participants were culturally diverse with many nationalities from numerous countries. This resulted in lively discussions and follows on chats during the various events linked to the conference.

These proceedings include many of the papers presented and reflect the diversity of issues, ideas, and innovations that make up tourism as we see it today.

## **Part I: Cultural Heritage Tourism Management**

Part I consists of eleven chapters focussing on identifying, developing, and managing tourism at a project, national, and worldwide level. Papers present practical information about routes, potential developments, management of existing attractions, festival attendance, impacts of events and festivals, and the use of aerial filming using drones for ease and to reduce impact. European policy was also examined along with human development and cultural heritage.

Chapter “[Portuguese Heritage in the UAE: Authenticity in Archaeology and Tourism](#)” by Adriaan de Man highlights the potential to develop the remains of Portuguese forts along the Omani coast offering a tourism diversification opportunity for UAE. He discusses the marketing potential along with providing insights into how the profile of this heritage can be raised and viewed in a more positive light.

Chapter “[Routes and Itineraries as a Means of Contribution for Sustainable Tourism Development](#)” by Giusy Cardia discusses how itineraries and routes have become more prominent in recent years and that they can support sustainable development in five areas (inclusive and sustainable economic growth; social inclusiveness, employment, and poverty reduction; resource efficiency, environmental protection, and climate change; cultural values, diversity, and heritage; mutual understanding, peace, and security). However, she stresses the fact that these routes need to be identified and classified and that research should be undertaken to assess their usage and hence management requirements. She argues that in order for these to continue and further cultural routes to be developed, more research on their use, past, and traditional ties are required along with encouraging collaboration between local communities, businesses, and stakeholders in order to ensure an active role in promotion and conservation of these routes.

In her chapter, Anastasia Moira considers “[Human Development Tourism: Utilizing the Cultural Heritage to Create a Universal Culture](#)”. She describes how human development tourism aims to utilize the world’s material and intangible cultural heritage to cultivate a universal culture of HD values and principles. Her paper provides an example of how intangible heritage reflects the HD’s values and principles and provides people useful guidelines they can use in order to apply these values and principles in their life. The pilot programme, also, shows how nature and the material and intangible elements of cultural heritage can be combined in a meaningful and structured way in the context of Human Development Tourism Program.

Chapter “[Importance of Indoor Aerial Filming for Creative Industries \(CIs\): Looking Towards the Future](#)” by Virginia Santamarina-Campos, Blanca

de-Miguel-Molina, Marival Segarra-Oña, and María de-Miguel-Molina discusses the rise of Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS), commonly known as drones, and their use by film producers in outdoor aerial photography and filming. RPAS provide significant advantages over current photography and filming techniques such as the expansion of creative spaces and movements of the camera. The benefits of using indoor drones have not yet been studied in detail so the requirements and expected characteristics of their use are analysed in this paper.

Chapter “[Museum Tourism: A Comparative Study on the Royal Museum of Greenwich and the Ironbridge George Museum](#)” was presented by Ahmad Maez Al Zuned. He used questionnaire surveys and interviews with museum officials to explore the perceptions of museum stakeholders in order to better inform museum management strategies and planning. The results indicate there is an ideal level of usage that encourages engagement with local people as well as visitors which requires ongoing review and monitoring. He also notes that care should be taken to understand visitor perception and satisfaction to encourage “word-of-mouth” recommendations and that museums should be a centre of knowledge, entertainment, leisure, and above all excellence.

Chapter “[Cluj-Napoca European Youth Capital: Why to Attend a Major Event](#)” was presented by Cristina Fleşeriu, Smaranda Cosma and Marius Bota. The role of festivals as events is an important topic, and the reasons young people in Romania attend major events were examined in this paper. The results show that festival goers attended for the experience and the socialization with other participants. Concerts were preferred followed by educational events. A number of other important factors were shown, discussed, and their managerial implications highlighted.

Chapter “[Tourism Impacts of International Arts Festivals in Greece. The Cases of the Kalamata Dance Festival and Drama Short Film Festival](#)” by Vasiliki Georgoula and Theano Terkenli explores the role of international arts festivals in the tourism development in the cities of Kalamata and Drama, Greece, through measurement and evaluation of the perceptions and opinions of its attendants and the cities’ residents and visitors. The results show that the festivals have influenced tourism development in the two cities, but in different ways. Drama has benefited by improved tourism, image, and as a first-time visitor attraction while Kalamata, an already established destination, has enhanced its image and high-profile visitor attraction. In both cases, it is widely acknowledged that the festivals have further untapped potential, as unique city branding tools, adding value to the destinations and extending the tourism season.

Chapter “[European Policy on Culture and Prospective Synergies: a Mission not so Impossible](#)” was presented by Sofia Boutsiouki. In this paper, the dimensions of the European cultural policy context are considered along with focusing on two policy actions: the European Capitals of Culture and the European Heritage Label. It analyses their role as pillars of broader synergies in the field of culture. It concludes that both actions provide interesting characteristics and have accumulated valuable experience which can aid cities and regions in their design and implementation of their own cultural policies.

Chapter “[Tourism and Ethnic Identity Development: The Impact of “Heritage Greece” Program.](#)” by D. Gavrieli-Alexandris and G. Katsas uses the Heritage Greece programme as a case study, employing a time series analysis of responses to two surveys of participants: one before arrival to Greece and the other at the conclusion of the programme. The paper relates to experiential learning as a tool to explore ties to ethnic identity. In addition, it establishes cultural tourism as a vehicle for bringing together heritage and ethnic identity and highlights the opportunities emerging for the destination as a result of bridging heritage to ethnic identity.

Chapter “[The Perception of European Identity Through the Cultural & Educational Tourist Experience of Greek Students](#)” by Savvas Makridis, Vasiliki Papageorgiou and Spyridon Alexiou, examines how cultural and educational tourism can also become an opportunity to challenge socio-cultural standardisation, due to its role in the visualisation, preservation, and even reaffirmation of an individual identity. Their case study focuses on students who have visited the Technological Educational Institute of Central Greece and Ionian Islands as travellers or participants in the EU educational exchange programme. Their findings indicate that students’ cultural or educational experiences have positive influence on the interpretation of European identity and highlight the importance of placing greater emphasis on the consideration of the sociocultural context in which these experiences are shared. Such emphasis should also include investigating the correlation of the sociocultural dimensions of students’ tourist experience abroad to the socio-psychological causes of students’ perception of Europe.

Chapter “[Extremely Far and Incredibly Quiet Block 27—The Jewish Pavilion, Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum](#)” by Tal de Lange is a summary of the presentation for the creation of a permanent memorial to these murdered Jewish men, women, and children—one that would encompass both their inconceivable numbers as well as their individual identities. In April 2010, following a competition, held by Yad Vashem museum, Studio de Lange was nominated to plan and design the permanent exhibition in block 27, the Jewish pavilion at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum. The site is UNESCO Heritage since 1979. The pavilion is open to the public since July 2013.

## **Part II: Smart Tourism—Current ICT Developments of Tourism in a Sustainability Context**

In Part II, the proceedings moved into discussions about ICT and the role it plays in tourism development with thirteen papers relating to this topic. The researchers showed how ICT could be used to change perceptions of a destination or facility and how optimizing search engines could increase the number of “hits” on a Website, the impacts of social media on hotels and lodgings, CRM (Customer Relationship Management) and social media, the role of novels in urban tourism and sustainability in education, hospitality and the environment by reducing pollution.



In Chapter “[How New Technologies Influence the Perception of Athens as a Tourist and Cultural Destination](#)”, Efthymia Sarantakou, Paris Tsartas, and Christina Bonarou presented a paper on how new technologies meet the requirements set by the new forms of cultural consumption and can create tailor-made products and services. A mature, established destination, such as Athens, can use soft actions based on public and private sector partnerships, on voluntarism, and on the appropriate use of new technologies in order to capitalize old and new tourist and cultural infrastructure, as well as to improve its image and upgrade its reputation.

Chapter “[Evaluation of E-Service Quality in the Hotel Sector: A Systematic Literature Review](#)” by Anna Kourtesopoulou, John Kehagias, and Alikstis Papaioannou proposed that delivering high-quality e-services is a key strategy to achieve competitive advantage, due to its positive correlation with the increase of customers purchasing decisions. Major differences were identified based on hotel type (chain or independent), size (number of beds), and category. The results of the research suggest that hotels should improve their Website design as it has a major contribution on customer experience in sourcing information or making an online purchase.

Chapter “[The Impact of Website Persuasiveness on Luxury Hotels Financial Performance](#)” by Konstantinos Koronios, Panagiotis Dimitropoulos, and Athanasios Kriemadis analysed the effectiveness of 335 Website of luxury hotels using STATA 12. Persuasiveness was measured using six dimensions, namely informativeness, usability, credibility, inspiration, involvement, and reciprocity. The results showed a low degree of overall persuasiveness, specifically in the involvement dimension. The findings could offer the hotel managers useful insights into enhancing their Website’s persuasiveness and accordingly their financial performance.

Chapter “[The Importance of Search Engine Optimization for Tourism Websites](#)” by Agisilaos Konidaris and Erato Koutsoumpardi examined the metrics of four hundred tourism business Websites on the island of Kefalonia, Greece, and showed that Search Engine Optimization (SEO) metrics were optimized for only 25% with the remainder requiring extensive optimization. More optimized Websites had more generic queries in their category. Hence, SEO plays a significant role in tourism Website rankings and requires improvement for a large number of businesses.

Chapter “[Multi-criteria Decision Making in the Evaluation of the Thematic Museums’ Websites](#)” by Katerina Kabassi and Aristotelis Martinis discussed how museums are now using Websites as a main marketing tool. In this paper, a model for evaluating and comparing Websites of thematic museums is presented. The analytic hierarchy process (AHP) is used to compare two Websites of five museums based on olives and olive oil. Pairwise comparisons were used to calculate a final value for each Website. This was then compared to earlier methods of assessing Website quality and found to be a more effective method of evaluation.

Chapter “[The Impact of Social Media on the Lodging Performance of Five Star Hotels in Malta](#)” by Simon Caruana and Gabriella Farrugia discussed that while the importance of social media is clearly defined and its importance as a

communication medium with the consumers is seen as fundamental, it appears that social media is not being used to its full potential. It has been shown to have an impact on booking behaviour, but hotels are finding it difficult to establish a direct link with the occupancy rate. The conclusion was that further research is required to ensure the uptake of social media by the hotel industry to increase impact on bookings and that hotels need to ensure they have employees who have the right skills to analyse the data gathered.

Chapter “[Augmenting Urban Places’ Identities with Novels](#)” by Dimitrios Makris and Maria Moira outlined the potential to present cities in a new light by using augmented reality linking cities and novels. The results of two case studies are presented suggesting there is a role for novels-based AR medium for a creative and fruitful engagement when visiting urban places, and encompassing a more multifaceted social and spiritual involvement of tourists.

Chapter “[The Importance of Customer Relationship Management and Social Media in the Greek Wine Tourism Industry](#)” by Dimitrios Belias, Efstathios Velissariou, Dimitrios Kyriakou, Labros Vasiliadis, Christos Mantas, Labros Sdrolias, George Aspridis, and Kakkos Nikolaos considered the value of CRM and social media on the wine tourism in Greece. The results of the literature review indicate that CRM would benefit wine producers; however, it seems that the way that they operate, relying on traditional marketing methods, means that the use of social media may not be ideal as word-of-mouth recommendations remain the important aspect for this sector.

In Chapter “[How Does the Spanish Hospitality Industry Envision Its Eco-innovation Orientation?](#)”, Marival Segarra-Oña, Angel Peiró-Signes, Maria de Miguel Molina, and Blanca de Miguel Molina used the model of structural equations and data retrieved from the Technological Innovation Spanish Panel to analyse the key factors in the environmental orientation of innovation processes for hotel companies. They discuss how the environmental orientation of companies is proactively affected by the typology of innovations and the existing relationship between the market drivers (customers, competitors, clients, and suppliers) and companies’ environmental orientation. Based on the results, a validated partial least squares (PLS) graphical model is presented, which clarifies and quantifies established relationships among the different variables.

Chapter “[The Interest of Sport Tourism Enterprises in Green Practices](#)” by Georgia Yfantidou, Eleni Spyridopoulou, Alkistis Papaioannou, and Panagiota Balaska investigated the attitudes and the behaviour of small, medium, and large sport tourism enterprises with regard to sustainable development. As a global industry dependent on high-quality natural environments for its attractiveness, tourism cannot hide from its responsibility to promote more sustainable business practices. The fundamental idea of the selective marketing approach is to attract a certain kind of tourists to the destination, e.g. those who behave in an environmentally friendly manner. The model for sustainable tourism development in Greece relates to ecological change brought by tourist activity, infrastructure development, and through sport.

Chapter “[Sustainability in Sport Tourism Education—Theoretical Impact and the Tourism Sector Reality](#)” by Ourania Vrontou, Panagiotis Dimitropoulos, Yiannis Douvis, and Vasiliki Avgerinou discusses how sport tourism education has failed to effectively incorporate sustainability as a core course module, focusing instead on traditional operational outlines, thus limiting the building of green conscious and applicable industry skills in the tourism management scene. A systematic review provides a range of approaches to assist in the difficult task of mapping a sustainable sports tourism course outline, not only in terms of structure, but also in terms of the relationship between the course and the evolving tourism environment. The examination of existing theoretical paradigms aims to produce generalizable fields of academic education leading to well-skilled sustainability-minded sport tourism professionals.

Chapter “[Sustainable Tourism in Costa Rica: Supporting Rural Communities Through Study Abroad](#)” by Linda Heyne, José Rogelio Vargas, and Susana Matamoros Mendoza showed how national initiatives that promote sustainability and examples of rural tourism as experienced through study abroad enable students to learn about sustainable tourism by talking directly with tour operators, staying in local accommodation, and undertaking recreational activities. It also shares the work of José Rogelio Vargas and Susana Matamoros Mendoza who train local community members living near protected areas to become sustainable tourism entrepreneurs and aim through their efforts to improve the quality of life and economic viability of rural communities while conserving surrounding natural resources.

Chapter “[Intelligent Management of Outdoor Cultural Events Promoting Exploitation in Smart City Environments](#)” by Zois Koukopoulos and Dimitrios Koukopoulos investigates the feasibility of applying Internet of Things solutions in outdoor cultural events aiming in the enhancement of leisure experience for tourists and the promotion of real-life cultural festivities exploitation for the benefit of local communities. The authors designed and implemented modern tools that permit tangible and intangible cultural data collection from public authorities and spectators, which enhanced dissemination of data to the broader public adapting augmented reality techniques in a friendly manner and local businesses products and services efficient dissemination and exploitation. Their study suggests that such an interaction can be beneficial for local authorities and tourism supporting a sustainable city environment.

### **Part III: Frameworks, Tools and Approaches for Innovation and Development of Tourism**

In the final part of this conference proceedings, eighteen papers dealt with innovation in tourism development. They illustrated the importance of gastronomy in cultural tourism and the role niche tourism (e.g. agrotourism, low-budget, rural

tourism, casino tourism) plays in economic development. Hosted Buyers Programs linked to Tourism Fairs were considered along with the various factors that determine profitability in the Greek hospitality industry. Sustainability was addressed via recreational scuba-diving. Greece as a sporting destination was examined as well as profitability and business performance. Overall, it provides a diverse and useful series of tools and innovations for tourism development.

Chapter “[Moroccan Gastronomy as a Key Factor of Tourism Attractiveness in Morocco](#)” by Mohamed el Hafid, Hasnaa el Assri, and Aziz Sair used multivariate analysis to study the attributes of tourists visiting Morocco in order to classify them according to the type of travel and to see whether the Moroccan gastronomy occupies an important position among the essential attributes of the destination. They found that gastronomy played a part in the attractiveness of the destination, although better promotion and communication about the offering as well as new products was required.

Chapter “[Enhancing Hospitality Services Through the Engagement of Visitors in Local Gastronomy Experiences: A Marketing Perspective from the Supply-Side](#)” by Alexios Patapios Kontis and Sofoklis Skoultos addressed how local gastronomy has gained recognition as an integral part of the tourism product and how as a mean of destinations differentiation it plays a crucial role to the construction of the unique character, identity, and authenticity of each destination. In recognition of this, the Hellenic Chamber of Hotels (HCH) has designed and is implementing an innovative programme, which uses local gastronomy culture of each Greek tourism destination, as a vehicle to enrich breakfast content in hotels with local agrodietary products, traditional recipes, and viands. This research showed that the “Greek” breakfast is a success with tourists as well as encouraging hospitality businesses to purchase local products.

Chapter “[Cittaslow Philosophy in Yedi Bilgeler Winery—Turkey](#)” by Alev Dündar Arikan and Irfan Arikan considered how wine tourism is more than visiting vineyards because it has the power to create and develop a region’s identity and increase distribution channels. This paper describes how a winery in Turkey has adopted and implemented the Cittaslow philosophy (a slow foods concept developed in Italy) and the value it brings to the local people.

Chapter “[Financial Analysis of Municipal Sport, Tourism and Cultural Organizations](#)” by Panagiotis Dimitropoulos, Ourania Vrontou and Vasiliki Avgerinou discussed that with the decentralization of the decision-making process and resource management, local authorities need to be more effective in managing their sport, tourism, and cultural organizations. A study of two municipal cultural and sport organizations showed that by improving the planning of the regular (operating) income and expenditures, the negative ratios will be converted to positive, resulting in positive overall performance for both organizations.

Chapter “[Marine Animals’ Ethology as a New Product in Recreational SCUBA Diving Market](#)” by George Skoufas, Anastasia Tsirika, and Christian Michel examined diving preferences and behaviour and found there was a lack of awareness of the health and safety dangers of diving at deeper depths by recreational divers. The results suggest increased knowledge about marine life and ecology by

divers, and dive companies would make shallow diving more interesting and might encourage recreational divers to remain in these waters, thereby improving their safety and reducing ecological impacts.

Chapter “[Impact Factor of Development of Entertainment Tourism in Macau—Industry Perspective](#)” by Iok Teng Kou, Jian Ming Luo, and Ka Yin Chau presented the results of interviews and questionnaires with high-level managers in eighteen private organizations in the entertainment industry in Macau. The aim was to evaluate the industry and its main impact factors. Five factors were identified: development of entertainment tourism products, promotion at target markets, government support, education and management of human resources and innovation and creativity. They provide a basis for policy makers, corporations, and educational institutes that can be used to identify and diversify future tourism products

Chapter “[Profitability Determinants of the Greek Hospitality Industry: The Crisis Effect](#)” by Panagiotis Dimitropoulos presented research undertaken to assess the factors affecting financial performance in the Greek hospitality industry. Limited liability companies and corporations registered with the Chamber of Commerce during the fiscal year 2011–2013 were examined, providing 13,724 observations for analysis. They found that firm size, sales turnover, and operating cash flows made a positive contribution to profitability, while firms with increased leverage and capital intensity (fraction of fixed assets) were associated with lower levels of profitability.

Chapter “[Customer Oriented Strategy and Business Performance in Tourism and Hospitality Industry](#)” by Alkistis Papaioannou, Thanos Kriemadis, Kapetaniou Panagiota, Georgia Yfantidou, and Anna Kourtesopoulou studied the implementation of customer-oriented strategy in 142 four- and five-star hotels in the region of Peloponnese, Greece. Particular interest was paid to the relationship between customer-oriented strategy used by four- and five-star hotels and business performance (profit, ROI, sales volume, and market share). The results showed that there were significant and positive relationships between the customer-oriented strategy and business performance.

Chapter “[General Travel Behavior in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace](#)” was presented by G. Yfantidou, A. Dalakis, G. Costa, G. Tzetzis. In this research, tourists from seven countries were asked about their travel behaviour including how often, with whom, and what activities they undertook. The researchers concluded that to develop modern tourism products and turn them into creative lures that will attract visitors, businesses and Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) need to develop strategies and policies, which will be based on their tourist resources and will enrich them with intangible stories, myths, emotional experiences, events, and activities.

Chapter “[A Scientific Modeling of Factors of Human Motivation in Organizations](#)” by Theodoros Stavrinoudis and Christos Kakarougkas created a new integrated model of human motivation in organizations which led to the formulation and the novel codification of two main factors: the regulating factor and the motivating factor. The regulating factor within an organization can regulate/affect the motivating factor which in turn affects the behaviour and the

actions of the employees. It depends on two factors: the human/employee and the community/organization. Likewise, the motivating factor depends on two agent factors: needs and the outcomes of actions/behaviours (positive or negative). The researchers intend to use the results of this study to carry out field research upon the motivation via reward systems in Greek luxury hotels and hope to discover how these systems can contribute to the change of organizational culture in hotels.

Chapter “[Tourism Consumer Behavior and Alternative Tourism: The Case of Agrotourism in Greece](#)” by Dimitrios Belias, Efstathios Velissariou, Dimitrios Kyriakou, Konstantinos Varsanis, Labros Vasiliadis, Christos Mantas, Labros Sdrolias, and Athanasios Koustelios found that since agrotourism is not legally recognized in Greece, it is difficult for farmers to host visitors on their farms and process and sell their products directly. This literature review highlights aspects of agrotourism, and the authors proposed further research is required to evaluate this industry.

Chapter “[Governmental, Entrepreneurial and Social Dysfunctions and Responsibilities in Terms of Tourism Development Strategy Implementation in Greece: Quo Vadis?](#)” by Aglaia Nousia, Labros Sdrolias, Alina Xyz, Dimitrios Belias, Dagmar Škodová—Parmová, Zuzana Dvořáková—Líšková, Ladislav Rolinek, Stefanos Koffas, Dimitrios Kyriakou highlighted the disparity between the potential value of tourism to the country’s GDP and the lack of investment and vision in the tourism product. The result is a reduced competitive edge with neighbouring countries who offer the same product, e.g. sun, sea, and sand, but have invested in infrastructure and services. The authors suggest that cooperation, dialogue, and action need to take place to improve tourism provision and ensure the place of Greece in the tourism market.

Chapter “[Individual Budget Travels as a Form of Leisure Among the Polish Citizens](#)” by Jan Zawadka and Joanna Pietrzak-Zawadka examined various aspects of budget travelling including why travel this way, who they travel with, where do they go, what do they do, and how do they manage on such low budgets. The results suggest they travel in this manner is by choice (not always due to economic necessity) and the main restrictions to further travel are lack of time and money.

Chapter “[Greece as a Sports Tourism Destination](#)” by Dimitrios Belias, Efstathios Velissariou, Dimitrios Kyriakou, Labros Vasiliadis, George Aspridis, Christos Mantas, Alexandros Reditis, and Athanasios Koustelios examined the potential of sport tourism in Greece. The literature review showed that at almost 15 years after the Olympic Games of Athens, Greece has lost its chance to develop as a sports tourism destination and further analytical work is required for future evaluation of the sport tourism market.

Chapter “[Rural Residents’ Tourist Activity in the Context of Socio-economic Changes in Poland](#)” by Agata Balińska considered the role Polish rural residents play in tourism and shows that their participation is lower than the national average. The results suggest there is a real demand for services in rural areas, but there were factors affecting this including the character of work, tight finances, mentality, value system, or environmentally friendly place of residence. Similarly, there are issues

with insufficient access to the tourism offer correlated with the physical distance from travel agencies and poorer than in cities access to Internet.

Chapter “[Hosted Buyers Program \(H.B.P.\)—Tourism Development and the City TIF-HELEXPO H.B.P. for the Period 2014–2016](#)” by Dimitris Kourkouridis, Vicky Dalkrani, Kyriakos Pozrikidis, and Ioannis Frangopoulos considered Hosted Buyers Programs (the invited visitors who attend Trade Fairs) and the substantial contribution they make to tourism in the hosting areas. This study explored the 90-year history of tourism development of the city of Thessaloniki and concluded Hosted Buyer Programs had a major impact on the city’s tourism.

Chapter “[The Innovative Tourism Enterprises Assessment Capability](#)” by Leszek Koziol presents the concept of the innovative capability evaluation system of an enterprise in a standardized formula and presents the results of empirical research. The basic problem presented in the paper is the recognition and evaluation of the innovative capability of the researched companies and a set of the innovative capability of key determinants which constitute the basis for assessing this capability was extracted. An explanatory study based on a sample of 6 Polish hotels belonging to medium-sized enterprises was conducted, and their competitiveness was estimated.

Chapter “[Tourists’ Precautions in an Unsafe Destination: The Case of Agadir, Morocco](#)” by Nisrine Cherkani and Pedro Quelhas Brito examines what fascinates tourist to travel to a less secure destination. The authors try to define what kind of precautions tourists take while travelling to a destination which can threaten their safety and in which way those precautions contribute to increase tourist satisfaction.

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**Part I**  
**Cultural Heritage Tourism Management**



# Portuguese Heritage in the UAE: Authenticity in Archaeology and Tourism

Adriaan De Man

**Abstract** The relatively short-lived, early modern Portuguese military presence along the Omani coast, but also that of the nowadays United Arab Emirates, has left few physical remains. Some forts have been partially excavated, whilst others seem to have been so heavily reconstructed that their original layout remains invisible. As a result, they have little impact on the visitor experience. This paper seeks to provide a framework that renders these forts, and the narratives around them, pertinent in terms of authenticity. A second step deals with their integration as a potentially distinctive heritage resource. Both approaches need to ponder whether such structures are to become major tourist attractions, which seems unfeasible in the near future, yet destinations may still capitalize on them as part of an integrated marketing strategy. As an exercise, the following text can build on comparable examples, ranging from certain prehistoric sites to forms of intangible heritage, as their commodification faces, to some extent at least, similar challenges. In any case, in the heavily Dubai-centered tourism industry of the UAE, the sustainable use of cultural niche areas along the coast does fit well the national design for diversification.

**Keywords** Heritage management · Forts · UAE tourism · Authenticity  
Branding

**JEL Classification** Z32

## 1 Introduction and Key Literature

The aim of this paper is to connect the concept of authenticity to the wider discussion about commodification in the heritage sector, and more specifically to adverse circumstances, namely the almost total absence of tangibles. This analysis

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furthermore explores another challenging dimension, that of negative perception, combined with peripheral locations. The coastal fortifications of Portuguese origin in the nowadays UAE form a suitable case study.

The vast body of publications on authenticity in tourism and heritage may be divided in two main tendencies, that of marketing and consumer insights, on the one hand, and that of social sciences, on the other. The former constitutes research directly related to the industry, whereas the latter is mostly academia-based, although there is no practical separation possible. References deemed useful to this paper have been processed in the text below, where they apply to specific aspects. On this same subject, one can find a great deal of authoritative sources (e.g. Howard 2002; McKercher and du Cros 2002; Smith 2006; Lindholm 2008; Knudsen and Waade 2010; Morgan et al. 2010; Straub 2012); the historical ones, on their turn, are outlined in the following paper.

## 2 Historical Synopsis and Dispersion of Portuguese Sites

The first Portuguese ships arrived in the Arabian peninsula in 1507, under the command of Afonso de Albuquerque, who explored the Gulf ports, taking Hormuz only in 1515 and establishing a network of fortifications to ensure a lasting control (Iria 1973; Bethencourt and Chaudhuri 1998). This situation lasted for about a century, as the English arrived in 1616 and rapidly assisted the Persian interests; already in 1622, the Portuguese garrison of Hormuz surrendered, facing a combined Anglo-Persian assault. Portuguese presence in the Arabian Gulf and Oman created a number of challenges not only to local and regional powers, but especially to concurring European nations, and to the Mughal and Persian empires that equally sought to control this ancient trade route (Soucek 2008). Alliances were short-lived and often were the result of fast-moving agreements with third parties. The Savavid dynasty in particular had some irregular affairs with the Portuguese kingdom, as Ottoman power extended, namely over Egypt, which was far more demanding and immediate a threat than the European forts. Ottomans became a serious player in the Indian Ocean, and Hormuz had already temporarily fallen to expeditions in 1552 and 1581. But most of the Ottoman expansion was land-based and therefore did not excessively affect Portuguese naval activity (Subrahmanyam 1995). After losing Hormuz, Portugal based its logistics on Muscat until also this city was evacuated in 1650, which rapidly represented the disaggregation of Portuguese power in the region.

During this century and a half, a sequence of forts was created at the entrance of the Arabian Gulf, north of the nowadays Omani coast (Curiate/Kuriyat/Qurayyat, Mascate/Muscat, Sibó/As Sib, and Borca/Barka, and Soar/Sohar), and correspond to the Emirati sites of Khor Fakkan (Port. Corfacão), Kalba (Port. Quelba), Bidiyah (Port. Libedia), (?) Mada and Diba al Hisn (Port. Doba). As was the case in the wider region, reaching Bahrain, their construction seems to not have obeyed to a global strategic plan, but rather to specific situations that required their setup or abandonment. For the garrisons, these posts were not at all coveted, as becomes

clear by the rapid rotation of commanding officers, and probably of their men as well, whose daily lives consisted in stationing remote and arid outposts involving little or no communication with local populations. Most ramparts were built very slowly over time, which is why there often is a mixture of materials and of building solutions in the same construction.

As far as their outline is concerned, Portuguese fortifications in the Gulf all have a triangular or a rectangular shape, that is, the smaller ones have only three bastions. Most have been identified through written documents, maps in particular (see some place names and topography on Lazaro Luis' 1563 map; Albuquerque and Santos 1990, and a rich corresponding iconography in Loureiro 2007), or oral history, and therefore lack positive archaeological confirmation. One exception is Bidiyah, in the emirate of Fujairah, where an excavation did confirm the Portuguese origin for what sources call Libedia. This fort was built using masonry from a much older tower, but material remains of European origin are scarce, which is not the case in other sites (Ziolkowski 1999; King 2001). Before its establishment in 1623, António Bocarro described the place as a small village of no more than 200 inhabitants. One other fort was built in Kalba (Port. Quelba), construction having started in 1624, and some 30 km to the North, in Khor Fakkan (Port. Corfacão) a triangular structure was built around 1620—its ruins were still visible to the crew of a Dutch vessel in 1666, as well as a second outpost on a neighboring hill, also completely abandoned.

This swift overview shows an extremely limited number of physical elements to work with for creating a functional heritage narrative. Strict archaeological remains may be complemented, though, by an assortment of supplementary elements.

### 3 Heritage Tourism in the UAE

Four hundred years later, the same coastal area corresponds that of the United Arab Emirates, a federation of seven emirates, established in 1971. The cities of Abu Dhabi, and especially that of Dubai, have become major tourism destinations, the UAE tourism sector being good for AED 133.8 bn, around USD 37 bn that is, or 8.7% of GDP, in 2016 (WTTC 2016). International tourist arrivals in 2016 are estimated at 18.2 mn, with a 2020 forecast of 23.8 mn. The very recent leisure development and hospitality industry are part of long-term tourism strategies in the emirates of Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and to a certain extent Sharjah (e.g. Sharjah museum- and Biennial-stimulated) as well, with Dubai in particular at the center of a growing MICE market (Alpen Capital 2016), a positioning bearing witness of an ongoing diversification strategy aimed to reduce economic oil-dependency. To compare figures and even just photographs from two or three decades ago with the current reality is a stunning exercise; today most iconic buildings have to do with hospitality, commerce, and museums, which aim at a target that may be loosely identified as cultural tourists. The social and cultural impacts stemming from international tourism in the UAE have been identified and remain a challenge, though (Stephenson 2014). Within this hypermodern everyday reality, authenticity

and identity have become a concern in the heritage narrative (Melotti 2014). In no more than two generations, customary ways of interacting have been forced into adjustments and compromises, given the boosting economy and, as a result, disruptive changes both in the physiognomy of cities and number of foreign residents. The cosmopolitan effects of development altogether may be deemed as positive, yet local families, tribes and policy makers alike are confronted with a cultural landscape that is now radically unlike that of their parents. Identity issues about the place of tradition in modern Emirati society have encouraged numerous ethnographic and cultural activities, some in the form of festivals and creative/performative arts, other as museums, traditional villages and places of reflection, and other still as archaeological sites.

As is the case elsewhere, they all target both residents and international tourists, and even among the former there are sharp differences between the emotional impact of commodified heritage on Emirati nationals and on expats of many diverse backgrounds, which form almost nine tenths of the population. Tourists on the other hand do predominantly seek a different experience, with a heavy focus on shopping (Peter and Anandkumar 2011; Mehta et al. 2014) and the exhibition industry, especially in view of the upcoming Expo2020 universal exposition (Jauncey and Nadkarni 2014), but also on high-revenue niches such as medical tourism (Inhorn et al. 2012) and desert hotels, which of course includes traditional culture and building techniques (Ryan and Stuart 2009). The thriving Dubai tourism industry has created a number of new spaces some call hyper-real destinations, configuring new development models (Steiner 2010), such as Burj Al Arab and Burj Khalifa, the Palm, Madinat Jumeirah, and so forth. All these modern reinterpretations do integrate a taste of locality and tradition, either by adding the barjeel or wind tower to a shopping mall, or decorating the entrance with arabesque motives, or creating a sense of palatine water flowing through canals. This idea of course enters the specific tourist landscape of the UAE, and the country's leisure habits. Heritage destinations outside Dubai have been promoted by each of the emirates' tourism authorities, chiefly aiming at residents or international niche segments. The breathtaking east coast, very popular for snorkeling and diving, as well as the northern emirates, play an important part in providing extra-urban genuineness, yet cannot/should not match the return on investment achieved by Dubai.

But the local heritage-related economy is often also very segmented, a good example being that of falconry (Wakefield 2012), which is a dimension present in many exhibitions and decorations, inscribed as living heritage by UNESCO, and even central to the planned Zayed National Museum's architecture on Saadiyat Island—the same cultural district where a Louvre Abu Dhabi and a Guggenheim branch are bound to open to the public in the very near future. But falconry means something fundamentally different to the local population, having little emotional meaning and only residual involvement by tourists. The way local populations understand and consume their own heritage also depends on designated historical themes, which in the case of the UAE look very connected to the recent past, especially the building of the country in 1971 and the immediately previous periods. One of such themes is a somewhat conflicting sentiment on the existing,

positive British-Emirati relationship (Bristol-Rhys 2009), although historically this same relationship could be heavily challenged, namely during the operations against so-called Gulf pirates (De Man 2017a).

In short, broad narrative forms of history are always marketable, whilst analytical studies are much less interesting for tourism consumption. This is so because the way history is integrated in vendible narratives is always selective, and so is the somewhat uncomfortable Portuguese presence in the Gulf, which, again, consisted in little more than the establishment of a series of forts along what is nowadays the coastline of the UAE. One defining episode occurred in 1507, when Khor Fakkan resisted to a Portuguese fleet, the town being burned down and at least part of the local population suffered a dreadful revenge (Lancaster and Lancaster 2011); the popular image of Portuguese soldiers still today is connected to that of nose and ear cutters. On the other hand, there has been a vivid interest in the forts' architecture and reference on maps and in historical documents, and so in principle the resource is viable in terms of tourism production.

#### **4 Authenticating and Commodifying**

The relationship between built or archaeological heritage and tourism has been studied for quite some time, in the scope of authenticity. This concept is rarely (if ever) based on some intrinsic quality of a structure or object, and instead seems more related to social consensus, meaning that something becomes authentic if deemed so by a community. It has little to do with age or physical attributes, and became a growing concern not only in academia, but also in tourism practice. Despite some previous reflection on the subject, the mid-1990s saw a development of theorization on the matter (Ashworth and Larkham 1994; Nuryanti 1996; Dahles 1998), and international organizations such as UNESCO, ICOMOS and the European Union created successive action plans heavily based on heritage-based development. A quick overview seems to identify a current trend shifting focus from strict material authenticity to those of intangible heritage and cultural landscapes. What this entails for the tourism industry is that a place brand needs to invest increasingly more in the production of what has been called emotional geographies (Davidson et al. 2006). This is central of course to the demand component, and the tourist motivations, something heritage tourism research used to traditionally be less concerned with, even during a certain period when publications on this topic were thriving (Gnoth 1997; Kaufman 1999; Garrod and Fyall 2001; Poria et al. 2003).

Specifically regarding the potential branding of Portuguese heritage in the UAE, two immediate challenges consist in the effective lack of available material remains, on the one hand, and the general sense of detachment from the viewpoint of local culture, on the other. Both dimensions may be addressed through a process of authenti(fi)cation, still a hot topic in tourism studies, history and anthropology alike. In essence, it goes back to the tensions between accuracy and commodification, in

other words, between the strict object-related, essentialist perspectives, and existential ones that look at authenticity as an individual immersion (Knudsen and Waade 2010). The concept of authenticity as defined above (i.e. it first and foremost needs community validation) only becomes useful in practical heritage management when it confronts visitors/consumers not with the objective details of spaces and objects, but rather with an experience and thus to a feeling. This has been proven to be manipulable, given that tourists connect and even enhance the representation of places through mediation, without which such experiences would be less attractive. Many publications explore the meaning and conceptualization of heritage authenticity (Moscardo 2001; Prentice 2001; Taylor 2001) and one finds many recent applications both on case studies (Gilley 2014; Thomsen and Vester 2015) and on further theorization (Wang et al. 2015), the latter often particularly linked with the fields of visitor perception, eco-cultural tourism (Stoykova 2015; Tiberghien et al. 2017). In the pervasive equation between heritage and development, archaeology has been associated with positive effects in local community livelihoods and tourism in general (Gould and Burtenshaw 2014); negative impacts of tourism on heritage have also been widely identified (Smyth 2016), but in any of these cases there is a need for commodification. Closely related to what was mentioned above about narratives, two theoretical vectors may be pointed out in a connection with authenticity. One approach is built on historical accuracy, which always enters in conflict with the commodification process, and a second one assumes that a staged authenticity is much more appealing as a narrative, and not in detriment of truthfulness.

## 5 The Usefulness of the Past—Any Past?

This paper assumes that the scarce archaeological remains of the Portuguese forts in the UAE are currently not usable as part of a coherent tourism product. Then how to move forward and package the past (cf. Baillie et al. 2010), for consumption in the real world? An artificial, top-down solution is usually not a good idea; politization of heritage may be counterproductive in cultural tourism, as several studies have shown (Huong and Lee 2015), yet on the other hand the lack of historical awareness, or even misrepresentation of certain may be equally harmful. The combination of both tangibles and intangibles is extremely difficult to manage, as the latter are usually imperfectly understood and therefore not well transformed according to the visitors' needs. In practical terms, to what extent does a tour operator or a hotel manager need to deal with historical precision? A variety of examples shows that this is probably not what the average tourist is looking for; from the Riviera Maya to the Honolulu luaus, a socio-centric, middle-class family will not seek radical authenticity, without the comforts of running water and prepared food (De Man 2017b). No one is there to provide the accurate sequence of Maya history because it really does not matter to the tourist; the Yucatan's archaeological sites, on the other

side, are an iconic must. It is hence a standard assumption that tangible parts are more significant for tourist satisfaction (Albayrak et al. 2010).

This simplification is however not linearly applicable in all parts of the world. In the particular case of Arab heritage commodification processes, some intangibles do influence in a specific manner. The correlation between traditional ways of doing business, strongly based on personal trust and relations, and modern destination management and marketing, which to a certain extent implies the opposite (i.e. impersonal agreements), is not an easy one but does create opportunities. This is well observable in the UAE leisure and hospitality industry, and in its growth towards a cultural and religious sensitivity, aiming at what may be called Islamic tourism (Stephenson et al. 2010). This is sometimes perceived as mainly pilgrimage-oriented, but in reality corresponds to a much wider set of contexts, including dress codes, halal food, forms of art, a more traditional interaction between people, and so forth. It provides a culturally considerate, perhaps less Eurocentric way of commodifying separate elements into a tourism product. Precisely the same process may be used for pre-Islamic Emirati heritage, and for that of European origin in the nowadays UAE. Many heritage museums in the different emirates do focus on British military equipment, for instance, and on photographic evidence of UK involvement leading towards the independence of the UAE. This sort of objects is lacking for the older, culturally less defining Portuguese period. So the question is not only whether this type of legacy is usable, but also if it makes sense as part of a tourism mix. In theory, the first part is not an issue, as virtually anything is transformable into a product, considering the widest possible interpretation of authenticity, as seen above.

Comparative situations can be found around the world, obviously in overseas regions that experienced Portuguese colonization until recently and hence count on a large amount of building, folkloric, linguistic and other elements. The 20th century colonial wars and the subsequent independence of large countries such as Angola or Mozambique created certain social frictions that must be approached wisely when promoting Portuguese heritage, especially its intangible forms. Another tense example is that of India's heritage tourism, that needs to consider Goa's typical architecture and food, a natural fusion and result of almost half a millennium of Portuguese presence there, despite the politics of tourism that insist heavily on a Hindu-centric national identity (Bandyopadhyay et al. 2008). Brazil is a singular case, independent since the early 19th century, after a Portuguese prince became emperor, resulting in the formal secession from Portugal. Even so, some of the archaeological remains and historic buildings have been neglected as they would need investment and conservation (Funari 2001; Smith et al. 2004), and on occasion one faces some politicized atmosphere vis-à-vis the Portuguese past by social activists and descendants of slaves and of native populations. Macau, on the other hand, provides a serene affiliation with its colonial past, having known a recent and peaceful transition to Chinese administration, much to the image of neighboring Hong Kong. Still, a study on heritage tourism showed that tour guides operate differently with regard to their audience, namely by ignoring Portuguese colonial history when speaking to Chinese visitors, which does not occur with

non-Chinese tourists (Wong 2013). In other places, the merely sporadic presence of Portuguese throughout History provides an emotionally neutral resource to be developed without the restraints of a recent colonial past. Examples are cases of built environment in countries as dissimilar as Ghana (Nana Ato Arthur and Victor Mensah 2006), Malaysia (Cartier 2014), and Kenya (Irandu 2004). If sufficiently promoted, Portuguese heritage in any location becomes usable as a sustainable attraction.

## 6 Practicalities

Considering this overview, can Portuguese heritage be commodified in the UAE tourism scene as well? And more importantly, should it? If there is a global destination prepared to accommodate and process exotic, unexpected, or extraordinary themes, it would be the United Arab Emirates. From a water park based on a polar experience to indoor skiing on artificial snow, both the financial resources and the economic soundness are there; simply put, creative touristic initiatives are in high demand, and they may still be sustained by tradition and history, provided they are conveniently packaged. Perhaps the most operational way of conceptualizing a place for Portuguese heritage in the UAE tourism mix would consist in a middle path; to some extent there is margin for positively manipulating a still undeveloped resource. Challenges are both physical and emotional in nature: notwithstanding some archaeological remains that are geographically eccentric and difficult to reach, the effort needs to strongly concentrate on an intangible platform, as mentioned the most challenging part of the tourism experience bundle. In practice, this means branding, promoting an easy label for tourist consumption. The forts seem a key strand, as they are easily understood, simultaneously as a simple concept and as a graphical construct. In other words, consumers from any culture have a fairly accurate presumption about what an actual fort would look like, and they would recognize it as, say, a logo on a website, or a miniature on a key holder as well. Other available components show perchance less operative potential. One commonly cited reality is the local tradition of putting bulls opposing each other in the emirate of Fujairah, on the East coast that is, precisely where most of the forts concentrate. Some claim a Portuguese origin for this custom, linking it to bull-fighting, whilst others point to the long history of depicting bulls and oxen since pre-Islamic times (King 2001). Transforming a merely hypothetical Portuguese element into an asset is no doubt feasible but might in this case interfere with existing traditions.

Location and access naturally play a vital part in the success of an attraction, and visiting many of these sites means a several hours-drive from Dubai. What makes tourists allocate comparatively more time and resources in visiting less reachable areas is basically the expectation of uniqueness (Prideaux 2002). Peripheral territories have indeed been making numerous attempts to promote some local heritage element as unique (De Man 2016). Infrastructure-wise, comparable situations have



needed to opt between (1) objects, large or small, displayed in an exhibition/museum; (2) an archaeological site that may be adapted in different ways to accommodate visitors; and (3) theme parks. At first sight, the latter option may seem the least authentic, indeed completely inauthentic if considered in a very strict perspective, but one may think of reenactments that are accurate in terms of technology or props, and play an important role in education. Viking villages, either as commercial theme parks or as “authentic” village reconstructions (Halewood and Hannam 2001), or medieval fairs and castles, sometimes evoking an imaginary world straight out of films and books (Ashton 2015), have often to face similar challenges as managing the Portuguese forts in the UAE, namely the insufficiency of material culture.

One matching issue tackles the relationship between narrative and landscape, that is, the physical and emotional space where the experience takes place, in other words, where the tourism product is consumed. This is a particularly unstable context, not only distinctively endogenous, but also dynamic in nature. Induced effects continuously transform the product. Alongside the rationale directly connected to the site, this affects a multiplicity of other factors not subject to commodification at all, yet still interfering with the product. Urban planning, sustainability and landscape management all involve and condition the archaeological niche element that might potentially be marketed as Portuguese heritage. Competing experiences, such as the desert landscape around Abu Dhabi or Dubai, the coastline of Fujairah or Sharjah, the oases in Al Ain, and many other cases face similar challenges, even when dealing with Arab heritage itself; landscapes always develop in a permanent tension between economic initiatives that alter their very nature, and thus their relationship with heritage tourism.

## 7 Concluding Remarks

Recognizing these dynamics is fundamental in the brand conception and implementation process. Nevertheless, as stated, and before moving towards a marketing plan, one would need to correct a negative, or neutral at best, image of Portuguese presence in the Gulf. It has been acknowledged for a long time now that a destination’s perception by tourists is the result of both an organic and an induced process. Only the latter is subject to a marketer’s immediate efforts, and in the end what tourists think of a given attraction is what matters, not the campaigns put into place as part of some promotion strategy. The steps to correct an uninteresting/irrelevant image about Portuguese heritage should follow some of the classic procedures in destination management (Ahmed 1991), among which one might select the following: (a) enhancing the positive component parts, namely the physical distinctiveness of the forts in the wider landscape; (b) using selective promotion, a procedure consisting in exposing potential visitors to positive images about Portugal and other carefully chosen information (e.g. the epic discovery of the world by Portuguese seafarers; the Islamic heritage in Al Andalus that shaped Portuguese culture in many ways), downplaying or

ignoring the negative parts of the historical narrative (punishments, abusive taxation); and (c) organizing familiarization, a procedure successfully used by different national tourism agencies, and consisting in inviting writers, journalists and people from the tourism industry (travel agents and tour operators) that subsequently become social influencers. In addition, freeriding on positive images that circulate in mainstream channels (e.g. those of well-known Portuguese football players) may not relate directly to archaeological sites in the UAE yet still does increase awareness.

Again, all things considered, how does Portuguese authenticity in the UAE perform with regard to the marketing and branding process? Leaving the political aspects aside as much as possible (archaeological heritage is always subject to symbolic interpretations about ethnicity, for instance), the connection that ultimately matters is between history and authenticity. It has been investigated under several other lights, from mediation to conservation (e.g. Gustafsson 2008; Myrberg 2013; Scott 2015), and this paper advocates a dynamic and adaptive use of the concepts. By treating the monuments and artifacts as the center of an integrated tourism product, a sustainable resource can be managed, as an alternative to conventional and competing attractions.

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# Routes and Itineraries as a Means of Contribution for Sustainable Tourism Development

Giusy Cardia

**Abstract** The study emerges from the idea that 2017 has been recognized as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development (UNWTO 2016). The recognition underlines the potential of tourism to contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Thus, it assesses the extraordinary opportunity to build a tourism sector that is more responsible and committed to global development goals. The author focuses on the potential of cultural and natural routes, and itineraries, in terms of inclusive and sustainable economic growth; social inclusiveness, employment and poverty reduction; resource efficiency, environmental protection and climate change; cultural values, diversity and heritage; and mutual understanding, peace and security. Indeed, the paper aims to describe the routes and itineraries, most of which have survived from past centuries, and analyze their potential to boost the power of tourism as a solid contributing factor in order to make the world a better place. The methodology is qualitative and develops beginning with the selection and analysis of bibliographic sources through the identification of key words such as itineraries, cultural routes, historical routes, thematic routes, and so on. Besides these sources, the author will assess other relevant information collected from websites and social network pages related to itineraries and routes known at a European and international level. The sources collected have facilitated the classification of the itineraries and routes according to geographical, historical, thematic, and motivational criteria, and the results have been analyzed based on their contribution to the SDGs. The conclusions, will also take account of some research limitations such as the problems arising from the analysis of the topic due to the considerably large amount of existing itineraries around the world, and the difficulty to distinguish between official itineraries accredited by entities like the Council of Europe, and those itineraries recognized by other relevant stakeholders, like local communities and travelers.

**Keywords** Itineraries · Routes · Sustainability · Tourism · Development

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## 1 Introduction

The modern concept of sustainability is strictly linked to the Brundtland Report which was issued in 1987 by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED 1987). The report refers to sustainability not only to a state of harmony but rather to “dynamic process of changes”, as pointed out by Liu (2003, p. 460).

In the last 25 years, the concept of sustainability became so widely accepted that its principles have been applied to other sectors and human activities like tourism, especially due to its negative impacts on local communities, and their cultural and natural resources.

From 1995, when the Charter for Sustainable Tourism was promulgated in Lanzarote (Spain), to the World Summit on Sustainable Tourism (ST + 20) celebrated in Vitoria-Spain in 2015, when the validity of the Charter was reiterated by UNWTO (2015a), sustainable tourism is widely recognised as a European and global priority. This recognition has been strengthened by the United Nations 70th General Assembly (A/RES/70/193) which has designated 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development (UN 2016).

The declaration, which represents a further contribution of the tourism sector to the three pillars of sustainability, follows the recognition by global leaders at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio + 20) that “well-designed and well-managed tourism” can contribute to the three dimensions of sustainable development, to job creation and to trade.

The main objective of this research is focused on the exploration of opportunities that sustainable tourism could bring to local destinations and communities, as a catalyst for positive change of policies, business practices and consumer behavior in the context of the universal 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Moreover, this research is directed to the analysis of the potential of routes and itineraries for building a tourism sector that is more responsible and committed to global development goals.

The study begins with a review of the literature of the universal 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and their relation with tourism. Moreover, the literature explore the concept of cultural route and the classification of routes and itineraries developed at local, national, European and international level.

In the third heading the methodological path is described, starting from the literature review mentioned above, which allows to identify five areas of influence of tourism among the sustainable development goals and the Agenda for Sustainable Development. These areas of influence of tourism represent a link with the routes and itineraries as the main case study of this research. Indeed they are used as one of the criteria for the classification of the routes and itineraries already

existing around the world. Several criteria for the classification of routes and itineraries, and the identification of best practices for each criteria, are the core of the forth heading related to the research results. The amount of existing routes, and the criteria to classify them, show that routes and itineraries have an economic and social importance since they play an important role for the development of territories and communities.

The last paragraph concludes by providing recommendation for boosting the potential of cultural routes in terms of sustainable tourism development.

## 2 Literature Review

The literature review has been carried out by identifying two main strands. On one side, the author has explored the concept of sustainable development and its relation with tourism. On the other side, the concept of itineraries and routes, and their classification according to several criteria, has been explored.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), officially known as “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” is a set of 17 “Global Goals” which are included in the United Nations Resolution A/RES/70/1 of 25 September 2015 (United Nation Development Programme 2015; United Nations 2015). The Official Agenda for Sustainable adopted on 25 September 2015 has 92 paragraphs. Paragraph 54 outlines the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and the associated 169 targets.

The proposal covers a broad range of sustainable development issues such as: End poverty in all its forms everywhere (SDG1); End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture (SDG2); Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages (SDG3); Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (SDG4); Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (SDG5); Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all (SDG6); Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all (SDG7); Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all (SDG8); Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation (SDG9); Reduce income inequality within and among countries (SDG10); Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (SDG11); Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns (SDG 12); Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts by regulating emissions and promoting developments in renewable energy (SDG 13); Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development (SDG 14); Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss (SDG 15); Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective,



accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels (SDG 16); and Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development (SDG 17) (UN 2014).

The Resolution, which was promulgated through a deliberative process involving its 193 Member States, as well as global civil society, is a broader intergovernmental agreement that follows the 2015 Development Agenda and the Millennium Development Goals (UN 2010).

In this study, a special focus will be dedicated to the relation between Sustainable Development Goals and tourism, and from this relation will emerge a further criteria to distinguish and classify itineraries and routes as tools to achieve sustainable development.

In line with new Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), UNWTO (2015a) has designated 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development. This designation has a special value not only for the importance of the sector in itself, but also for increasing awareness of the several benefits it brings. Among them, one may consider the protection of cultural heritage and the appreciation of the inherent values of different cultures.

The International Year promotes tourism's role in five key areas such as: Inclusive and sustainable economic growth; Social inclusiveness, employment and poverty reduction; Resource efficiency, environmental protection and climate change; Cultural values, diversity and heritage; and Mutual understanding, peace and security.

With regards to inclusive and sustainable growth, one may refer to some figures. Since 2009, the tourist arrival has increased 4% or more annually; the 7% of total world exports and the 30% of world services exports are related to tourism; in 2015 US\$ 1.5 trillion in exports come from international tourism; and tourism represents 10% of world GDP.

With regards to Social inclusiveness, employment and poverty reduction, one in every eleven jobs globally is in tourism which represents also the largest export category in many developing countries. By 2030 the 57% of the international tourist arrivals will be concentrated in emerging economies; and compare to other sectors, tourism employs almost twice as many women employers as other sectors.

With regards to Resource efficiency, environmental protection and climate change; tourism can be a vehicle for protecting and restoring biodiversity since it is committed to reducing its 5% of world CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

With regards to Cultural values, diversity and heritage; tourism promotes cultural diversity and raise awareness of the value of heritage by reviving traditional activities and customs by empowering communities and nurtures pride within them.

With regards to Mutual understanding, peace and security, tourism provides opportunities for cross-cultural encounters that can build peace and generate soft diplomacy, and it is a resilient sector that recovers quickly from security threats, and it is able to break down barriers and builds bridges between visitors and hosts.

The aforementioned Resolution A/RES/70/1 refers directly to tourism. In particular, it refers to the promotion of sustainable tourism which is specifically mentioned in the paragraph 33.

Besides that, goal 8.9 recognises the need to “devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products”.

In the goal 12.b, it has been pointed out the need of developing and implementing tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.

In the goal 14.7, it has identified tourism as one of the tools to increase the economic benefits to Small Island developing States and least developed countries by 2030.

### *Sustainable Development Goals Background*

The Intergovernmental negotiations on the Post 2015 Development Agenda (IGN) began in January 2015 and ended in August of the same year. As a result, a final document was adopted at the UN Sustainable Development Summit September 25–27, 2015 in New York, USA.

The SDGs build on the Principles agreed upon under Resolution A/RES/66/288, known as *The Future We Want*. (UN 2012) which is a document released as a result of the Rio + 20 Conference which took place in Rio de Janeiro-Brazil in 2012 (UN 2012a).

However, the history of the SDGs traced back to 1972 when governments met in Stockholm, Sweden, for considering the rights of the human family for a healthy and productive environment during the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (UN 2015 *ibidem*).

In 1983 the United Nations decided to create the World Commission on Environment and Development which in 1987 has defined sustainable development as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

As a result, in 1992 the first United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was held in Rio de Janeiro, and here the first agenda for Environment and Development, also known as *Agenda 21*, was developed and adopted.

The full implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Commitments to the Rio principles, were strongly reaffirmed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2002.

Just before the celebration of the Rio + 20 Conference in 2012, a government retreat was held in Solo (Indonesia) and Colombia proposed the idea of the SDGs. As a result, a document including development goals and associated targets, was developed. In the aforementioned Rio + 20 Conference further discussion about the SDGs were undertaken, and they led to the production of another relevant document, mentioned above and entitled “The future we want”.

This document refers to several themes such as poverty eradication, energy, water and sanitation, health, and human settlement, and it is linked to the Millennium Development Goals as stated in its paragraph no. 246: “We recognize that the development of goals could also be useful for pursuing focused and coherent action on sustainable development. The goals should address and

incorporate in a balanced way all three dimensions of sustainable development (environment, economics, and society) and their interlinkages. The development of these goals should not divert focus or effort from the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals”.

The Millennium Development Goals were adopted at the Millennium Summit in September 2000 (United Nation Development Programme 2000) where world leaders committed their nations to a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty, and set out a series of time-bound targets, with a deadline of 2015.

Among the targets for addressing extreme poverty, one may mention income poverty, hunger, disease, lack of adequate shelter, and exclusion-while promoting gender equality, education, and environmental sustainability, besides basic human rights such as the rights of each person on the planet to health, education, shelter, and security.

Since the MDGs have 2015 as a temporal target, a further process was implemented starting from the United Nations System Task Team (UN 2015). The UN System Task Team was established by the UN Secretary-General to support system-wide preparations for the post-2015 UN development agenda, in consultation with all stakeholders, including Member States, civil society, academia and the private sector, and bringing together over 60 UN entities and agencies and international organizations. As a result of these consultations a first report known as “Realizing The Future We Want” was produced (UN 2012b).

The report identifies four dimensions as part of a global vision for sustainable development: Inclusive Social Development, Environmental Sustainability, Inclusive Economic Development, and Peace and Security.

Besides the UN System Task, a UN Secretary General’s High Level Panel on the Post 2015 Development Agenda, was implemented and its report (UN 2013) was submitted to the Secretary General in 2013.

*Interest for Routes and Itineraries: Definition, Elements, Criteria and Classification*

We have reviewed the second strand of the literature by starting from the several definitions of itinerary and routes as proposed by the UNESCO Meeting of experts (1994), ICOMOS (2008), and Council of Europe (2010).

Besides that, we have taken into account the connections between the itineraries and routes developed and funded by organizations like UNESCO, Council of Europe, UNCTAD, UNAOC, and UNPD, and the most relevant conventions and resolutions promulgated at international and European level.

During the Meeting of Experts on Routes as a Part of our Cultural Heritage, which took place in Madrid on 24–25 November 1994, a definition of heritage route was promulgated: “A heritage route is composed of tangible elements of which the cultural significance comes from exchanges and a multi-dimensional dialogue across countries or regions, and that illustrate the interaction of movement, along the route, in space and time”.

The Annex III of the report refers to three categories of criteria that could be used to delimit a route: spatial and temporal criteria to establish its exact material nature, and cultural criteria to define the effects and consequences arising from its

use. More specifically the spatial criteria refers to the route followed, its sites, monuments, constructions, buildings, ways, and area of influence; the temporal criteria may refer to its beginning, end, frequency of use; intensity of use and variations; and the cultural criteria is linked to the purpose of the route and its limits (spiritual or material purpose); its impact on mankind's memory or experience, and the volume and the nature of the exchanges (men, goods, technologies).

The International Scientific Committee on Cultural Routes (CIIC) Of ICOMOS has elaborated and revised the ICOMOS Charter on Cultural Routes (2008) which includes a more detailed definition of routes, their elements and some criteria to classify them.

Route is "Any route of communication, be it land, water, or some other type, which is physically delimited and is also characterized by having its own specific dynamic and historic functionality to serve a specific and well determined purpose, which must fulfill the following conditions:

- (a) It must arise from and reflect interactive movements of people as well as multi-dimensional, continuous, and reciprocal exchanges of goods, ideas, knowledge and values between peoples, countries, regions or continents over significant periods of time;
- (b) It must have thereby promoted a cross-fertilization of the affected cultures in space and time, as reflected both in their tangible and intangible heritage;
- (c) It must have integrated into a dynamic system the historic relations and cultural properties associated with its existence"

The ICOMOS Charter refers also to the routes elements such as: context, content, cross-cultural significance as a whole, dynamic character, and setting.

Cultural Routes occur in a natural and/or cultural context, and must necessarily be supported by tangible elements that provide a physical confirmation of the cultural heritage, and intangible elements that give sense and meaning to the various elements that make up the whole.

The concept of Cultural Route implies a value as a whole which is greater than the sum of its parts, and gives the Route its meaning.

The dynamic of a Cultural Route does not obey natural laws or casual phenomena, but rather exclusively human processes and interests.

The Cultural Route is closely linked to its setting, and it is an inseparable part of it. The setting shapes and provides a framework of the cultural route.

Besides the elements, ICOMOS Charter provides several criteria to classify the routes according to their:

- territorial scope: local, national, regional, continental, or intercontinental.
- cultural scope: within a given cultural region or extended across
- geographical areas that have shared or continue to share a process of reciprocal influences in the formation or evolution of cultural values.
- goal or function: social, economic, political, or cultural.

- duration in time: those that are no longer used versus those that continue to develop under the influence of socio-economic, political, and cultural exchanges.
- structural configuration: linear, circular, cruciform, radial or network.
- natural environment: land, aquatic, mixed, or other physical setting.

Another classification is provided by UNWTO (2015b) that in its global Report on cultural routes and itineraries classifies the routes according to the following variables:

- design and structure which includes two large cultural route models: the linear models which are based on one or several start points, and one end point, and those that have arisen based on an archipelago of points. An example of the linear model is the Camino de Santiago, which starts at various departure points but arrives at one destination, the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, Spain. In the Archipelago model, the route and its various elements form an archipelago of points but are not necessarily connected sequentially or physically. Some example of this model are represented by the European cemeteries route and the Phoenicians' route, since they do not have a start or an end in the strict sense of the terms.
- theme which encompasses two large groups and a multitude of intermediate situations. On the one hand, there are cultural routes that are articulated around a main theme and on the other, there are cultural routes which include several topics, with the route itself being the essential theme. The route of Cluniac locations (themed around on architecture) or the cave art route (themed around on prehistoric art) are mainly focused on a single theme. The Camino de Santiago and the Via Regia (Royal Highway) are examples of the several topics model which include a wide array of elements (e.g., landscape, art, religion, cultural traditions, and gastronomy).
- territory which includes four types of routes: local (e.g., Dry Stone Route in Mallorca, Spain); regional (e.g., Mudejar Route in Aragón, Spain), national (e.g., Vía de Plata Route, Spain) and transnational (e.g., Transromanica network, European itineraries of Jewish Heritage, the European route of thermal heritage and thermal cities).
- historic origin or their current reconfiguration in order to differentiate routes that derived from actual historic situations, from routes that are the result of associations made in the present based on a theme or a common narrative. The Camino de Santiago and the route of Saint Olaf are examples of routes where the historical element is evident while the European route of thermal heritage and thermal towns, the Routes of the Olive Tree, and the Transromanica network: itineraries of Romanesque art in Europe, are the result of an association with a strong historic basis that have been redesigned in the present.
- visitor infrastructure which consists in distinguishing routes based on the number and type of overnight stays necessary to visit them. In this way we have routes for which overnight stays are not necessary, routes that can be visited

with only one overnight stay, and, finally routes involving an overnight stay in several places, which inherently requires the visitor to plan and be constantly on the move.

The Council of Europe defines a cultural route as: “A cultural, educational heritage and tourism co-operation project aiming at the development and promotion of an itinerary or a series of itineraries based on a historic route, a cultural concept, figure or phenomenon with transnational importance and significance for the understanding and respect of common European values” (CoE 2010).

*Cultural itineraries and routes and their connections with conventions and resolutions promulgated at international and European level*

The charters and conventions analysed in this paragraph allow a better understanding of the cultural itineraries and routes in the interpretation and implementation of the European values through the daily activity of the routes.

From an international perspective, one may mention the UNESCO Convention (UNESCO 1972) concerning the protection of the world cultural and Natural Heritage, which was adopted on 1972 in Paris, and came into force on December 1975.

Indeed there are several heritage sites that are inscribed in the world heritage list and they are part of a Cultural route. The Santiago of Compostela way is one of the most relevant example. However, it is not the path that is has been declared part of the World Heritage List but rather its groups of monuments, both religious and secular, located in Spain (1993) as well as in France (1998).

Another relevant example is the Via Francigena path which includes heritage sites included in the world heritage list such as Canterbury Cathedral, Historic centre of San Gimignano, of Siena, and of Rome; Landscape of Val D’Orcia, and the Vatican City.

The Via Regia is another case which crosses several world heritage sites such as: Vilnius historic centre, Bialowieza Forest, Wieliczka Salt Mine, Centennial Hall in Wroclaw, Classical Weimar in Belvedere Castle; Cathedral of Notre-Dame, Former Abbey of Saint Remi and Palace of Tau, in Reims; the banks of the Seine in Paris; the Port of the Moon in Bordeaux; the Roman Walls of Lugo; and Las Médulas.

The relationship between the Cultural routes and the world Heritage list is strengthened by the spatial and thematic continuity across national borders provided by the Cultural routes programme and by the practical methods to manage monuments and sites along the routes, with cooperation between the countries, as furnished by the World Heritage List.

Another relevant convention is that one for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage which was adopted by UNESCO on 2003 in Paris, and came into force on 2006 (UNESCO 2003).

The intangible heritage value is not the cultural manifestation itself but rather the wealth of knowledge and skills that is transmitted from one generation to the other through the intangible heritage itself. The Cultural routes promotes themes traditions, knowledge, rituals, and tastes which are a fundamental asset of the European and local culture and identity.

One of the most relevant cultural routes which is linked to a declaration on intangible cultural heritage is the Routes of Olive Tree which have been involved starting by the inscription of the Mediterranean diet on the Representative list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2010.

With regards to the Council of Europe, Cultural routes were created as a cultural programme with the aim to translate the principles expressed in the European Cultural Dimension into concrete actions by “promoting trans-border cultural co-operation among countries as a tool to go beyond political boundaries” (Berti 2015).

The programme is built upon the European Cultural Convention (Council of Europe, 1954) as one of the most fundamental text on cultural policy and co-operation among European countries with regards to the fields of culture, education, youth and sport. It has been signed in Paris in 1954 and it came into force on May 1955. The cultural Convention purpose is to develop, among others, mutual understanding among the European people and reciprocal appreciation and respect of their cultural diversity.

The Cultural Route programme is also linked to the European Landscape Convention (Council of Europe, 2000), better known as Florence Convention, which has been adopted in Florence in 2000 and it came into force on 2004. Indeed the cultural routes are suitable tools to increase the awareness of the different European landscapes by representing a good opportunity for collaborative research and projects in the field of landscape architecture.

The Cultural route programme has some connections with the Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Council of Europe, 2005), better known as the Faro Convention, which was adopted on 2005 and came into force on 2011. Indeed both the programme and the convention are focused on the importance of the local people and their affinity with their region as a tool for rediscovering and understanding the cultural identity of the sites by encouraging the tourism sector in a sustainable way.

Besides that, the European Landscape Convention recognize the importance of putting into practice the principles of co-responsibility by sharing it between the residents and the visitors.

The later Cultural Route project started in 1987 and it was built upon the concept of medieval pilgrim routes such as Santiago de Compostela, and it has “highlighted international cultural connection embodied in works of cultural and natural heritage, with the visitor expected to do the travelling” (Berti, *ibidem*).

Other institutions such as the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) have recognised initiatives such as St James’s Way and the Via Francigena, as routes to promote intercultural and religious dialogue. Besides UNAOC, even the United Nations Development Programme (UNPD) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) have funded initiatives linked to cultural routes and itineraries, especially the Silk Road and the Caravan Route in North Africa.

In particular, the Investment Guide to the Silk Road 2014 developed by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) identifies tourism as one of the eight investment priorities and opportunities for the Silk Road.

### **3 Methodological Path to Identify Best Practices Among Itineraries and Routes**

Since the scope of this study is to explore the relationship between tourism and the 2030 Agenda for development and the Sustainable Development Goals, we have identified some best practices among the itineraries and routes developed at local, European and International level considering the opportunities that those brings to make tourism as a mean to contribute to a better world, and to sustainable development.

In order to do that, we begun the desk research by taking into consideration the definition, the elements and the criteria for classifying itineraries and routes. Once we have reviewed the literature, we have developed our own classification of routes by using the five areas of tourism as the criteria to classify them.

The first step of this study has been taken by identifying bibliographic sources and websites related to itineraries, cultural routes, historical routes, thematic routes, and so on.

The literature has literally followed two separate strands, one related to the sustainable development goals, and its background, and the other of the routes and cultural itineraries, their criteria and elements of distinction, and the classification.

Starting from existing classification, other criteria have been modified or added to the previous ones. In particular the contribution of the routes and itineraries to the sustainable development has been taken into account as one of the most relevant outcomes of this study. The criteria is built upon the connections between the five areas of tourism, on one side, and the elements, criteria and characteristics of the routes and itineraries, on the other.

These connections have allowed the author to identify another criteria of classifying routes starting from their contribution to one or more areas of tourism which are inclusive and sustainable economic growth; social inclusiveness, employment and poverty reduction; resource efficiency, environmental protection and climate change; cultural values, diversity and heritage; and mutual understanding, peace and security.

Once the contribution of the routes for sustainable development has been pointed out, we have identified some best practices for each area of tourism among the inventory of routes and itineraries existing at local and international level.

### **4 A New Classification of Cultural Routes and Itineraries**

Starting from the classification of routes as described in the ICOMOS Charter and UNWTO, we have developed a further set of criteria to classify the routes which are:



1. Route Motivation Purpose which includes four kind of routes:
  - Pilgrimages, Religious and Spiritual routes such as the Saint James way, the Francigena way, the San Benedetto route, the Assis Path, the Pilgrimage route to Palestine, the Buddhist Routes in South Asia, and the Route of Saint Olav Ways.
  - Trekking/sport/Adventure. Among them one may mention the cycle ways like the Sun Cycle way which crosses 12 regions, 414 Municipalities included between Brennero to Sardinia in Italy; Wind Cycle way from Venice to Turin/passing through 4 regions/120 Municipalities; and the Water Cycle way which is long 500 km and it crosses 68 Municipalities in the South of Italy
  - Cultural/Exploration other cultures/destinations which are divided in the tangible heritage, intangible heritage as indicated in the thematic criteria below
  - Commercial: Nowadays this purpose is not so relevant like in the past times. Commercial aspects became part of the tourism product (services provided, accommodations, hospitality, other complementary products) rather than being a trip purpose.
2. Thematic which is based on the use of natural and cultural resources.
  - The natural resources routes include, among others, Heritage of Mercury between Spain and Slovenia, the Route of Amber, the Route of Olive tree, the Pyrenean Iron Route, the Iter vitis, the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro (Mexico), and the Camino a Santa Fe for finding gold.
  - The cultural resources are divided in two sub-categories: tangible and intangible heritage. The routes built upon the fruition of some tangible heritage, include, among others, The Cluniac sites in Europe; Transromanica —The Romanesque Routes Of European Heritage; the Cistercian abbeys and sites; the European Cemeteries; the Prehistoric Rock art; the Casadean Sites; the Architecture of Totalitarian Regimes of the 20th century in Europe's Urban Memory; and the Route of the fortified towns of the Greater Region. The routes which set up is organized on intangible Heritage include, among other: the Hansa, the Jewish Heritage Route, the European Route of Ceramics, the Megalithic Routes, and the Réseau Art Nouveau Network.
3. Historical routes which are built around the existence of ancient civilizations like the Phoenicians Route, the Viking Route, the Trail of Hasburgs, El legado-andalusi, and the Huguenot and Waldensian trail; and historical figures such as Saint Martin of Tours route, In the footsteps of Robert Louis Stevenson, Destination Napoleon, and the European routes of emperor Charles V.
4. Geographical which encompasses five types of routes such as:
  - Intraregional which includes, among others, Balearic Archaeosites (Spain), Love Way (Cinque Terre, Liguria)

- Cross-region: Way of Gods (Italy) which is the Etruscans path they built in order to develop their trade and extend their domain on the Po Valley for at least four centuries (VII-IV cent. BC).
  - Intra-country: Via Francigena, Italy (Valle d'Aosta, Piedmont, Lombardy, Emilia Romagna, Tuscany, and Latium). (The Francigena ways is built around a pilgrimage of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Sigerico, who visit Pope John V on 990 AD walking for 1600 km). Another example is the *Quebrada de Humahuaca* in the desert plateau of the High Andean lands Argentina which follows the line of a major cultural route, the Camino Inca which starts near the town of Ollantaytambo in the Sacred Valley and ends at Machu Picchu;
  - Cross country which includes, among others the Great Himalaya Trail passing through Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, China; Qhapac Nan; and the Andean Road system which passes through Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru;
  - Cross-continent. One of the most famous cross-continent route is the Silk Road from China to Europe passing through Central Asia, West Asia, and Africa. Besides that, one may mention the Incense Route as a network of trade routes extending over 2000 km to facilitate the transport of frankincense and myrrh from the Yemen and Oman in the Arabian Peninsula to the Mediterranean.
5. Legal Status or recognition. This criterion consists in distinguishing those routes that are officially recognized by a European or international Institution, from those that are not official routes.
- Among the former, one may mention the routes awarded by the Council of Europe which, currently, are 32 while there are other three that they obtained the status of candidates and they are awaiting for their full recognition (Impressionism; Longobard and Chocolate ways). Besides that, the UNWTO has also recognized some routes like, among others, Qhapac Ñan, Quebrada de Humahuaca, Incense Route of Israel, Roman Ways (Spain), and Slave Route as part of the world heritage list. The International Committee on Cultural Routes of ICOMOS has patronized some wine and the vine routes in the Mediterranean Cultural Heritage, and the Hispano-Portuguese Bastioned Fortifications Across Five Continents.
  - Among the non-official ones, one may mention those routes recognized by local communities and tourists such as Guoliang, the hand-made road built in 1972 to connect the village to the provinces of Huixian and Xinxiang, where the community has dug a tunnel of 1300 m, 5 m height and 4 m depth in the rock. Besides that, there are also private businesses such as tour operators or travel agency like Yukon which organizes road trips to see the aurora borealis, to see the Midnight Sun, to follow the Klondike Gold Rush, and so on.

*The contribution of routes and itineraries to the sustainable development and best practices*

A further criteria to classify the routes has been developed and it derives from the need of combining cultural routes with their contribution to the sustainable development goals. Starting from the benefits and main characteristics of the routes emerged from the literature review, then we have identified keywords that are extrapolated from the five areas of tourism, namely: inclusive and sustainable economic growth; social inclusiveness, employment and poverty reduction; resource efficiency, environmental protection and climate change; cultural values, diversity and heritage; and mutual understanding, peace and security.

As a first step we have identified connections between these five areas of tourism and the routes and itineraries.

As a result, we can affirm that the routes and itineraries represent an immense opportunities for the economic growth and inclusive development, and they foster creation of employment and small business ventures in line with the inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

Among the best practices, one may mention the growth of tourism along the Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor which plays an important role in facilitating regional development, economic growth, job creation and professional development for communities. Stretching 5000 km through China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, the Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor is the first Silk Road Heritage Corridor to be inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor linked multiple civilisations and facilitated the trade of goods, silk, culture, religious beliefs, arts, science and technology between two of the great power centres of the Silk Roads trade until the 16th century.

Another interesting best practice is the Amber Road, which was an ancient trade route for the transfer of amber, known as “the gold of the north”, from coastal areas of the North Sea and the Baltic Sea to the Mediterranean Sea (Navarro 1925). Nowadays this route has developed collaborative actions on how to use tourism as a tool for socio-economic growth, development and job creation in the involved countries in Central and Northern Europe such as Poland, Lithuania, Germany, Switzerland, Netherlands, Belgium; and in the Southern France and Spain.

The routes support the distribution of tourism's socio-economic benefits throughout multiple value chains which is also in line with the second area of tourism, namely social inclusiveness, employment and poverty reduction which is also linked to the fact that the routes may encourage the close participation and engagement of local communities (SITI 2016).

Among the best practices that may support social inclusiveness, employment and poverty reduction one may mention “Cammini e Percorsi” which is an ongoing project developed by the Agency of the State property, promoted by the Italian Ministry of Culture and tourism (MIBACT). The initiative is directed to the requalification and reuse of the public real estate located alongside cycle ways and historical-religious itineraries. The idea consists in allocating buildings and sites and leased them for free to entrepreneurs under 40 years old, and associations through a call for tender. The aim of this initiative is to create and boost a network

of infrastructure and services alongside those ways and itineraries to develop a more responsible tourism that respects the territory and the environment.

In line with the third area of tourism, namely resource efficiency, environmental protection and climate change, the routes may revitalize existing destinations and allow the discovery of new destinations.

A good example of resource efficiency, environmental protection and climate change, is that one of EUROVELO, the European cycle route network, which is a project managed by the European Cyclists' Federation (ECF) in cooperation with national and regional partners. It currently consists of well over 45,000 km of bike paths divided in 15 Routes developed in 43 European Countries. Since biking and walking are two sustainable alternatives of transportation, and biking and walking tourism, is increasing in a lot of countries, this network encourages even more the development of sustainable transportation and tourism. Besides that the international status of the routes helps with garnering funds and political support for their continuing construction.

Furthermore routes and itineraries contribute to the fourth and fifth area of tourism, namely cultural values, diversity and heritage; and to mutual understanding, peace and security respectively. Indeed the routes are built upon a unique local heritage and traditions which enriches the cultural identity and heritage of destinations and stimulate cultural exchanges that build the sense of place in the world, instill local pride, and enhance the visitor experiences alongside the different regions and foster closer ties between visitors and host communities.

With regards to the cultural values, diversity and heritage, we have identified in the Great Himalaya Trail a best practice. The Great Himalaya Trail targets five districts in Nepal (Humla, Dolpo, Gorkha -including Manaslu-, lower Solukhumbu and Taplejung), and it includes some of the most remote mountain villages and communities in the world. This area is characterized by a significant cultural diversity and a high and special biodiversity for flora and fauna. Tourism is one of few sectors where Nepal has a comparative advantage and growth potential and trekking has the strongest potential to directly benefit the poor in relatively remote parts of the country. However, the incidence of poverty and gender inequality is very high, especially in the Western Hills.

Among the most relevant best practices for promoting mutual understanding, peace and security, one may mention the "Lights and Sounds" Project which allows the recovery of the Mission of Trinidad as a cultural and historical journey that could tell the story of the Guarani and the Jesuits lifestyle in Paraguay. The project aims to better understand the encounter of two civilizations.

More in general, and according to the Baku Declaration on the Council of Europe Cultural Routes: cultural tourism for intercultural dialogue and social stability, cultural routes provide educational tools for understanding past conflicts and for alleviating tensions and promoting peaceful cohabitation.

## 5 Conclusion

The study shows that there is an increasing prominence of the itineraries and routes in the recent years. In particular the idea behind this study is finding connections between routes and itineraries and their contribution to boost the role of tourism for sustainable development in the specific 5 areas (inclusive and sustainable economic growth; social inclusiveness, employment and poverty reduction; resource efficiency, environmental protection and climate change; cultural values, diversity and heritage; mutual understanding, peace and security).

Despite these opportunities, there are also some limitations such as the lack of an exhaustive inventory of cultural routes due to a huge variety of itineraries and routes existing from local to international level; the difficulty to monitor the routes since there are the “official” recognized by several entities (CoE, UNWTO, ICOMOS) and the “unofficial” but well recognized by communities, tourists, and tourism providers (tour operators, guides, travel agencies).

The complexity of the routes makes it difficult to classify them since a lot of routes can fall under several criteria at the same time, and it is also difficult to collect and analyze data with regards to the number of pilgrims and tourists who undertake an itinerary. A lack of data makes it difficult to properly manage those itineraries.

### *Recommendations*

Having said that, we would strongly suggest the destinations to explore further cultural routes and itineraries and manage the existing ones in a sustainable way. In order to do that, destination makers need the support of researchers in order to find past and traditional ties upon which it is possible to build new routes and itineraries (not invented/artificial routes) in order to be implemented by governments, businesses and other associations. The local communities should have an active role in the promotion of their territory and in the conservation (time/space) of their heritage, traditions, and resources. In order to do that, the local communities need to be educated and be aware of the common cultural heritage. Some businesses are directed to failure since they compete each other rather than implement models of mutual assistance with other SMEs. In order to provide a better product and service and an unforgettable experience for the visitor, it occurs that businesses work together and collaborate with all the other stakeholders. The idea of collaborating and generating synergies is applicable to regions and countries as well as to small businesses, authorities and all the relevant stakeholders and it may serve as a bridge to social, economic and human development.

Nowadays undertaking an itinerary is becoming a trend considering the statistics. However, the idea existing behind an itinerary is not that one of making it as a phenomenon, directed to failure by time, but rather make people more aware of the benefits of the itineraries for sustainable development.

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# Human Development Tourism: Utilizing Cultural Heritage to Create a Universal Culture

Anastasia Moira

**Abstract** Sustainable tourism aims to maximize the benefits of tourism and minimize its negative impact, especially on the host countries, mainly by complying with the standards required for the achievement of the sustainable development goals. However, tourism, due to its great scope and impact, has a significant potential to foster and expand its contribution to humanity, by becoming a pivotal leader of Human Development. The present paper suggests the development of a specific type of tourism, the Human Development Tourism, which aims to utilize the world's material and intangible cultural heritage to cultivate a universal culture of HD values and principles. Human Development Tourism maximizes tourism's great potential to overall promote the development of humanity by directly developing peoples' awareness of Human Development, its value for them, and their role in it, hence, enabling them to better serve it. The pilot HD Tourism Program presented here is attached to the CAVE (Classical Aristotelian Virtues of Ethics) Approach<sup>©</sup> for Human Development, which aims to provide people with the fundamental capabilities for HD through the development of 14 Aristotelian virtues. Hence, it provides an example of how intangible heritage, specifically the Aristotelian Ethical Theory, reflects the HD's values and principles, and provides people useful guidelines they can use in order to apply these values and principles in their life. The pilot program, also, shows how nature and the material and intangible elements of cultural heritage can be combined in a meaningful and structured way in the context of Human Development Tourism Program.

**Keywords** Tourism · Human development · Cultural heritage  
CAVE-Approach<sup>©</sup>

**JEL Classification** Z32

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## 1 Introduction

Tourism is one of the most rapidly evolving and fast growing industries in the recent decades, with important economic and socio-cultural benefits. Its contribution to the GDP is estimated to be around 10.4% of the world total, while the GDP for specific regions whose local economy mainly relies on tourism is much higher. It is a major source of income and employment for people in the tourism industry; according to World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), it is estimated that tourism industry directly supports 74 million jobs, while, considering all its indirect economic effects, it supports about 215 million jobs (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005). Moreover, tourism's value is not limited to the economic benefits it generates; it also contributes to people's wellbeing by offering pleasure and enjoyment as a leisure activity, and by offering people the opportunity to feel pride for their material and intangible heritage. Finally, it provides a context for cross-cultural interaction and communication. On the other hand, despite its rapid and sophisticated growth, and its significant benefits, it has some important negative economic, political, sociocultural and environmental impacts, especially on the host countries, that need to be managed (Archer, Cooper, & Ruhanen, 2005; Buckley, 2012), while its overall economic, social and environmental impact remains uneven among various countries and the different communities within them. Since tourism is a wide and complex sector of the economic system comprised by a set of markets, which cannot even be considered as a single industry (Stabler, Papatheodorou, & Sinclair, 2009), its positive or negative impact on a global scale is significant, and so is its contribution to the creation and management of the global issues.

Sustainable tourism emerged out of the need to minimize tourism's negative impact, mainly by complying with the standards and specifications set for the promotion of predetermined sustainability goals. In this paper, through an examination of the notions of sustainability, Sustainable Development and Human Development (HD), it becomes evident that tourism can maximize its contribution to the management of the global issues by broadening its focus from Sustainable to Human Development. To increase tourism's contribution to development, a new type of tourism is suggested, the Human Development Tourism that may also compliment and foster the achievement of sustainable tourism's goals. Its primary aim is to cultivate a Universal Culture of Human Development using the tangible and intangible heritage of the host countries. The Human Development Tourism advances tourism industry to a powerful proactive and leading instrument of HD, by maximizing its unique advantage to connect cultures, facilitate intercultural dialogue, inform, educate and inspire large populations all over the world to promote the HD principles, and foster individuals to become efficient HD agents. The pilot HD Tourism Program presented here utilizes elements from the material and intangible heritage of Greece. Having as a foundation the intangible heritage of Aristotelian Ethical Theory, it helps people to enjoy Greece's nature, modern culture and relevant elements of its material heritage, while raising their awareness of their role as HD agents. The program includes activities that facilitate



understanding of how the Aristotelian Theory promotes HD values and principles, how the Aristotelian virtues are reflected on the tangible cultural heritage met in museums and archeological places visited in the program, and mostly how these virtues can be applied in various contexts in life to promote people's individual wellbeing and common interest.

## **2 Understanding the Purposes and Value of Sustainable Tourism**

### ***2.1 The Scope and Purposes of Sustainability and Sustainable Development***

Sustainable tourism aims to promote Sustainable Development, so in order to understand why and how sustainable tourism is useful, we need to examine the purposes of sustainability and Sustainable Development that sustainable tourism aims to serve. Sustainability initially referred to the preservation of the natural resources and the protection of the environment, but under this meaning it has been faced with the skepticism, even the opposition, of the developing countries that considered it to be a threat for their development (Strong, 2001). The environmental and ecological concern of sustainability intrinsically clashes with the economic development which directly affects the quality of peoples' life; the decline of the one leads to the improvement of the other. Environmental sustainability would ultimately be enhanced if economic growth stopped, because the pause of any economic activity would simply mean that there would not be any further nature exploitation or other side effects resulting from the economic activity that are harmful for the environment. However, such an extreme scenario would be meaningless because the attainment of sustainability in such a case wouldn't benefit people but rather lead them to extreme poverty, misery and extinction. Consequently, sustainability cannot be considered to be a goal in itself and certainly not an ultimate goal of humanity because it is not preferable for human beings over anything else. On the other hand, it is self-evident that economic growth has a negative impact on the environment, which, if remained unmanaged, might even lead to the extinction of our species. Hence, it is again unreasonable to consider economic growth as a goal in itself, or the ultimate goal of humanity because it is also not preferable over anything else. Although neither sustainability nor economic growth may stand alone as a goal in itself, they both have a high value for human beings, and so both must be promoted.

In an attempt to compromise the inherent antagonistic purposes of sustainability and economic growth, a new term was born in the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm in 1972; the term "Sustainable Development". Initially the word "Development" in this term referred to the

economic growth, while the word “Sustainable” implied the protection and preservation of the natural resources and the environment. So, Sustainable Development referred to the process of economic development that is carried out in such a way and to the degree that assures sustainability of the natural resources and the environment. Despite the emphasis on economic growth and the protection of the environment, the first principle in the final declaration of the Stockholm Conference reflects the ultimate purpose behind Sustainable Development, namely people’s welfare. It states that “Man has the fundamental right to freedom, equality and adequate conditions of life, in an environment of quality that permits a life of dignity and well being” (United Nations, 1972, p. 4). Unlike sustainability or economic growth, people’s welfare can perfectly stand as a meaningful goal in itself that, also, offers a rational framework to consolidate the opposing forces of environmental sustainability and economic growth. In addition, the first principle goes one step further to combine the need for environmental protection with political-social standards such as freedom and equality. However, the notion and policies of Sustainable Development kept their focus on economic growth and the protection of the environment, putting them instead of people’s welfare and the political-social parameters in the center of development. Since then, the notion of Sustainable Development has been plagued with a lot of controversy, and has been mostly criticized for the ambiguity of its definition and the resulting contradiction of policy initiatives to its rhetoric, as well as for its meaning and value (Anand & Sen, 2000; Stefanovich, 2000).

However, the United Nation’s 1987 Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: *Our Common Future*, further advanced the conceptualization of Sustainable Development, increasing its connection to people’s wellbeing. Also, the new definition, known as the Brundtland definition, clearly reflected the principle of intergenerational universalism, referring to both the current and future generations, as it stated that Sustainable Development “meets the needs of the present without compromising the well-being of the future generations”. It was the first attempt to link environmental sustainability to social equity not only within but also between generations, assuring equitable opportunities (as those are offered through environmental and natural resources) for all to satisfy their aspiration for a better life. Furthermore, it acknowledged the pivotal role of the individual human agent in the achievement of Sustainable Development, and recognized the powerful impact of the socially and culturally based values on the human agent’s ability to act in ways that promote Sustainable Development. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio in 1992, the Agenda 21, aimed to dynamically promote Sustainable Development by setting specific environmental and developmental objectives and by calling for the international cooperation for their achievement (United Nations, 1992).

It is obvious that the evolution of the notion of Sustainable Development has been characterized by an increasing connection of the environmental sustainability and economic growth to people’s welfare, with an analogous gradually increasing incorporation of political-social standards and human rights in its definition and

overall conceptualization. However, Sustainable Development maintained its focus primarily on environmental sustainability and economic growth.

## ***2.2 Human Development and its Relation to Sustainable Development***

In the following years, international or global development that used to be defined in merely economic terms, acquired a more holistic perspective that clearly placed the human wellbeing, instead of economic growth or sustainability, as the ultimate purpose of development. This shift of focus to human wellbeing is reflected to the notion of Human Development and Amartya Sen's (1992) pioneering economic theory of capabilities approach, embedded in it.

Human Development's objective, as stated by UNDP (1990), is to create "an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives" (p. 9), and it is defined as "the process of enlarging people's choices" (p. 10). Unlike Sustainable Development that directly aims to environmental sustainability and economic growth, Human Development directly aims to people's welfare by offering them the capabilities (Sen, 2001) they need in order to "be and do what they value and they have reason to value" (Alkire, 2010, p. 24), such as the capability to be feed, to be educated, to be healthy, to be a dancer, to make a family, to travel etc., and takes under closer consideration the political and sociocultural parameters of development such as social justice and equity. The Human Development perspective set the framework for further criticism on Sustainable Development, especially regarding the latter's uneven concern to protect the rights and freedoms of the next generations. For example, Sustainable Development, keeping its primary concern on the preservation of nature and the protection of the environment, recognizes the right of both the current and future generations to be equally benefited by the natural resources and the environment, but it practically neglects the rights and freedoms of the current generation to live a life of dignity. So, its measures and policies often aim to sustain the environmental conditions and natural resources but have a negative impact on the quality of life of current generations, depriving, especially the less privileged, from the opportunity to "be and do what they value and they have reason to value". This uneven concern actually contradicts with Sustainable Development's own fundamental principle of universalism (Anand & Sen, 2000) as it aims to "save" the environmental resources for the future at the expense of people's current wellbeing or "enjoyment" (Ramsey, 1928). Under the HD perspective, where emphasis is placed on offering equal capabilities to people to live flourishing lives, and not exclusively on assuring sustainability and economic growth, the principle of universalism requires that there must be an equal concern of the overall capabilities offered to both current and future generations (UNDP, 2006) to enable them live flourishing lives, so that "in our anxiety to protect the future generations ... not (to) overlook the pressing claims of the less privileged today" (Anand & Sen, 2000, p. 2030).

Under this light, environmental sustainability is viewed as a small part of Human Development, and sustainability and economic growth are clearly viewed as mid-goals of Human Development, as means for the achievement of the ultimate goal of a flourishing life. Furthermore, it is clarified that the mere attainment of sustainability and economic growth doesn't necessarily serve Human Development and its ultimate purpose. On the one hand, economic growth's impact on HD largely depends on how the economic growth is attained (whether or not the conditions of the economic growth expand people's overall capabilities to live flourishing lives), and on the way that the produced wealth is used (whether or not it is used in ways that expand people's capabilities to live flourishing lives). On the other hand, environmental sustainability's impact on HD largely depends on how its attainment affects people's overall quality of life (whether or not it expands people's capabilities to live flourishing lives) and on the way that the sustainable resources are used in ways that expand people's overall capabilities to live flourishing lives. Needless to say that both environmental sustainability's and economic growth's impact on HD largely depends on whether they are attained and used according the principles of universalism within and between generations, according to which they both need to produce an equitable balance of total capabilities offered to all people within and between generations, so that to equally enable all to live flourishing lives.

Consequently, it becomes obvious that the main concern of Sustainable Development in every context shall not be how to economically develop according predetermined sustainability standards, but rather how to sustain what offers people the overall capability to live flourishing lives, and to grow economically in the way that increases people's overall capabilities to live flourishing lives. In this sense, Human Development, and not specific environmental and natural resources, is what Sustainable Development needs to sustain (Neumayer, 2012). Solow's (1991) description of sustainability reflects a similar standpoint, firstly stating that sustainability is our "moral obligation ... to preserve the capacity to be well of, to be as well of as we are" (p. 13), and secondly, postulating that sustainability cannot refer to the preservation of specific resources. Moreover, he implied that the key factor in the preservation of resources is not our interest in sustainability, but rather their value for us.

Although HD has a broader scope than Sustainable Development, and economic growth and sustainability are viewed more as means of HD rather than as goals in themselves, HD at the same time serves as a means to their attainment (Anand & Sen, 2000); "people being better educated, more healthy, less debilitated, and so on, is not only constitutive of a better quality of life, but is also contributes to a person's productivity and her ability to make a larger contribution to the progress of material prosperity ... human skill and agency would be important not just in raising productivity, but also in devising ways and means of dealing with environmental and other challenges" (p. 2039).

Based on the above rationale, Sustainable Development out of the context of HD is meaningless, while its attainment without HD is difficult and rather not sustainable itself. So, HD is an equal if not a greater priority than Sustainable

Development with the latter being viewed as reasonable HD goal that all HD agents freely value, and are willing and able to pursue in order to expand their overall capabilities to live flourishing lives. The vital importance of Human Development to the attainment of the sustainability goals is reflected by the evolution of Sustainable Development in the following years.

The World Summit on Sustainable Development that took place in Rio De Janeiro in June 2002, also discussed a wide range of issues recognizing that Sustainable Development cannot be solely a matter of environmental concern, but also economic, political and sociocultural (United Nations, 2002). Also, in the same year, the Earth Charter expanded the definition of Sustainable Development to include sociocultural parameters as its vital elements, such as universal human rights and social and economic justice (Earth Charter, 2017). The Earth Charter along with the declarations and workings of the previously mentioned conferences significantly contributed to Sustainable Development by offering global understanding and consensus on the meaning of sustainability and the vision, principles and challenges of Sustainable Development. They also provided a useful reference for governments and organizations to design appropriate policies for the promotion of Sustainable Development. However, ten years later, as it was noted by the United Nations at the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Rio in 2012, very few progress had been made (United Nations, 2012). One of the reasons might be that the vast majority, if not all, of the discussions and actions for the promotion of Sustainable Development, had been carried out by academics, governments and organizations, not directly the people. So, it was emphasized that “sustainable development must be people inclusive and people-centered, benefiting and involving all people” (p. 8). This might be explained by the fact that people in order to contribute to Sustainable Development need to be willing and able to do so, in other words, they need to have the capability to do so. However, the capabilities that enable people to pursue and attain what promotes their welfare and common interest are offered through Human Development.

So, to have progress in Sustainable Development, the focus shouldn't be only on the definition of the sustainable goals and on policies to attain them, but also on Human Development. As “HD is development by the people of the people and for the people” (Alkire, 2010, p. 24), to foster Human Development, people that are both “agents and beneficiaries” of development (UNDP, 2002), need be empowered.

### ***2.3 Sustainable Tourism and Human Development Tourism***

Nevertheless, despite Human Development's importance, up until now the most effort has been put to the promotion of Sustainable Development, especially in the educational and business sector. Accordingly, tourism as well, as an industry with a great impact on global economy and sustainability, has been greatly concerned with Sustainable Development.

Sustainable Tourism is defined as “the tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities” (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005, p. 12), and its main objective is to increase the benefits of tourism while minimizing its negative impact on the four dimensions of sustainable living; economic, social, environmental and political sustainability which respectively refer to the appropriate development, equity and peace, conservation and democratic participation. The evolution of sustainability and sustainable development gradually increased the importance of sustainability in the tourism industry and the promotion of Sustainable Tourism. The United Nations declared the year 2017 as The International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development “recognizing the importance of international tourism, and particularly of the designation of an international year of sustainable tourism for development, in fostering better understanding among peoples everywhere, in leading to a greater awareness of the rich heritage of various civilizations and in bringing about a better appreciation of the inherent values of different cultures... also the important role of sustainable tourism as a positive instrument towards the eradication of poverty, the protection of the environment, the improvement of quality of life” (United Nations General Assembly, 2015).

Despite the broadening of Sustainable Development’s scope beyond the sustainability of the environment and natural resources and economic growth to the political and social sustainability, the practices in various industries, including sustainable tourism, mainly focus on policies ensuring people’s conformity to predetermined sustainability standards, and not on people’s development that is required for their active engagement in Sustainable Development, as well, outside the tourism context in other contexts in their life. In tourism, as in any other human activity, both the sustainability and human development principles need to apply. However, tourism has a unique potential to function as an accelerator of sustainability and a paramount HD leader by purposefully contributing to the development of HD agents through a new type of tourism; the Human Development Tourism. Human Development Tourism (HDT) is defined as the tourism that uses the world’s material and tangible cultural heritage to create a global HD culture by raising people’s awareness of HD and their role in it, and fostering their understanding of HD values and principles.

### **3 Human Development Tourism’s Pillars**

#### ***3.1 The Pillar of Education***

Education is a HD capability and a powerful instrument of HD, as it enables people to think, behave and act in ways that best promote their wellbeing and common good. It provides access to new information and cultivates rational thinking that

people need in order to assess and value what best promotes their wellbeing and common good, it offers new perspectives and visions that guide, motivate and inspire people to pursue what they value, and it facilitates dialogue and exchange that helps people communicate and connect. Education in various forms and contexts is needed in order to cultivate a global culture of HD where individual people think and act according the values and principles of HD as these are reflected in the Earth Charter or the UNDP Program.

The United Nations declared the period between the 2004 and 2014 as the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) “in order to emphasize the critical role of education in moving towards a more sustainable world” (Wals, 2012, p. 9). The DESD program, adhering to the principle that it is not only important what you learn but also how you learn it, combined a wide range of approaches to learning such as systems thinking-based learning, values-based learning, critical thinking-based learning, problem-based learning and social learning, as well as various types of formal and informal learning in different contexts. Undoubtedly, the DESD program serves HD, as any effort that promotes Sustainable Development does. However, since HD serves and fosters sustainability, as previously argued, education on HD is equally important, if not more important, than education on Sustainable Development. Also, if preceded the education on Sustainable Development, it would probably increase the latter’s efficiency.

Firstly, education on HD would aim to enable people lead flourishing lives, instead of aiming to enable them reduce their negative impact on environment and nature which is the primary purpose on Sustainable Development education. DESD used an advanced learning methodology to serve its purpose, taking under consideration that it is not only important what people learn but also how they learn it. Nevertheless, why people learn what they learn is equally important for learning too, because the purpose of learning, as stated in the objectives of any educational program and supported by the program’s goals and activities, defines the value people assign to the learning for them, which in turn, greatly affects their motivation to learn, apply and transfer the new knowledge. Logically, an educational program that aims to help people to live long, healthy and creative lives, would best motivate them to learn, apply, and transfer the new knowledge in practice than an educational program that aims to help them reduce their negative impact on the natural environment.

Secondly, sustainability as well as any other HD goal (global, group, community, or individual goal) set in any context and at any point in time to enlarge people’s choices to “live long, healthy and flourishing lives” (UNDP, 1990, p. 9) is based on the same HD principles that promote the idea of a global society where every person is responsible for his/her wellbeing but also for the wellbeing of the community, the humanity and the future generations. Also, sustainability not only is based on the same set of values as HD but also requires the same set of basic competencies or *fundamental capabilities* (Moira, 2016) in order to be pursued and attained; specifically (a) the ability to value what promotes individual wellbeing and common good in every situation, and (b) the ability to efficiently use any other

capability in order to attain what the person values, allowing the reconciliation of moral values and logic or public reasoning which is vital for social justice and universalism (Rawls, 1971; Sen, 2005). Obviously a person that doesn't value sustainability will not be willing to serve it even if "technically" knows how to serve it, and also a person that values sustainability but doesn't know how to manage various parameters to efficiently serve it will not be able to serve it. The cultivation of an HD culture based on the HD principles and the building of the basic HD competencies (or fundamental capabilities) is a difficult goal to attain, even in an educational program exclusively dedicated to it. So, the attempt to attain the above goal in the context of an educational program that needs to focus on another specific subject (such as sustainability and suggested practices to attain it) would be rather unsuccessful. On the other hand, if basic HD principles are not cultivated and basic HD competencies are not developed, then again the effectiveness of an educational program on sustainability or any other HD goal would be hampered as well, and the need for the cultivation of these principles and competencies would be evident soon. These two points are aligned to the conclusions stated in DESD's full-length Report. Specifically, one of the key conclusions of the program was that, under the perspective of a whole-systems approach, reevaluation of existing values is required in order to achieve a meaningful progress towards sustainability. Also, the suggested ESD future steps included the fostering of capacity-building learning very strongly attached to the basic HD competencies or fundamental capabilities.

Hence, there is a need that HD Education is offered to enable people to efficiently serve Human Development. Such an education should certainly inform people about the notion of Human Development, its importance for people's wellbeing and their pivotal role in it, but also should contribute to the development of the fundamental capabilities of HD. Finally, it could take any form to be applied in various contexts according the appropriate standards and specifications of any context. Accordingly, Human Development Tourism which aims to promote HD, needs to have an educational component with all the above characteristics. Also, HDT has the specifications that make an education on HD appealing enough to engage people and motivate them to apply the new knowledge (HD's principles and values) in practice.

### ***3.2 The Pillar of Culture***

Human Development, in order to be attained, requires that people think, behave and act in ways that promote their wellbeing and common good, according the HD principles and values. Hence, Human Development entails a cultural transformation or reorientation in order to be served, because culture, by definition, reflects ways of living together and value systems (UNESCO, 2001). Human Development is carried out by all the people in the world, so a universal HD culture needs to be cultivated. However, the HD culture needs to be cultivated in such a way that the



cultural diversity, which is vital for humankind, to be preserved. Moreover, cultural diversity that is recognized for providing the roots of development, and has been characterized as a source of exchange, innovation and creativity, can be a great contributor itself for the creation of a universal HD culture.

Under, this light, HDT offers unique advantages for the promotion of HD, and specifically the cultivation of a world culture of HD. Firstly, it provides the context and opportunity to cultivate the world HD culture while preserving the cultural diversity which has been acknowledged as the common heritage of humanity, and, also, recognized for its significance for Sustainable Development. HDT, by utilizing the material and intangible heritage of all civilizations in order to promote the HD principles, enables the ethnocentric creation of the world HD culture; every civilization, country and community may contribute to the promotion of the values and principles of HD, showing how specific elements in their material and intangible heritage reflect them. Such an ethnocentric creation of a world culture facilitates people to perceive HD not as a new-age artificial theoretical construct “externally” imposed on them, but rather as a revival and repositioning of pre-existing values and principles that humanity has been holding for ages. So, people are offered an additional way to connect, feel familiar and identify with the HD values and principles as these are reflected in the world’s cultural heritage, and originate from a common world ancestry. As a result, people’s understanding of the HD values and principles, as well as their motivation to apply them is enhanced. Furthermore, tourism provides a context of cultural dialogue which is of vital importance for the cultivation of a world HD culture, as cultural dialogue has been acknowledged for its significance to help people gain knowledge and understanding of different cultures (International Tourism Charter adopted by ICOMOS in 1999). Specifically, HDT, by identifying the different ways in which HD values and principles are expressed among the different cultures, fosters not only the understanding of the HD values and principles, but also the understanding of the other cultures. Moreover, respecting and emphasizing the distinctive elements in each culture that express the HD values and principles, HDT further promotes cultural diversity. Last but not least, tourism has the potential to reach a huge number of people throughout the world; the World Tourism Organization (2005) estimates that the international arrivals will exceed 1.56 billion by the year 2020. So, it has the great potential to massively increase people’s awareness of HD and their role in it, and, hence, it can rapidly spread an HD culture throughout the globe.

#### **4 A Human Development Tourism Pilot Program**

The pilot HDT program presented here offers a general suggestive template for the design of a HDT program. Firstly, it consists of a Theoretical Component and an Experiential Component each of which might be comprised of a variety of formal or informal activities. For example, for the Theoretical Component such activities might include workshops, mentoring sessions, individual and group dialogues and discussions, while for the Experiential Component such activities might be visits to

museums and archeological places, leisure activities in nature and various forms of ancient and modern cultural experiences (e.g. watching a theater play, listening to music, enjoying the local cuisine, participating in a cultural event, sailing etc.). The program is executed in a specific route that needs to efficiently accommodate both components of the program, and meaningfully link the various natural and cultural experiences of the Experiential Component to the Theoretical one. The route and schedule of the program, which defines its duration as well, might be selected among pre-designed routes or be customized based on specific needs and interest of the travelers. The Theoretical Component in the suggested pilot program demonstrates how the intangible heritage reflects and promotes HD values and principles, while the Experiential Component helps travelers to understand how these values and principles are reflected in different expressions of life in the culture of the host country (modern and ancient), and in their life. Here, we will mainly focus on the Theoretical Component which is the central axon in an HDT program, to illustrate how it reflects and promotes the HD values and principles.

The Theoretical Component of the pilot HDT program for the host country of Greece could not be other than the intangible heritage of the Aristotelian Ethical Theory as described in Aristotle's work *Nicomachean Ethics*. Aristotle's perspective has been often cited in the studies of HD, Nussbaum (1988, 1990) and Sen (Crocker, 1992), and particularly his ethical theory has a direct correspondence to the concept, values and principles of HD. It is strongly attached to the CAVE<sup>©</sup> Approach perspective (Moira, 2016), and uses the links and correspondences of the Aristotelian Theory to the HD defined there. Specifically:

The correspondence of Aristotle's Ethical Theory in *Nicomachean Ethics* to HD (UNDP, 1990, 1993, 1995, 2000, 2002) becomes obvious through the following points: (a) Both the Ethical Theory and HD share the common purpose to help people lead "flourishing lives", considering all other goals as 'means' to achieve this ultimate purpose, (b) both consider wellbeing as a dynamic process, not as a static final state to be attained, (c) both recognize the importance of the individual human agent as the most important agency in human welfare, (d) both promote individual wellbeing and common interest, considering each as a prerequisite of the other, (e) both adhere on the principle of the freedom of choice according to which people need to freely choose what they consider as good for them and others, and finally, (g) both highlight the necessity of rational judgment and logical thinking in making choices and decisions in order to serve the person's wellbeing and common good.

Furthermore, the Aristotelian Theory besides offering descriptions and principles that help us to conceptualize wellbeing (*eudaimonia*, or happiness), also suggests an anthropocentric way to attain it through the development of the Aristotelian virtues. So, the Theoretical Component in the HDT program illustrates how the Aristotelian Theory assumes a similar view to HD, but also offers people an insight into how they can promote HD, and, hence, their wellbeing and common interest through the development of the virtues. Although, the development of the intellectual and moral virtues, offers people a way to fully develop the fundamental capabilities of HD (Moira, 2016), the HDT Program certainly doesn't generally aim to help people develop the virtues, just to learn about them and understand their

connection to HD, their wellbeing and common interest. Virtues, also offer an additional context for intercultural dialogue and understanding, as well as, a new perspective for self development. Then, the Experiential Component offers various opportunities to travelers to understand how virtues (or the lack of them) are expressed in the stimuli that various activities offer e.g. through the story behind a sculpture in a museum, through a theatrical play, through travelers' own attitudes and behaviours in a leisure activity, through their own generated emotions and thoughts etc. Finally, the whole program aims to turn the elements of cultural heritage to useful instruments for development; mindsets and constructs that shape a way of thinking that promotes HD, images and emotions that remind them of the values and principles of HD, and insights to how to apply the latter in their life.

## 5 Conclusion

Sustainable Development is an important goal and process for humanity, but cannot be meaningfully understood and served out of the context of Human Development. This is supported by the fact that the evolution of Sustainable Development was based on a gradual expansion of its conceptualization to include and incorporate political and socio-cultural elements that are in the core of Human Development notion. Maybe, in the future, the evolution of Sustainable Development will lead to its ultimate fuse with the notion of Human Development. However, for now there are still great differences between the two with the most important of them being that Human Development is directly concerned with people's wellbeing and the offering of capabilities that will promote it, while Sustainable Development (still) is directly concerned with the attainment of sustainable goals which compromise economic growth to environmental sustainability. In other words, we can say that Human Development is more clearly anthropocentric, while Sustainable Development is more clearly results-oriented, and maybe this explains why its promotion has been given a priority over the promotion of Human Development in every human activity, including the business sector of tourism; due to the urgency to bring direct results in important issues. The aim of the present paper was to show that Sustainable Tourism doesn't maximize the great potential of the tourism industry to serve humanity economically, culturally, politically and environmentally, and to suggest another type of tourism that directly aims to the development of the individual human agents so that to enable them best serve development. Certainly, there are important challenges that Human Development Tourism needs to face, such as the need of collaboration of professionals of various industries to design appropriate HDT programs, the required training of the guides and tour operators on HD and HD's connections to the elements of the material and intangible cultural heritage included in the program, or on the management of the intercultural dialogue in the context of the program etc. On the other hand, these same challenges, if successfully overcome, will offer unique benefits such as the significant progress of both Sustainable and overall Human Development due to the

involvement and participation of individual people throughout the world, the lack of which has been identified as one of the factors responsible for the slow progress in Sustainable Development. It is worth it that both HDT's challenges and benefits will be closer examined in the future in order to optimize HDT, because HDT not only maximizes the potential of tourism to contribute to HD, but also culture(s)'s potential to do the same. Human Development Tourism, as an overall practice, demonstrates the spirit of Human Development to best use our capabilities, and especially our culture, in order to enable current and future generations to live long flourishing lives. As it is acknowledged by UNESCO, "the value and priority of culture(s) relates not only to its intrinsic worth, but to the ways that it is used" (Robinson & Picard, 2006, p. 17), and the same stands for tourism as well.

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# Importance of Indoor Aerial Filming for Creative Industries (CIs): Looking Towards the Future

Virginia Santamarina-Campos, Blanca de-Miguel-Molina,  
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**Abstract** Aerial photography and filming represent an indispensable resource for the Creative Industries (CIs), deploying activities like registration of artwork and heritage sites. When filming in confined (indoor) spaces, auxiliary devices as cable cams, camera rails, jibs, scaffolds or lifting platforms are being employed, enabling film directors to obtain special camera shots or to perform graphical surveying and recording of heritage sites or buildings. With the rise of Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS), commonly known as drones, film producers are increasingly focusing on their use for outdoor aerial photography and filming, since RPAS provide significant advantages over current photography and filming techniques such as the expansion of creative spaces and movements of the camera. Also classical filming equipment is normally not adequate when shorter distances to the object are required, and by using RPAS this can be overcome while adding more possibilities for free movement for the camera operator. It is also less risky, as there is no need to climb up a scaffold, ladder or lifting platform to get professional results, and given that RPAS, compared to classical equipment, are small sized, mobile and do not need any support equipment. Thus, in summary, RPAS do not invade the film set. We can also find other advantages such as that complex and bulky auxiliary infrastructure such as cable cams, jibs, scaffolds, etc. become unnecessary and, therefore, logistics are easier and assembly and disassembly is faster; that RPAS require less space than traditional equipment; and that they are cheaper, as prices have dropped significantly and this creative tool is more accessible for small companies. The benefits of using indoor drones have not yet been deeply studied, and in this paper, industry needs and expected characteristics to enhance its use are analyzed.

**Keywords** Registration · Artworks · Cultural heritage · Museum Drone · RPAS

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## 1 Introduction

Cultural and creative industries are activities whose principal purpose is production or reproduction, promotion, distribution or commercialization of goods, services and activities of a cultural, artistic or heritage-related nature (UNESCO, 2013). The definition highlights how the term creative industries is applied to a wide spectrum of productive activities, including production of goods and provision of services that depend on innovation, including many types of research and software development. The creative industries, are, by definition, innovative (Jaaniste, 2009) and, in the same way as any innovation developed in any other industry, fuel the economy (Tidd, Bessant, & Pavitt, 2005) by generating revenues at the firm level and spillovers that affect closely-related sectors such as tourism (UNESCO, 2009), among others. Indeed, some authors see culture and creativity as drivers of a more humanistic development that can obtain economic goals and innovation and trade while also contributing to social inclusion, cultural diversity and environmentally sustainable growth (Flew, 2014).

The Creative Economy Report published by UNESCO (2013), collects the different perspectives and models that classify the Creative Industries' activities.

If one closely analyzes Fig. 1, it can be seen how filming and photography are indeed considered creative industries while at the same time they can be a strong resource for other creative and cultural industries as architecture, publishing, performing arts, fashion, and advertising, and at the same time an inherent part of the narrative of places, intersecting with culture, heritage and tourism.

To be more precise, the Creative Industries (CIs) rely on “visual arts,” those that appeal primarily to the visual sense, that is, art forms that focus on the creation of works which are primarily visual in nature, or are multidimensional objects. Aerial photography and filming represent a basic resource for activities such as news production, marketing programs, movies, TV shows, video games or cultural documentaries on architecture, heritage, tourism or artworks, among others, as motion capture and images are needed.

Given the versatility and affordability of Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS), commonly known as drones, film producers are increasingly focusing on their use for outdoor aerial photography and filming, since RPAS provide significant advantages over current photography and filming techniques with the expansion of creative spaces and movements of the camera. Also, classical filming equipment is normally not adequate when shorter distances to the object are required and by using RPAS this can be overcome while adding more possibilities for free movement for the camera operator.

<b>1. DCMS Model</b>		<b>2. Symbolic Texts Model</b>		<b>3. Concentric Circles Model</b>	
Advertising Architecture Art and antiques market Crafts Design Fashion Film and video Music Performing arts Publishing Software Television and radio Video and computer games		<b>Core cultural industries</b> Advertising Film Internet Music Publishing Television and radio Video and computer games  <b>Peripheral cultural industries</b> Creative arts  <b>Borderline cultural industries</b> Consumer electronics Fashion Software Sport		<b>Core creative arts</b> Literature Music Performing arts Visual arts  <b>Other core cultural industries</b> Film Museums and libraries  <b>Wider cultural industries</b> Heritage services Publishing Sound recording Television and radio Video and computer games  <b>Related industries</b> Advertising Architecture Design Fashion	
<b>4. WIPO Copyright Model</b>		<b>5. UNESCO Institute for Statistics Model</b>		<b>6. Americans for the Arts Model</b>	
<b>Core copyright industries</b> Advertising Collecting societies Film and video Music Performing arts Publishing Software Television and radio Visual and graphic art  <b>Partial copyright industries</b> Architecture Clothing, footwear Design Fashion Household goods Toys		<b>Interdependent copyright industries</b> Blank recording material Consumer electronics Musical instruments Paper Photocopiers, photographic equipment  <b>Industries in core cultural domains</b> Museums, galleries, libraries Performing arts Festivals Visual arts, crafts Design Publishing Television, radio Film and video Photography Interactive media  <b>Industries in expanded cultural domains</b> Musical instruments Sound equipment Architecture Advertising Printing equipment Software Audiovisual hardware		Advertising Architecture Arts schools and services Design Film Museums, zoos Music Performing arts Publishing Television and radio Visual arts	

**Fig. 1** Creative industries classification. *Source* Creative economy report, UNESCO (2013)

It is also less risky, as there is no need to climb up a ladder or lifting platform to get professional results, as RPAS, compared to classical equipment, are small sized, mobile and do not need any support equipment. Thus, in summary, they seldom invade the film set. We can also find other advantages such as the removal of complex auxiliary infrastructure such as cable cams, jibs, etc. and, therefore, logistics are easier and cheaper, assembly and disassembly is faster, RPAS require less space, and prices have dropped significantly and this creative tool is more accessible for small companies than traditional auxiliary filming equipment. The benefits of using indoor drones have not yet been deeply studied. In this paper, we report a study of industry needs for indoor filming using RPAS and analyzes what characteristics are needed in order for RPAS to become more widely used in indoor filming.



## 2 Objectives and Methodology

This chapter describes the creative industries' needs for indoor filming using RPAS and the methodology utilized to obtain the information. To do so, we deployed 3 sessions in different countries, England, Belgium and Spain using the focus group technique. This tool consists of collecting information through a semi-structured group interview process led by a moderator who can intervene to varying degrees depending on the dynamics of the discussion.

This methodology is very useful for gathering information on a specific topic. Informants were chosen from different creative industries in order to collect a wider set of opinions, and then information was codified and analyzed using qualitative analysis software. Results and conclusions are presented in this document.

### 2.1 *Current Situation*

Drones are used mainly for outdoor activities although there is a wide range of industries that could benefit from their use indoors. Since existing RPAS lack a precise, robust and affordable indoor positioning system as well as advanced safety features, the control of any RPAS in indoor environments is particularly difficult and dangerous. Therefore, RPAS cannot be yet employed professionally in indoor environments. The goal of this new product, the indoor drone, is to obtain professional filming and photographic material for this industry in order to increase its competitiveness within the European market.

The AIRT project aims to create a new product that fulfills the needs of the creative industries by the definition and improvement of indoor RPAS. This chapter presents the process of identifying the needs that creative industries have and the features that the NPD should fulfill. The description of the different steps we followed including describing the methodology used, the identification of the key informants, the deployment of the information gathering sessions and finally, the analysis of the results, are explained.

### 2.2 *Methodology: The Focus Group Technique*

In order to obtain information directly from the consumer and identify the features that a new product must accomplish, the focus group technique is the most suitable research methodology. It is a qualitative method that asks participants open questions. It is led by an expert and follows a semi-structured interview protocol to allow the discussion to flow.

In our case the different types of companies that comprise the creative industries were considered. Three different sessions were organized, in different European countries (England, Spain and Belgium), to better cover the European creative industries' needs (see Figs. 2, 3 and 4).



**Fig. 2** Luton (England) focus group no. 1



**Fig. 3** Valencia (Spain) Focus group no. 2



**Fig. 4** Gent (Belgium) focus group no. 3

### 2.2.1 Regarding the Participants

In every group we tried to look for a parity of genders among all six key informants (experts), all of them being decision-making informants or CEOs belonging to European SMEs. The participants signed consent forms allowing the team to work with the material collected during the sessions in activities related to the project. They were informed that the intellectual property of the sessions belongs to the project team. These agreements were signed by the informants following each country's data protection regulations. The description of the informants can be seen in Table 1.

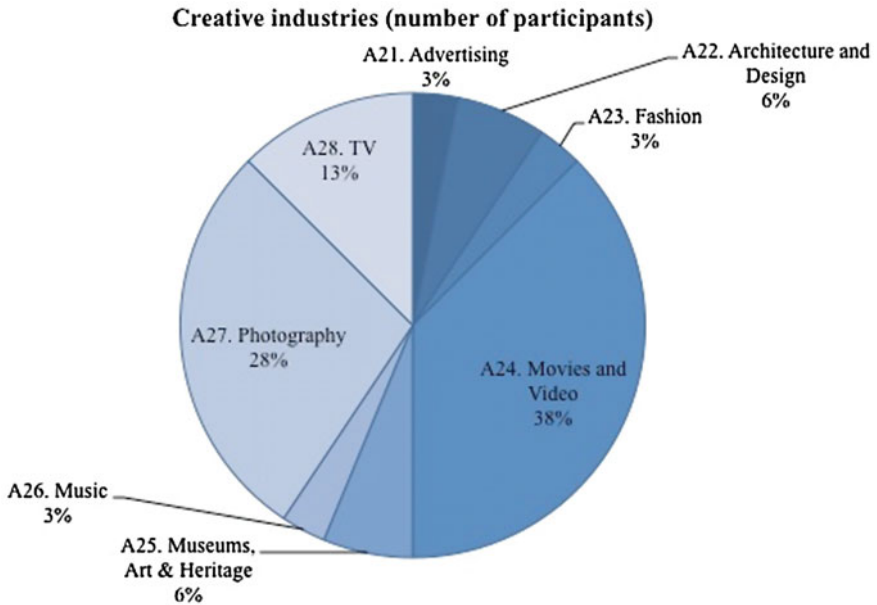
As can be seen in this table, all the sectors were covered. Out of the 20 participants, one was from the advertising sector (coded as participant 19), two were from architecture and design (coded as participants 6 and 14), one from the fashion industry (participant 18), 12 participants belonging to the video and advertising industry, although from different activities within it (participants 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 19) as participants 4, 7, 12, 13 and 16 were also classified as part of the photography industry and participant 1, 3 and 15 were also related to the TV field.

Two of the informants came from the museums and heritage field (participants 8 and 13), one from the music and photography sector (participant 20). Participant 18 was also related with the TV industry.

The movies and video sector was the most numerous (see Fig. 5) and accounts for 38% of the total, followed by photography and TV (28%), as those are also the most directly related to the industries that are currently leading in the use of drones.

**Table 1** Distribution of focus-groups participants regarding their area of expertise

ID	A21. Advertising	A22. Architecture and design	A23. Fashion	A24. Movies and video	A25. Museums, art & heritage	A26. Music	A27. Photography	A28. TV
Part1				X				X
Part2							X	
Part3				X				X
Part4				X			X	
Part5				X				
Part6		X						
Part7				X			X	
Part8					X			
Part9				X				
Part10							X	
Part11				X				
Part12				X			X	
Part13				X	X		X	
Part14		X						
Part15				X				X
Part16				X			X	
Part17							X	
Part18			X					X
Part19	X			X				
Part20						X	X	



**Fig. 5** Groups of informants by type of creative industry

On the other hand, music and fashion were the least represented creative industries (3% of the total informants each) whereas advertising, museums and art, and architecture and design were somewhat more represented (6% each).

### 2.2.2 Identification of the Appropriate Place

As the session was recorded with both video and sound systems, an adequate level of light and sonority was needed. A publishing and design partner was in charge of selecting the appropriate places as well as of recording the sessions and taking pictures. A total of 809 photos were taken and 310 min of film were recorded. The first meeting took place in Luton, the second session took place in Valencia, and the last one took place in Gent, Belgium.

### 2.3 Focus Group Dynamics Description

The sessions followed interview guidelines that were previously defined by the researchers (see Fig. 6) to keep the conversations focused on the more interesting and relevant topics for identifying the necessities of the sector.

1. Have you used drones for your creative works?
  - a. If not, why not?
  - b. And would you like to use them?
  - c. If so, which features would you like to add them?
  - d. And to remove?
2. Do you think it would be interesting to use them indoors?
  - a. Which could be the potential benefits?
  - b. Which requirements will they need to be used indoors?
3. Which uses would provide you a drone for indoor recording?
  - a. Special shots, increase the creative works, avoid the use of auxiliary tools...

**Fig. 6** Questionnaire to guide the conversation. *Source* Own elaboration

The focus group technique can offer insights consistent with those shared by the broader target market. Focus group moderators should pose questions in a way that does not lead group members to provide desired responses, but rather honest and insightful responses.

The sessions were conducted in English. The recorded material was transcribed and analyzed using a software package for qualitative analysis, in order to classify the information and select the most relevant data.

Informants did not know the questions they were going to be asked in advance, although a brief explanation of the project and the intended objective of the meeting was offered.

Although it was not mandatory that all the participants had used drones before, we selected at least 2–3 participants per group with previous experience in the use of drones to get a better insight of real needs, the current difficulties and future/desired features that the new product should have.

During the session, catering was offered in order to create a comfortable and friendly environment.

Information was processed according to the ethical rules of focus groups field-work; that is, informants cannot be identified.

The informants are a representative sample of potential clients carefully selected in order to cover most of all the possible features that the new product can have, especially non-obvious ones such as safety and quality.

### 3 Focus Group Results

Analysis of results from focus groups was obtained by using the Qualitative Content Analysis method. Qualitative data were obtained through the analysis of interviews of participants in focus groups, which were recorded and transcribed. The software QDAMiner was used to undertake the analysis. To prepare the data for that analysis, we coded all the information in the transcriptions. The codes

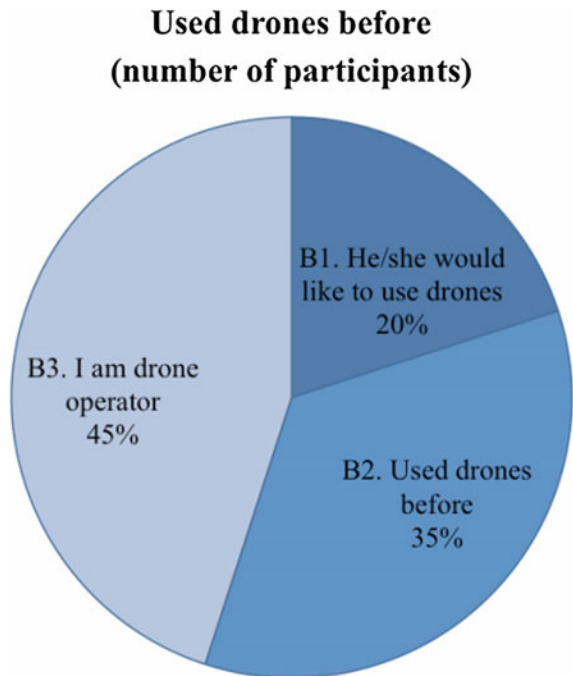
(variables) used were defined attending to the questions that guided the focus groups meeting and, therefore, the answers to these questions. Additional codes were defined to cover information that was also considered important and, even, strategic for the commercialization phase. Results from this codification are presented below.

### 3.1 Previous Use of Drones by Participants

This subsection includes the analysis of questions related to whether participants had used drones before, their experience while they were using them, reasons for not using drones and features to add to them based on their experience. Results are presented in Fig. 7 and Tables 2, 3 and 4.

Figure 7 indicates that 35% of the participants in the three focus groups had used drones before whereas 45% of the total were drone operators (RPAS pilot licensed). The rest of the interviewed guests (20%) indicated that they would like to try the use of drones. When they were asked about their motives for using drones, two of them indicated that they had operated drones in an indoor environment, one application was in an advertisement campaign for a company while the second was in an empty theater. The rest of the answers indicated the use of drones outdoors in filming and photography.

Fig. 7 Previous use of drone by informants



**Table 2** Why did they not use drones before or not very often?

Code	Count
BC1. I do not trust in amateurs with little knowledge who sell they are drone operators (bravado)	2
BC2. Insurance side of risks (equipment broken, people hurt)	1
BC3. Uncertainty about having anything usable afterwards	1
BC4. They do not add anything to the narrative or to the story	1
BC5. There are applications for cameras on ground and others for drones	1
BC6. We have not done purely interior for drama	1
BC7. Why change what you traditionally would do?	1

**Table 3** Coded responses regarding informants’ experience

Code	Count
BB1. Indoor flying difficult when avoid obstacles like machines	1
BB2. We struggled with coordinates	1
BB3. Trade off between thinking in drone not crashing against and creativity	1
BB4. Problems with DJI 4th	3
BB5. Infrared is not reliable	3
BB6. Crash if something is reflecting	1
BB7. Trade off between bigger better camera for cinema (weight) and drone size	6
BB8. It flew away and I never saw it again	2
BB9. Regulations limited our work with drones	3

**Table 4** Features to add to an indoor drone

Code	Count
C1. Automatization like an autonomous car	2
C2. Long tentacles (like two inches nearer)	1
C3. Possible to fly really close and if touch something then do a small correction and back off	1
C4. Reliability	1
C5. Ability to record and replicate a flight (replicate the shot would be the best, like with a slider)	6
C6. The drone flies itself and you only control the camera	1
C7. Make it smaller	1
C8. Something which scans the environment before flying	1
C9. Filming upwards	1
C10. Duration of battery (12 min in “Inspire” drone)	1
C11. Sensors for positioning	1
C12. Lighting system (for example, with leds)	2



Participants were also asked about why they had not used drones before, and their responses are shown in Table 2.

These answers added information to the analysis, as they showed most of their concerns were related to integrity and good conditions of the equipment, while others were skeptics about the new possibilities that drones can offer. They also distinguished between the different applications that are intended for drones and for regular cameras. The increasing number of new entrants in the industry that can lead to a lack of professionalism in the drone pilot's activity generates some distrust that may prevent consumers from using drones for their filming or photos sessions. Some others have not yet been aware of the possibilities (for drama, for example) and appear to be averse to change.

And I think the reason a lot of us don't use drones so frequently is because they usually don't add anything to the narrative or to the story, then they often just feel like for production or for camera... they just indulge this expensive beautiful thing and that... they don't add something. I think they will be added more for narrative, but, not just yet. I'm yet to know how they use them really.

Participants were asked about their experience when they used drones (In case you used drones before, how was your experience?). Results for the codification is showed in Table 3.

When analyzing those answers, the quality of the camera appears to be the main concern as professional filming cameras are heavy weight. Although they may value the advantages of using drones, so far it does not compensate to reduce the quality of the filmed material. Another important concern is reliability, as some participants had previous experiences of crashing drones when being using for indoor filming, and others mentioned underdevelopment of infra red technology adapted to drones. The difficulty of taking care of the flight while simultaneously attempting to creatively look for the best shot is another important concern that was raised. Here again integrity of the equipment appears to be worrying.

...what I would think of the market currently is that there isn't a drone that handles indoor very well at all. I don't think there is. As a pilot you don't want to be controlled too much by it. Like, it's quite nice to just check off and fly it. And I fly quite regularly outside without GPS and all that kind of stuff, and I'm quite comfortable with it. But, when you're indoors then you don't want that because you're relying on something that you don't trust.

The different regulations depending on the country and the lack of a European homogeneous law for outdoor filming with drones is, at the same time, a barrier to increasing the number of drone users and pilots but also a big opportunity for indoor development that would not be under the aeronautical regulations and, therefore, would not require an aeronautical permit.

Another interesting issue that arises is related to the current biggest drone seller that is offering a large number of products intended for different uses. Several informants have used the latest product from this company but the development of the technology seems not to be ready yet as problems of reliability and interference caused by wind and light are alerting users to be cautious about proceeding with use of drones and ask for new technological developments to fulfill this gap.

The next question asked of participants was about the features they would add based on their experience. The answers from the informants were coded and can be seen in Table 4.

When analyzing those answers we can clearly see that the possibility to record and replicate a flight would be highly appreciated by users.

So you could do a shot and it would always... normally you work with two people so if one... if the pilot that flies the drone, if the camera man that does the creative shot and you work together... if you can do something flying indoors without... and you're sure that you cannot bump into something so you can push it. It records the flight path and you can do it for, let's say, ten takes exactly the same. That's very interesting and... but you still have to be in control when you start the shot.

Other features that could be identified for more than one informant were the option to illuminate with the drone (to add a lighting system) and the option to make the flight automatic. Different definitions were given for the same concept, flying close to objects without crashing (sometime they suggest to add a tentacle system to avoid crashes, other suggest the possibility to smoothly crash and go backwards).

The concept of filming upwards, that we understand is adding more directions/possibilities of movements to the drone. To distinguish between the control of the drone and the camera, the batteries lasting longer and size were concerns also considered, as well as the positioning system that currently is using sensors or infrared technology but does not fully satisfy users.

### 3.2 Potential Benefits and Requirements Identification for Indoor Drone Use

The next group of questions were intended to identify the potential benefits that users could envision from an indoor drone and the requirements they would suggest this product should have (see Tables 5 and 6).

**Table 5** Benefits from indoor drone

Code	Count
EA1. Time replacement in contrast to a crane	4
EA2. You go to your client office or building and half an hour later you can show him a movie	1
EA3. If a client asked us for an animation video we would send him a video instead of an email	1
EA4. A drone can be invisible	1
EA5. You do not need to move all the equipment for every shot	1
EA6. You do not need to move all the object in the house, for example	1
EA7. Lower costs	1

**Table 6** Elements for the drone to be successful

Code	Count
K1. The battery is not the most important	1
K2. In very big buildings be able to go to the top	1
K3. Modifiable to use lots of extra things (like DJI does)	1
K4. Lighter battery	2
K5. Modifiable will increase complexity and difficulties	1
K6. Easy to use and very easy modifiable	1
K7. Modifiable battery in size (to adapt to the fly)	1
K8. Safety	5
K9. As easy to use as possible	2
K10. Uncrashable	2
K11. Reliability	1
K12. Something like the Inspire 2 DJI	1
K13. The size (as small as possible)	5
K14. Live image quality on your smartphone	1
K15. Small sensors like in the iPhone	1
K16. Great film quality	1
K17. Recording	2
K18. I want to be in the air as long as possible	4
K19. Batteries easy to adapt quickly	1
K20. Something like a calibration pad to hold the drone in position	2
K21. Sensor to help in landing	1
K22. Your stick is your pilot	2
K23. Flexibility for the user	2
K24. Updating apps	1
K25. The drone must have the specifications	1
K26. Affordable	1
K27. A drone that does not hit the wall	2
K28. Capability to trail a room and draw a grid like an scanner	1
K29. Sensor in the camera needs to be flexible	2

When the participants were asked “What could be the potential benefits?” the informants had a clear idea of the faster use that filming with drones implies compared to the installation of a filming crane. Time here is the critical factor that unbalances the scale. They considered the multiple possibilities of taking different shots of the same scenario without installing and uninstalling the crane, the invisibility of a drone compared to a classical filming structure and therefore, the reduction of costs that this implies. The possibility of the drone adapting itself to the scenario and not the other way round was also considered as a benefit as it reduces time and is more convenient (see all responses in Table 5).

Regarding the identification of key elements of the new product, some answers are clearly highlighted as can be seen in Table 6. Safety and size are the main

concerns, followed by flight autonomy. So, in order to be successful, the indoor drone must accomplish three goals: it must be as small as possible, it has to be safe (understood as safe for the pilot, safe for the people in the environment and safe for the drone itself) and batteries must allow it to be in the air for as long a time as possible. There are also other common ideas regarding reliability, flexibility and resistance that should also be taken into account.

And, regarding other requirements, we can find: to reach a considerable height (to be able to get to the top of big buildings); to be flexible and allow for the interchange of different cameras; to be stable, easy to use (friendly interface), and reliable; to immediate transfer live images to other instruments (as cell phones or computers); and with self-updating software. Price arises in the conversation for the first time, as a participant highlights the importance of the drone being “affordable”.

## 4 Conclusions

The project’s first step, consisting of identifying the creative industries’ needs for indoor filming using RPAS, has been fulfilled. The three focus group sessions were successful. The selection of the informants, the appropriateness of the questionnaire and the comfortable environment that was created, together with the high interest that this new product has awakened, led to the team being able to gather good and enough information to define the features that the indoor drone needs to accomplish.

There are some strategic considerations to consider. First of all, there is a dilemma that needs be resolved; we have called it “user versus buyer”; Who is the drone’s user and who is the drone’s buyer at the creative industries sector?

After the deployment of the qualitative analysis based on the focus group results, we can conclude that the user is the drone pilot while the production management determines the specific considerations depending on the project (director of photography preferences, camera specifications, type of filming, light, etc.).

The pilot will buy the drone taking into account the production management needs and specifications. The level of knowledge and the closeness of the relationship among the production set/management and the pilot will act a as a mediating factor, leveraging the distance between both parts. Therefore, the higher the knowledge of filming and photography that the pilot has and the closer the established relationship among them (company-supplier), the more there will be asimilarity among roles (buyer/user).

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# Museum Tourism: A Comparative Study on the Royal Museum of Greenwich and the Ironbridge Gorge Museum

Ahmad Zuned

**Abstract** Museum provides us experiences, ideas, and satisfaction from the authentic objects of nature, science, history, and the arts. With records of extensive historical items and collections, museum accolades the outstanding universal value and indeed enhances the tourism prospects. This research endeavoured to address the objectives by exploring the perceptions of stakeholders involved in this respect to find a better way forward for museum management strategies and planning perspectives. This was done through a questionnaire survey and interviews with the museums officials. Having carried out this research and carefully assessing the contents of it, it can be safely stated that a dynamic and effective management strategy that reflects visitors' perceptions in practice will only purifies the heritage museums from its negative impacts of tourism and will lead towards the reward.

**Keywords** Musuems · Heritage museum · Mueusm visitors  
Museum management

## 1 Introduction

Museums attempt to accumulate multifarious events of politics, religion and some other social movements' that led the world over the centuries. It offers a profound learning experience and brings our past alive with records of extensive historical items and collections. Hence the distinctive characteristic of museums is that it constantly secure the present with past (Rahman, 2012). The quality of tourists' experience in museums often regard as mesmerizing. The Royal Museum of Greenwich and The Ironbridge Gorge Museum are the two leading heritage

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museums in the UK. Though geographically these two museums are located in distinctive areas but they two experienced a substantial growth in tourists' arrivals. Therefore, it is vital to have a timeous and proper management system and plan in place to conserve the attractions and to meet its ever increasing tourism potential. This work engaged constructively in evaluating management strategic plans in place in respect of the two case studies and how these strategies and plan can be developed to continue the upward trend of its attractions and increase its tourism prospects further. During the process of carrying out the research, the researcher understood that the critical analysis of management strategies will not only enable the researcher to put forward ways and ideas for benefiting two particular heritage sites, but this would also enable the researcher to acquire necessary knowledge in this respect.

The aim of the research is to examine the tourism and museum management strategies and planning perspectives of The Royal Museum of Greenwich and The Ironbridge Gorge Museum as heritage sites.

Objectives:

1. To identify the Management and planning strategies used by The Royal Museum of Greenwich and The Ironbridge Gorge Museum.
2. To compare the management and planning, and heritage presentation and interpretation approaches of the two museums and heritage conservation.
3. To understand how visitors to the two museums experience and perceive the heritage presentation and interpretation.

## 2 Tourist Experience in Museums

The aim of the museum is to “foster an informed appreciation of the rich and diverse we have inherited”, this manifest that museum is a real, authentic, and genuine place of experience (Herbert, 1995: 45). Prentice (1995) described museum is a quite experiential product which facilitate feeling and knowledge. Further to the discussion, Otto and Ritchie (1996: 167) stated that “the ‘experience’ of leisure and tourism can be described as the subjective mental state felt by participants”. In accordance with Otto & Ritchie, a museum can be the experiential form of consumption that emerged the two qualities to characterise the successful management: visitors' responsiveness and creativity (Lord, Dexter, & Lord, 1997). In addition, the competitive atmosphere and pressure on attendance signify the importance to pursue new ideas and method from a different discipline (Benediktsson, 2004).

Indeed museum provides experiences, ideas, and satisfaction from the authentic objects of nature, science, history, and the arts as museums are closely linked with leisure sectors (Kotler & Kotler, 1998). On the principle of ‘educations for the uneducated masses’ (Bennett, 1995) and ‘cabinets of curiosities’ (Weill, 1995), the most primitive museums were originated to establish to ... “raise the level of public

understanding ... to elevate the spirit of it's visitors ... to refine and uplift the common taste" (Weill, 1997: 257). In this context, Freedman (2000) stated that museum should play a mediator role of information and knowledge for it's users.

Museum is a unique place that shapes identities and developed from being a source of knowledge and objects to having a "... multifaceted, outward looking role as hosts who invite visitors inside to wonder, encounter and learn" (Schauble, Leinhardt, & Martin, 1997: 3). In fact, people experience intense feelings when they visit museums as they become close to something that is woven into the fabric of our history (Waxman, 1996). Moore (1997) stated museums are the exciting place to visit for leisure and entertainment. Kelly (2008) came up with a decision after conducting a survey on Australian museum visitors that tourists visited museums for new experiences, worthwhile leisure, learning and entertainment. McKercher (2004) survey revealed that museums are the most popular tourists' attraction as it is a part of the universal cultural system for preaching knowledge and experiences. It provides a unique sense of particular time and place that makes it a distinguish tourist destination (Graburn, 1989; Tufts & Milne, 1999).

However, despite the prosperous prospects of museums in the realm of the tourism industry, the museums are devouring some problems. Brown (1997), Garnet (2002) have identified funding cut is a problem that causes limited resources requiring the museum to operate on commercial basis. Apart from a commercial operations, the multifaceted characteristic of museum encourage to be responsive on social and environmental issues i.e. population, sustainability, social justice and indigenous rights (Bradburne, 1998; Brown, 1997). Furthermore, the exhibition, loaning collection and visitation have been affected by some global factors such as terrorism, climate change and global warming (Kelly, 2008).

In addition, with the advancement of technology and availability of other leisure choices, museums are now facing new demands (Cameron, 2003). Museums cannot be mere supplies of information rather a centre for providing knowledge and other educational and information tools that enable tourists to explore their own ideas and reach their own conclusion (Bradburne, 1998; Hein, 1997). Indeed, museums are having a diverse range of tourists every day and became a universal part of our cultural system (Herreman, 1988). In particular, according to Kirchenblatt-Gimblett (1998): 132, "Tourism needs destination, and museums are premier attractions".

### 3 Methodology

The research has been carried out through adopting mixed methodology. In doing so, the in-depth interviews of the employees and a questionnaire survey were persuaded to understand both sides opinion. To conduct this research the researcher adopted an interpretivist theoretical view which presents the research in a qualitative methodology. The Interpretivist theoretical view delivers the researcher an 'insider's' view to the key issue (Veal, 2006: 37).



In-depth semi-structured interviews were carried out with the people who work at the two museums and questionnaire survey with visitors was also conducted. In addition, the current management strategies and future plan in respect of ‘The Royal Museum of Greenwich and The Ironbridge Gorge Museum’ were examined with a view to seeking ways to enhance tourism prospects of this heritage site.

The visitors and museums officials were selected to conduct this research. In developing the strategy of the research, the researcher decided to select the representatives through a ‘purposeful’ sampling method for qualitative data which Veal (2006: 295) defined as “individual selected on the basis of a key criterion”. The interviewees were contacted through email (see Appendix 3) and with the consent of interviewees, the meetings took place at their convenient time and place as it was necessary to let them feel comfortable to gain more information. In a familiar environment, everyone feels secure, open and willing to talk. This results in the researcher to have longer time and more information which might not have been possible in any other place.

On the other hand, understanding visitors’ expectations and motivations, a visitor’s survey was conducted through distributing questionnaire survey to the visitors at the site. A random approach to sampling visitor’s survey adopted in this study. Considering the costs and time, the random sampling at the visitors’ site was appropriate.

## 4 The Royal Museum of Greenwich

The Royal Museum of Greenwich is the home of Greenwich Mean Time and the Prime Meridian line. The UNESCO in 1997 has awarded the ‘Maritime Greenwich’ (The Royal Observatory, The Queen house and Cutty Sark) as one of the outstanding value heritage site (Greenwich, 2012) (Fig. 1).

From Fig. 2 it can be seen that the RMG has been structured with five key positions at the key management decision level with several other positions at the lower management level to implement the whole operation of the management.

Under the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004, the local authorities are required to prepare Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) through taking into account of national and regional planning guidance and strategies (Act 2004).

With an aim to ‘stimulating curiosity’ the Museum Corporate Plan for 2009–2014 directing to shape the museum’s aspirations to let the people understand of British economic, social, political, imperial and maritime history and its consequences in the world today in a way that place the people stories at the heart of interpretation and link it to the contemporary issues as such people feel sense of the value and sense of the ownership (Corporate Strategic Plan 2009–2014).



**Fig. 1** Aerial view of The Royal Museum of Greenwich (Source Greenwich 2012)

## 5 The Ironbridge Gorge Museum

The Ironbridge Gorge Museum is one of the first groups of UK 7 heritage sites to be awarded by UNESCO as an outstanding value ‘World Heritage Site’ in 1986. The Museum has a unique contribution to the birth of industrial revolution of the 18th century which shaped a new era (Ironbridge, 2012). The long history, rich collections and contribution to the intellectual development described as one of “the most extraordinary district in the world” (Ironbridge, 2012) (Fig. 3).

## 6 Management Structure

The fig. 4 shows that the IGM has three management positions at key strategic management level along with other positions at other levels to conduct the whole operation of the museum. The Management structure of the IGM are designed below.

As an autonomous body ‘the Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust’ takes its own decision and it intends to increase the visitors to 600,000 including an additional 4000 educational visitors. To achieve operational excellence and long-term business sustainability, the essence of working with private and public partnership to

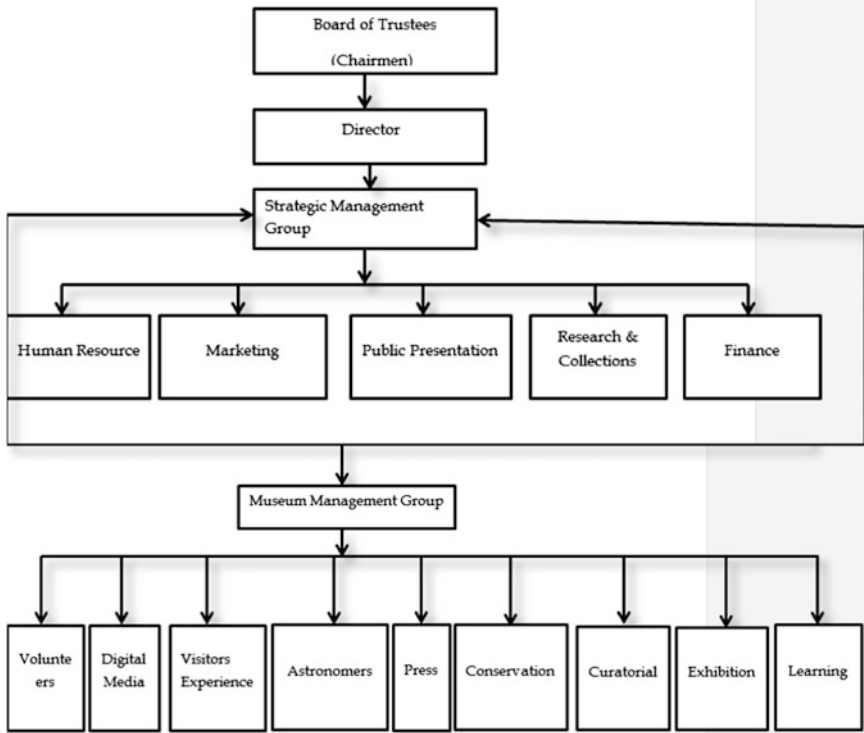


Fig. 2 Management structure of The Royal Museum of Greenwich (own work)

explore tourism opportunities and capitalize on tourism potential in order to generate tourism economy of West Midlands (Fig. 5).

## 7 Respondents’ Characteristics

The researcher aimed for 60 people and respondents were 60 from two museums. Respondents in the survey are characterised by a number of aspects such gender, age, country of origin and occupation and in order to classify the visitors by socio-demographic background specific questions were asked. Information on visitors’ background is important as it helps to classy respondents as well as to understand the visitors’ perception on tourist sites (Lie et al., 1987).

### (a) Age Group and Gender

The Table 1 that the both museums have higher numbers of female visitors than its male visitors. In case of age group, respondents’ age between 45 and 65 years



**Fig. 3** Coalbrookdale by Night taken by Philip de Loutherbourg, 1801. *Courtesy* The Science Museum, London

old constitute 37 and 35% respectively in RMG & IGM which are the highest among other groups followed by the age group 25–44 years old with faintly lower percentage i.e. 35 and 34% in contrast to the former group. The 65 years old group constitute the lowest percentage in both museums. This may be owing to their physical illness, not having a good company to visit or finding library more convenient than museums (Fig. 6).

#### (b) Visitors' Country of Origin

Due to convenient geographical location, RMG receives a substantial number of both domestic and overseas tourists. Despite being located in a far distance from London, the IGM attracts a larger number of domestic tourists 89% for its heritage recognition. In attracting international tourists, RMG receives more than double in percentage than IGM overseas tourists. There are many factors i.e. museum marketing, museum familiarity, and product portfolios that may cause the difference in attracting overseas tourist to the museums (Fig. 7).

#### (c) Occupation

Most respondents in both RMG and IGM were service holder or self-employed constituted 37 and 45% of visitors to the museums. The retired group shared equal percentage 29 & 29% in two museums. However, the both museums receive a large number of students representing 34 and 31% of tourists. Since most museums cater as a learning centre, this percentage of student visitors has justified the purpose of museums creation.

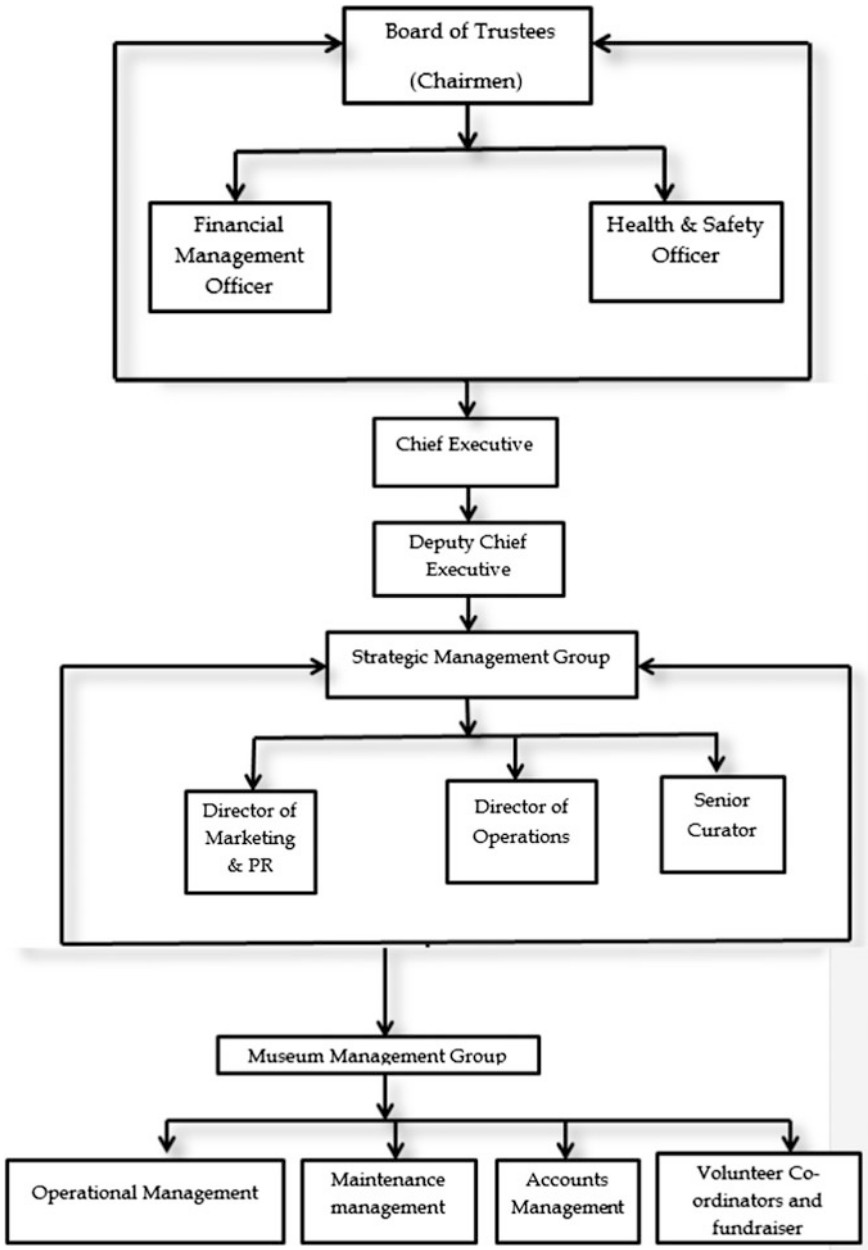


Fig. 4 Management hierarchy of Ironbridge Gorge museums (own work)



**Fig. 5** Large Kilns at Coalport China Museum (*Courtesy by the Ironbrige Gorge Museum Trust*)

**Table 1** Age group and gender

Age group	Gender		Total (%)	IGM		Total (%)
	RMG			Male (%)	Female (%)	
	Male (%)	Female (%)				
Under 25 years old	9	10	19	7	9	16
25–44 years old	16	19	35	14	20	34
45–65 years old	18	21	37	17	18	35
65 years old and above	3	4	12	7	8	15
Total	46	54	100	45	55	100

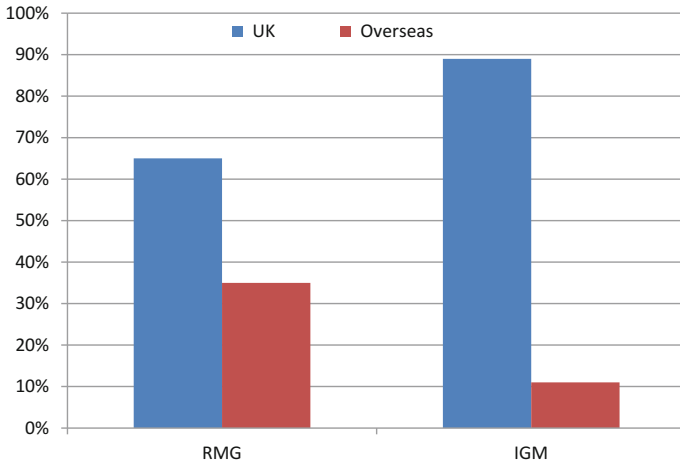


Fig. 6 Visitors country of origin

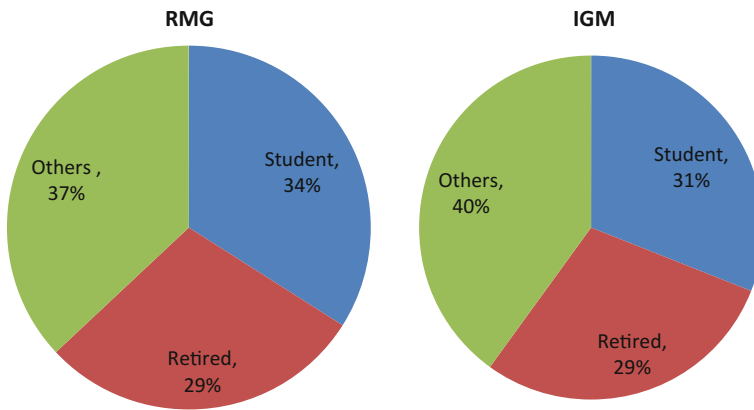
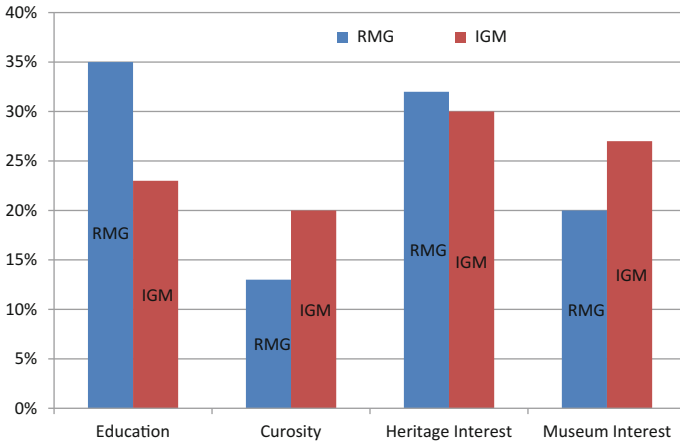


Fig. 7 Occupation of the visitors

## 8 Visitors Behaviour/Activities

The visitors’ behaviour or activities are mostly determined by the purpose of tourists visits and the activities available in the area to engage visitors. Reasons for visiting the both museums presented in Fig. 8.

Black (2005) stated that visitors’ engagements in the museums are determined by the availability of special interest of the visitors. Respondents in this survey were asked to answer their reasons for visiting the museums. Most respondents found heritage attraction a major interest in visiting the museums and constituted 32% in RMG & 30% in IGM as heritage tourists. Museum itself an attraction and receives



**Fig. 8** Main reasons for visiting museums

20% of tourists in RMG & 27% of tourists in IGM for being merely museums. Educational tourists are large in numbers in both museums and represent 23 & 35% of tourists for educational purpose. Another group of tourists believed that curiosity made them to visits to the museums and this group constitute 13 & 20% of tourist in both RMG & IGM respectively.

### 9 Attitude/Motivation of Tourists

Visitors’ attitude or motivation of tourists were gathered through asking specific questions tabulated below in order to understand visitors’ satisfaction, evaluation and their experience in the museums. A questionnaire survey was designed and distributed to the visitors in both museums allowing them to tick as appropriate from a range of choices.

(a) Visitors Perception (IGM)

The following Table 2 presents the overall perception of the visitors in IGM museum.

The results presented above reflected overall perception of the visitors in the IGM. The tourists’ perceptions of the museum varied to the museum setting. Their perceptions measured in the scale of strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree and disagree. The overall response was satisfactory for the museum except a large number of tourists (45%) showed their disagreement in particular issue i.e. combination of different technology for tourists to use in the museum while 35 and 10% of tourists strongly agreed and agreed respectively to the use of technology in the museum satisfactory. It is noticeable that 10% of the tourists disagreed with the



**Table 2** Visitors perceptions (IGM)

	Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly disagree	Disagree (%)
The exhibitions are clearly explained	15	85		
Understand the interpretation as given by the museum	8	91		1
The museum provides material deeper and hidden meaning related to the historical events	20	70		10
The museum visit was informative	94	6		
The exhibition conveys the feeling of being interactive	30	70		
The Museum has fun elements	10	82		8
The museum makes use of a combination of different technology	10	35		45
The basic information was needed covered by the museum	93	7		
The museum is designed for tourists	25	71		4
I would recommend others to visit this museum	10	88		2

museum provides material deeper and hidden meaning related to the historical events while 20% of them strongly agreed and 70% agreed with the argument. On the question of the museum visit was how informative 94% of the tourists strongly agreed and 6% agreed. A similar pattern is also noted on the basic information was needed covered by the museum (93% strongly agreed and 7% agreed). It is clear that 15% strongly agreed and 85% agreed in regards to museum exhibition is clearly explained to them. Overall 30 and 70% strongly agreed and agreed respectively on museum being interactive. It also noticeable that 88% agreed and 10% strongly agreed to recommend others to visit while 2% differs to that of opinion.

#### (b) Visitors Perception (RMG)

Table 3 presented tourists' perception about the offerings available at the RMG. A similar pattern of tourists' perception is also noted here. A large number of tourists 20% felt museum lacked combination different technology while 15 and 65% strongly agreed and agreed respectively. Unlike IGM, all responded of RMG would recommend others (10% strongly agreed and 90% agreed). A larger number of tourists here at RMG found materials have deeper and hidden meaning related to the historical events.

#### (c) Motivation

The tourists were asked to answer the following question to gain a greater understanding of their level of satisfaction (Table 4).

The respondents were asked to rate their experience on the scale of Highly interesting, Interesting, Good and Poor. In respect of RMG 50% of its tourists found

**Table 3** Visitors perception (RMG)

	Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly disagree	Disagree (%)
The exhibitions are clearly explained	35	65		
Understand the interpretation as given by the museum	10	89		1
The museum provides material deeper and hidden meaning related to the historical events	22	75		3
The museum visit was informative	94	6		
The exhibition conveys the feeling of being interactive	27	73		
The museum has fun elements	9	82		9
The museum makes use of a combination of different technology	15	65		20
The basic information needs are covered by the museum	90	10		
The museum is designed for tourists	28	71		1
I would recommend others to visit this museum	10	90		

**Table 4** Motivation of the visitors for IGM

Museums	Motivations	Highly interesting (%)	Interesting (%)	Good (%)	Poor
RMG	Overall how did you find the exhibition	50	40	10	
IGM		30	65	5	
RMG	How would you describe your experience in the museum	25	60	15	
IGM		24	66	10	

it’s exhibitions as highly interesting, 40% of them rated as interesting while 10% tourists rated the exhibitions of the RMG as ‘Good’. In regards to IGM, the exhibitions rated 65 per cent interesting while 30% Highly Interesting and 5% as Good. Other respondents scored museums experience with RMG 25% highly interesting & 60% Good while 15% said museum experience as a whole was good. The tourist ranked 25% Highly Interesting, 60% Interesting and 10% Good at IGM experience.

On the other hand, on the question what recommend would they put forward. At RMG, 80% of its visitors recommended using more signs while 5% recommended to use more technology and another 5% said museum should improve other services. The visitors at IGM, 60% of its visitors recommended using more technology and 30% said more exhibitions and collections should be displayed.

The researcher identified four objectives for the present study.

Objective 1: To identify the Management and planning strategies used by The Royal Museum of Greenwich and The Ironbridge Gorge Museum.

In terms of management and planning strategies of RMG & IGM, the researcher examined interviewees' opinion towards the museums management and Strategic Plan adopted by the museums. The RMG & IGM have a mission statement that includes promoting educational programmes and attracts a large number of tourists through improving visitors experience at the museums. Though the tourism prospects of the museums justified the commodification of the museums services but this sparked debate within the heritage research field as heritage fabrics comes under the stain. Despite the fact that tourism generates local economy, it is also important to highlight the areas where maintenance of the older building in their original conditions required or conserving them through restoration and repair (Interviewee 1). McManus (1997) stated the economic prospects of heritage places generate funds to conserve the heritage fabrics and motivating local and tourists to promote conservation.

On the other hand, effective marketing strategy empowers the museums to promote the sites worldwide. Adopting successful marketing strategy for the museums is important for economic sustainability. This requires espousing a coherent marketing strategy through administrative arrangements (Interviewee 2). Kotler and Kotler (1998) urged the museums to become more committed to public services, to design more educational programmes and to create the museum as a lively place where tourists can find pleasure and delight. Though the IGM marketing strategy is not comprehensive due to lack of funding, however, the RMG is in a better position in this regard. The both museums pursue a strategy to conserve the heritage settings and to look after the tourism prospects. The museum management team monitor the progress and review the management plan periodically.

Objective 2: To compare the management and planning, and heritage presentation and interpretation approaches of the two museums.

Figures 2 and 4 contain the museum management structure provided by the interviewees as part of the interview process. The management structures of the museums are reliant on the size of the museums. The three key positions of IGM along with chief executive and deputy executive have a vital role in the strategic management plan. On the other hand, the RMG has a higher number of positions (Five positions) in the strategic management group. This is because, the size of the museum and it's services and flow of tourists.

In regards to visitors' management and interpretation of the heritage, the interviewees recognised the appeal of the interpretations and the importance of variation in interpretation. Tilden (2007) view that interpretation must touch visitors personal experience, thoughts, hopes, a way of life to connect their 'ego' that makes interpretation interesting and appealing to the visitors. Furthermore, the heavy competition with other competitors emerged the museums to pursue easy and understandable interpretation as both museums have appealing stories to tell (Interview 1 & 2). Therefore the museums are required to demonstrate the innovative design, creative thinking and scientific discovery of the museums in their own historical context (Interview 1). The interviewees of both museums believed

that successful interpretation depends on visitors' satisfaction. However, visitors satisfaction achieve when interpretation given by the museums are full of enjoyment and provides material deeper and hidden meaning related to the historical events that convey the feeling of being interactive (see Table 3). Bath (2006) recommended technology can be a powerful means to make the interpretation effective to the tourists.

Objective 3: To understand how visitors to the two museums experience and perceive the heritage presentation and interpretation.

The questionnaire survey was designed in part to enable issues in heritage museums sites to be looked at from the visitors' point of view to reflect the visitors' expectation in the museums. Visitors of the museums evaluate their visits in line with their expectations. The tourism has immense contribution to the Greenwich and Ironbridge in respect of developing the local economy. The global influence of tourism has been dictating to shape the heritage sites in accordance with tourists' expectation.

It is true that different tourists foster different perceptions and it was seen in this study the decision to visit the two museums depend on different factors such as motivation and socio-demographic attributes. A substantial proportion of tourists come to the museums where education, museum interest, heritage interest and curiosity are the key reasons for visiting. The survey shows that the RMG holding higher percentage in heritage interest and education. On the other hand, the IGM receives a higher proportion of tourists who comes to the museums for curiosity and interest for this particular museum's history. The IGM had an outstanding role in the industrial revolution and some collections of artefacts in IGM those have been portraying glorious past of the Britain foster visitors curiosity towards this museum. Considering the socio-demographic background of the visitors, both museums receive a large number of tourists aged from 25 to 45 years old. The RMG seems popular to those age group than IGM. The reasons for the varied percentage of visitors in two museums, the researcher believed that historical background, consumption of cultural attraction of the museums. The Royal Observatory of RMG is one of the popular tourists attractions receives a substantial proportion of the museum tourists.

Despite the differences in visitors' perceptions, it is appropriate for the heritage museums management to ensure that greater care and importance should be given in the areas of interests from the visitors' perspective. The survey shows the fluctuation of tourist interest to museum products which represent the tourists' expectations towards the museums. The lowest percentage in some areas of museum services shown in the survey highlight the urgency that these areas are required to be looked into with greater care and improved accordingly to increase the number of diverse range of tourists and to fulfil their satisfaction. This is because; museums today became a universal part of our cultural system (Herreman 1988). In particular, according to Kirchenblatt-Gimblett (1998: 132) "Tourism needs destination, and museums are premier attractions".

## 10 Conclusion

Despite some limitations throughout the research, this research has achieved its aims and enabled to draw conclusions on the research objectives. Firstly, there is a need to pursue a long-term and holistic management plan that allows the museums 'Ideal' level of usage for a site through sustainable tourism which also ensures genuine engagement of local people as well as the visitors. Secondly, regular review and monitor the progress of a site and its conservatory process is also necessary. Thirdly, greater care should be given in understanding visitors' perceptions as this is vital to increase the number of satisfied tourists and extend the museum's tourism market through 'word of mouth' (Spalding, 2010) of those tourists. Fourthly; a museum should no more confine itself by portraying only as a mere centre of information but it should extend its operation to become a centre of knowledge, entertainment, and leisure and above all as a centre of excellence. For example, Liverpool museum can be considered to be an example of centre of excellence which became an agent of social change. Fifthly and finally the Management of a museum should give emphasis on utilizing the extensive use of modern technology in it's the whole operation including the area of marketing.

In respect of the above mentioned two specific museums, it was observed that the convenient location of RMG and it's better financial solvency compared to IGM put RMG in a better position than IGM in regards to it's exposure as a symbol of heritage tourism. However, it is important for both museums to widen their positive image and identity worldwide and achieve international status and in this respect; the advantage of modern technology should be taken to its full extent. In the case of developing museums' image, these two museums should incorporate the strategy to organise international events. Priority should be given to the engagement of local people as well as the visitors in various events. This will develop the local sense of belonging and would no doubt increase the number of day visitors at peak time as well as overnight stay visitors and for this, the management should work closely with local authorities to provide better services. Furthermore, the development of transportation is another important issue from both museums' tourism perspectives. The IGM is quite far and a time-consuming journey is required from the capital. There is no direct train or bus route to Ironbridge, which is one of the reasons for the museums to receive less number of tourists compared to RMG. Though the RMG is not isolated from London, but there is also no direct bus route for such a popular tourist destination. It is highly important for both museums to work with TFL and Rail services to have easy and affordable transportation services to the destinations. In particular, the IGM can introduce new mode of affordable buses preferably with no rooftop, which would enable the tourists to enjoy the scenic beauty of the Ironbridge. The both interviewees from IGM and RMG managements mentioned that museums incorporated in the management strategy to engage a large number of students through promoting educational programmes. Such programmes should be increased in numbers to continue the upward trend of the museums tourism prospects.

## Appendix 1: Questionnaire Survey

Age gender: F/M (Circle) occupation: Country of Origin:

1. Why did you come to the museum?
  - (a) Education
  - (b) Curiosity
  - (c) Heritage interest
  - (d) Museum interest
  
2. The Museum has fun elements
  - (a) Agree
  - (b) Disagree
  - (c) Strongly agree
  - (d) Strongly disagree
  
3. Overall how did you find the exhibition
  - (a) Interesting
  - (b) Highly Interesting
  - (c) Good
  - (d) Poor

4. Tick that applies—Museum Interpretation

	Strongly agree	Agree	Strongly disagree	Disagree
The exhibitions are clearly explained				
Understand the interpretation as given by the museum				
The Museum provides material deeper and hidden meanings related to the historical events				
The Museum visit was informative				
The exhibitions conveys the feeling of being interactive				

5. The museum makes use of a combination of different technology
  - (a) Agree
  - (b) Strongly agree
  - (c) Disagree
  - (d) Strongly disagree

6. The basic information needs are covered by the museum
  - (a) Agree
  - (b) Strongly agree
  - (c) Disagree
  - (d) Strongly disagree
7. The museum is designed for tourists
  - (a) Agree
  - (b) Strongly agree
  - (c) Disagree
  - (d) Strongly disagree
8. How would you describe your experience in the museum?
  - (a) Interesting
  - (b) Highly Interesting
  - (c) Good
  - (d) Poor
9. What can be improved?
  - (a) More signs
  - (b) Less signs
  - (c) More technology
  - (d) More exhibitions and collections
  - (e) Others
10. I would recommend others to visit this museum
  - (a) Agree
  - (b) Strongly agree
  - (c) Disagree
  - (d) Strongly disagree

## **Appendix 2: Consent Form For Interview**

BACHELORS DEGREE DISSERTATION

University of Sunderland London Campus

Student ID: 119148785

Consent Form for Interview

1. I, the undersigned, voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
2. I have been given an explanation by the researcher of the nature of the name, purpose and length of this study. I have been given the opportunity to ask question on all aspects of the study.

- 3. I am aware this interview is recorded. I understand that the recording are for the sole benefit of the interviewer, however, an external examiner may be required to listen to the recording.
- 4. I understand that all personal data relating to research participants is held and processed in the strictest confidence and in according with the Data Protection Act (1998). I agree I will not restrict the use of the results on the understanding that this study is purely academic in nature.
- 5. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the interview at any time without needing to justify my position and without any prejudice.
- 6. I confirm I have read and understood the above and freely consent to participating in this study.
- 7. If you wish to remain anonymous in this study please tick the box .

Name of Participant  
Signed

Name of Researcher  
Signed

Date

Date

### Appendix 3: Email to Potential Respondents

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am conducting a research study as part of degree (Hons) in International Tourism and Hospitality Management at University of Sunderland London Campus. My research examines management strategies and planning perspective to enhance tourism prospects of the Museum as a heritage site and I would like to meet with you to discuss your views on this topic.

The aim of the research is to identify the issues and opportunities that Museum faces as a heritage site, as acknowledged by those within Museum heritage industry. In order to conduct this research successfully, I would like to meet and talk with you, as a private stakeholder, to understand your thoughts and opinions on such topic.

The interview will last approximately thirty minutes and will be tape recorded. The information provided in the interviews will be vital to my research study and will allow you to voice your opinions on the future heritage tourism policy and planning development of Museum.

I understand that you may be concerned with confidentiality issues with the interview being tape recorded. May I assure you that the recording will only be listened to by me in order to help me process all the information, and possibly by an examiner who assesses my study. Your name will not be mentioned in any part of the research study either and I will provide a confidentiality contract for us both to sign which promises.



Although I am based in London and wish to visit the site at the end of December or first week of January 2013 to relish the opportunity to include your organisation and your knowledge within my research.

Please could you inform me of who is most appropriate to contact for this matter so that I may contact them directly. I shall contact you again later this week to discuss this further. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me via email: zuned03bd@yahoo.com, should you have any further questions.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Ahmad Zuned

ID: 119148785

University of Sunderland London Campus

Thames Quay

197, Marsh Wall

Docklands, London

E14 9SG

## Appendix 4: List of Interviewees

Interviewees name	Role within the museums
Dr. Pieter Van Der Merwe	Curator
Mr. Paul Gossage	Director of marketing and PR

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# Cluj-Napoca European Youth Capital: Why to Attend a Major Event

Cristina Fleşeriu, Smaranda Adina Cosma and Marius Bota

**Abstract** In the last years events have substantially increased in number, size and frequency of staging in both rural and urban areas. Motivation in attending is considered one of the most important aspects of consumer behavior and has received significant attention starting with the early of '90s especially in respect with event consumption. The main purpose of this research is to identify and understand the general dimensions of motivation in attending youth events. The study examines the motivations of Romanian young people in attending events under the umbrella of Cluj-Napoca European Youth Capital. A quantitative study was developed and designed supported by a structured questionnaire to obtain information regarding youths' motivations and perceptions toward attending the event, including their demographic characteristics. The data were collected during the event. The study reveals that the concerts are preferred (58% of the respondents) and in the opposite part are educational events (30%). When a participant chooses an event the field (57.3%) is considered the most important and the imposed attending (22.4%) is perceived by the majority as less important. The main reason for participating at an event is to experience new and different things (44%) and less important is enjoying the festival crowds (28%).

**Keywords** Motivation · Event · European youth capital · Demographic characteristics · Factor analysis

**JEL Classification** L83 · M31

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# 1 Introduction and Literature Review

In the last years events have substantially increased in number, size and frequency of staging in both rural and urban areas. Events registered one of the fastest grows in the leisure industry in the last decades (Getz 1991, McDowall 2011). The events industry became a growing global business as the role and impact of events in society is more than ever recognized (Berridge 2007). Festivals, as events, are perceived nowadays as an important part of cultural and leisure attractiveness of destinations (Yolal et al. 2015). Major events have the power to mobilize large numbers of people and create a significant impact on their lives by creating a positive experience for spectators and by changing humans' behavior on long term in a positive way (Cudny et al. 2012).

More researches have investigated different dimensions of events because of their exponential grow in impact. Some of the studies had the main objectives to identify attendees' motivations, satisfaction level and revisit intension (Gursoy and Kendall 2006; Yolal et al. 2009, 2012), while other focused on analyzing the perceived value of the experience as a diver of satisfaction and revisit intention (Kim and Uysal 2003; Gursoy et al. 2011) and only few studies examine these variables as segmentation criteria to find any specific group cluster (Kim et al. 2014).

In our days the events addressed to the youth represent an important part of the events industry as far as the youth participants are one of the main targeted segments. Only few researches regard youth events. Kim and Jogaratnam (2002) noted that travel activity preferences of youth include cultural activities, sports, leisure, and touring. According to Moisa (2010), young people tend to engage in activities characterized mainly by discovery, adventure, and sports.

The present research attempts to fill a gap by offering findings from a case study of Cluj-Napoca European Youth Capital.

The European Youth Capital (EYC) represents a title awarded to a European city for the period of one year. During this period the chosen city has the chance to develop and emphasize its youth-related cultural, social, political and economic life and development through a multi-faceted program, the implementation of new ideas and innovative projects.

The main purpose of the EYC is strengthening the relationship between the European and local levels, fostering youth participation at the local level by applying common European objectives regarding the youth policy.

In 2015 Cluj-Napoca (Romania) was the 7th city awarded with the European Youth Capital title. The first city was Rotterdam (the Netherlands) in 2009 and for 2016 is Ganja (Azerbaijan), followed by Varna (Bulgaria) in 2017 and Cascais (Portugal) in 2018 (<http://www.europeanyouthcapital.org/about/>, accessed on 26.02.2016).

## 2 Methodology

The main purpose of this study is to identify and to understand the general dimensions of motivation in attending events addressed to youth. The study examines the motivations of young people in attending events under the umbrella of Cluj-Napoca European Youth Capital.

An exploratory and descriptive research was performed during the event. Data were collected through a survey from the participants to the Cluj-Napoca European Youth Capital using a face-to-face interview based on a structured questionnaire to obtain information regarding youths' motivations and perceptions toward attending the event, including their demographic characteristics. Questionnaires were randomly handed out during the event. As a result, a sample of 869 valid questionnaires was retained in the analysis. The present study examines the preferred event type to attend, criteria used in choosing a specific event and the motivation to attend the event using an adapted form of motivation scale proposed by Uysal and widely tested and confirmed in the literature (Schneider and Backman 1996; Formica and Uysal 1996; Gursoy et al. 2004; Yolal et al. 2009; Yolal et al. 2015) and also demographic variables of the respondents.

## 3 Results

The sample consists of 869 valid questionnaires. Table 1 presents the profile of the respondents, considering demographic characteristics.

Concerning the age of the respondents, the majority of them (53%) are between 19–24 years old, as it was expected for this type of event. Seniors (up to 50 years old) represent a small percentage (3%). In correlation with the main purpose of the event the participants under 30 years old, including scholars and students are almost 80%. Almost 60% of the respondents are female and 41% are male. Analyzing the level of education, the majority (48%) has university and post university studies. It should be considered also the high school because the last graduated level for students is this one. The study reveals that the vast majority of the participants are educated. In respect with the income, but correlated with the age, the majority (66%) has under average medium wage in Romania. Considering the stable home, most of the participants are from Cluj-Napoca, but interesting is to remark that a significant percentage—23% are coming from other places. This information comes to support the idea of covering interest of the Cluj-Napoca European Youth Capital event. Looking at the marital status, and considering the ages of the majority, more than 40% are single, but summing the participants in a relationship this figure comes close to 60%. Useful information for identifying the participant's profile is that 18% of the respondents have children.

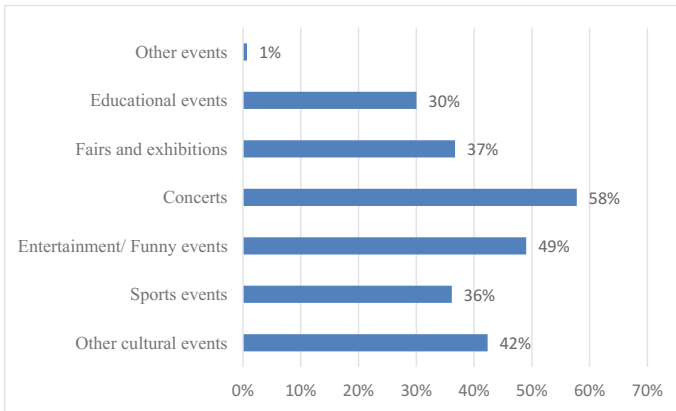
**Table 1** Profile of the participants to Cluj-Napoca European Youth Capital

Variable	Frequency	Percent (%)
<b>Age</b>		
<18	31	4
19–24	463	53
25–30	192	22
31–40	101	12
41–50	54	6
>50	28	3
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	513	59
Male	356	41
<b>Education</b>		
Basic studies	28	3
High school	355	41
Post-secondary	63	7
University studies	376	43
Post university studies	47	5
<b>Income</b>		
<700 lei	286	33
700–1500 lei	286	33
1500–2200 lei	167	19
2200–2900 lei	74	9
>2900 lei	56	6
<b>Stable home</b>		
Cluj-Napoca	673	77
Other places	196	23
<b>You are</b>		
Single	357	41
In a relationship without children	355	41
In a relationship having children	157	18

(Source Author's calculation)

Event's form or content represent one of the main criterion used to classify the events. In respect to this criterion, there are four categories: cultural events, leisure events, organizational events and personal events. The present study analyses only three categories because personal events are not under the umbrella of Cluj-Napoca European Youth Capital. Educational events and fairs and exhibitions represent organizational event. Leisure events are split between sports events and entertainment/ funny events. Concerts and other cultural events belong to the same category.

Figure 1 reveals that the concerts are preferred (58% of the respondents) and in the opposite part are educational events (30%). An interesting fact is that concerts and other cultural events represent the first and the third choice in participant's preference, both belonging to the same category: cultural events.



**Fig. 1** Preferred events’ type for attending. (Source Author’s calculation)

**Table 2** Criteria for choosing a specific event

	Very important	Important	Unimportant	Very unimportant	Average
Field	498	314	44	13	3.49
Discounts	284	340	203	42	3.00
Presence of important people	271	336	187	75	2.92
Obligation	110	263	301	195	2.33
Socialization	360	390	88	31	3.24
Networking	265	356	187	61	2.95
Total average					2.99

(Source Author’s calculation)

Six criteria were selected for the study to identify how a participant chooses an event to attend as shows Table 2. A scale was used—from 1—very unimportant to 4—very important—to hierarchy them. Field of event is considered the most important criterion (3.49), followed by socialization (3.24). Three of the criteria received evaluations above 3 points so are considered important and very important by the participants. The research revealed that excluding obligation which is under the average but closer to this value (2.33 compared with 2.5) all the rest 5 criteria must be considered when the main purpose and element of the marketing campaign of an event is set.

In Table 3 and Fig. 2 are presented the main reasons for attending an event. It can be noticed that the most important reason for participating is to experience new and different things and less important is enjoying the festival crowds.

The total average 3.79 is located between indifferent (3) and important (4), closer to important.

**Table 3** Motivations to participate to Cluj-Napoca European Youth Capital event

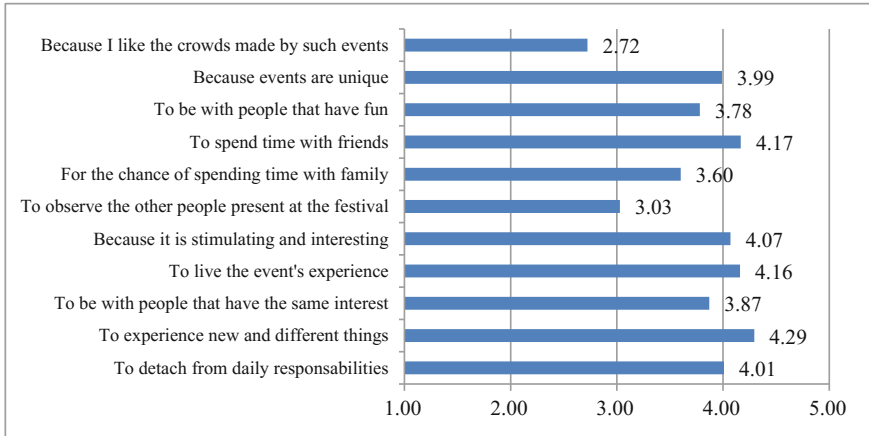
Motives	Very important	Important	Indifferent	Unimportant	Very unimportant	Weighted average
To detach from daily responsibilities	317	332	151	48	21	4.01
To experience new and different things	383	395	59	28	4	4.29
To be with people that have the same interest	261	358	163	50	37	3.87
To live the event's experience	321	418	91	26	13	4.16
Because it is stimulating and interesting	287	417	120	29	16	4.07
To observe the other people present at the festival	153	176	234	155	151	3.03
For the chance of spending time with family	234	287	184	96	68	3.60
To spend time with friends	347	388	86	28	20	4.17
To be with people that have fun	270	301	187	60	51	3.78
Because events are unique	284	370	152	48	15	3.99
Because I like the crowds made by such events	122	161	185	157	244	2.72
Total average						<b>3.79</b>

(Source Author's calculation)

Looking to the weighted average for each participating reasons the research reveals that five out of eleven factors are located between important and very important reasons for attending an event. Only one factor (because I like the crowds made by such events) is located between indifferent and unimportant.

The study wanted also to identify if there are some factors influencing the motives to participate to Cluj-Napoca European Youth Capital event. The factor analysis was done by using the Principal Component Analysis method with a varimax rotation. Based on the 11 items used for motivation two factors were identified: the experience and socialization. The two factors explain 51.65% of the





**Fig. 2** Weighted averages of motivations. (Source Author’s calculation)

variance in motivation. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy of 0.881 also indicates that patterns of correlation are relatively compact and yield reliable factors. Barlett’s test results indicated the appropriateness of the factor analysis ( $p < 0.001$ ). The eigenvalues were 4.382 and 1.3 (Table 4).

Factors	Eigenvalues	Percent of Variance explained	Cumulative %
1. The experience	3.083	28.024	28.024
2. Socializing	2.599	23.626	51.651

(Source Author’s calculation)

Similarly for the 8 criteria of choosing an event items the analysis yielded also two factors. They were named social and economic. The two factors explain 53.196% of the variance in importance. Although the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy is lower, 0.694, it still indicates that patterns of correlation are relatively compact and yield reliable factors. Barlett’s test results indicated the appropriateness of the factor analysis ( $p < 0.001$ ). The obtained eigenvalues were 1.992 and 1.2 (Table 5).

Factors	Eigenvalues	Percent of variance explained	Cumulative %
1. Social	1.992	33.195	33.195
2. Economic	1.200	20.002	53.196

(Source Author’s calculation)

In order to see if the motivation and the criteria of choosing an event vary across demographics, a series of t-test and ANOVA analyses were conducted. The demographical variables were gender, age, home town, education level, income and

**Table 4** Factor analyses of motivations to participate to Cluj-Napoca European Youth Capital event

Motivation item	1. The experience	2. Socializing
To have a change from my daily routine	0.597	0.050
To experience new and different things	0.806	0.042
To experience the festival myself	0.755	0.282
Because it is stimulating and exciting	0.705	0.252
So I could be with my friends	0.539	0.368
Because of the novelty of the events	0.610	0.361
To be with people of similar interest	0.423	0.524
To observe the other people attending the festival	0.096	0.809
To spend time with family	0.208	0.469
For a chance to be with people who are enjoying themselves	0.338	0.671
Because I like crowded places like festivals	0.035	0.766

(Source Author’s calculation)

**Table 5** Factor analyses of criteria for choosing a specific event

Criteria item	Social	Economic
Field	0.034	0.792
Discounts	0.161	0.721
The presence of important people	0.596	0.195
Obligation	0.648	0.117
Socializing	0.727	0.045
Networking	0.813	0.016

(Source Author’s calculation)

marital status. For the first factor identified in motivation (the experience) there are significant differences between males and females although the variances cannot be considered homogeneous (Leven’s Test  $p = 0.055$ ). In this case women consider the experience significantly more important than men. The people over 41 years of age considered the experience as being significantly more important than those between the ages of 19 and 30. The socializing factor didn’t present any significant difference among age groups. People outside Cluj-Napoca considered the experience (factor 1) as being significantly more important than people from Cluj-Napoca ( $p = 0.034$ ). The people with post-university studies consider the experience (factor 1) as being significantly more important than the other education groups while the socializing factor is significantly less important for high school graduates compared with people with studies up to the university level. There were no significant differences between income groups. Single people consider the socializing component as being significantly more important ( $p = 0.003$ ) than people in a relationship without children.

Considering the criteria, there was no significant difference from a gender point of view. People with ages between 19 and 50 years of age consider socializing as being significantly more important than people with ages over 51 years. People from Cluj-Napoca consider the economic factor as being significantly more important than people from outside Cluj-Napoca. People with basic education consider the social factor as being significantly more important than people with a high school education ( $p = 0.004$ ) and people with post-university studies ( $p = 0.007$ ). People with income between 700 and 1500 lei consider the social factor significantly more important than people with incomes between 2200 and 2900 lei ( $p = 0.017$ ). Single people consider socializing significantly more important than people in a relationship with children ( $p < 0.001$ ) or without children ( $p = 0.049$ ).

## 4 Conclusions

In the last years, events have increased in number, size and frequency all over the world and also in Romania. The events that are targeting the youth play an important role in this industry, because the participants represent the main targeted segment.

Regarding the analyze made in order to identify and understand the motivations of young people in attending the events organized under the umbrella of Cluj-Napoca European Youth Capital, the following consumer profile was identified: youth people between 19–30 years old, educated (the majority have university studies and at least high school in the case of students), having the under average medium wage in Romania and being single or in a relationship, but without children.

Also, the study reveals that the concerts are preferred by 58% of the respondents compared with just 30% that prefer educational events. When a participant chooses an event the field is considered by 57.3% of the respondents as being the most important and as less important is perceived by the majority the imposed attending (22.4%). 44% from the questioned people affirm that the main reason for participating at an event is to experience new and different things and less important is enjoying the festival crowds (28%).

The study revealed two main factors influencing the motives of going to events such experience and socializing. Regarding the experience, women consider it more important than men, people over 41 more than those between 19–30 years old, those from outside Cluj-Napoca more than those from the city and those with post-university studies compared with the rest. About socializing, for those with university studies this factor is more important than for those that have high-school ones and also for those that are single compared with people in a relationship without children.

About the criteria of choosing an event, also two factors were identified: social and economic. People between 19–50 years old consider the social factor as being

more important than those over 51 years. Those with basic education consider this factor more important than those with high school or with post university studies. The category that has an income between 700–1500 lei take this factor as being more important than those between 2200–2900 lei. For the respondents that are single, the social factor is more important than for the rest of the categories. The people from Cluj-Napoca take the economic factor as being very important compared with those from other places

The study has limitations especially considering that the data were collected during the event, but before the main popular concert (UNTOLD festival). Also a higher number of respondents assure a better accurate research. Even so, the present study is an attempt to identify the segments of clients that will want to participate at youth events, the types of events preferred by those segments and the motives in attending them. The study is important being a starting point of crystallizing categories of clients interested in spending their free time involved in such activities. Also, based on their motivations, the organizers can adapt the events based on the needs and wants. The study reveals new research perspectives regarding, on one side, the motives of participating at youth events and finding out if those ones are generally accepted in Romania, even if the context is not the same one, and on the other hand, if the segments are the same ones in all the cities that were under the aegis of an EYC.

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# Tourism Impacts of International Arts Festivals in Greece. The Cases of the Kalamata Dance Festival and Drama Short Film Festival

Vasiliki Georgoula and Theano S. Terkenli

**Abstract** Towns and cities are increasingly using arts festivals as an important motivator to attract visitors and tourism and to stimulate urban development. During the past two decades, arts festivals have been multiplying in the Western world and becoming more visible and culturally prominent. This research seeks to address tourism aspects that develop between arts festivals organisers and policy makers, residents, visitors and the tourism industry. The objective of the paper is to explore the role of the International Arts festivals in the tourism development of the cities of Kalamata and Drama, Greece, through measurement and evaluation of the perceptions and opinions of its attendants and the cities' residents and visitors. Primary data were collected with the aid of online questionnaires, distributed and collected during autumn 2016. 130 questionnaires were answered by residents and visitors of the Drama International Short Film Festival and 186 questionnaires were answered by residents and visitors of the Kalamata International Dance Festival. Results suggest that, after 22 years of operation, the two Festivals are significantly acknowledged for their overall role in the cities' tourism image and growth, despite different characteristics the two festivals and the two cities. The city of Drama has benefited from its Festival, which has played a significant part in improving the city's tourism infrastructure, image and first-time visitor attraction. As Kalamata is an already established destination, the Festival may have not necessarily translated into much higher tourism revenues and infrastructure improvement, but it has significantly enhanced its image and high-profile visitor attraction. In both cases, it is widely acknowledged that the Festivals have a lot of further untapped potential, as unique city branding tools, adding value to the destinations and extending the tourism season. This research aims to contribute to knowledge concerning the impacts of established international festivals on medium-sized cities, useful for research and academic purposes, as well as for local and national authorities responsible for tourism planning.

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101

**Keywords** International arts festivals · Cultural tourism · Local development  
Cities · Kalamata · Drama · Greece

## 1 Introduction

Worldwide, national governments and local authorities are increasingly using cultural festivals and special events as key elements within regional development strategies, since these provide opportunities for tourism promotion, increased revenues and investment in host regions (Getz 2007; Van de Wagen 2005). These events help recreate the image of a place and contribute to the extension of the tourism season (Huang et al. 2010; Boo and Busser 2006; Kotler et al. 1993; Mehmetoglu and Ellingsen 2005).

While an extensive literature on the various social, cultural and economic elements of festivals does now exist (Getz 2008; Waitt 2008), festival research was mainly focused upon mega-events and other hallmark events, leaving regional and small community cultural events rather underexplored (Bres and Davis 2001).

However, support for the operation of festivals and special events is thought to make a an important difference in peripheral regions and small communities. As eliminating regional inequalities in economic and social conditions remain a high priority in regional planning, local governments tend to confront some of these problems by developing effective and appropriate regional event policies (Whitford 2009). As a result, the use of cultural festivals and special events as an instrument for local economic and tourism development has gained worldwide momentum in recent years (Moscardo 2007; Small et al. 2005; Alves et al. 2010; Thrane 2002). Festivals and special events are being encouraged by public sector bodies, as a positive form of community development, and, thus, the need for a deeper understanding of the contribution of events contribution to regional development, place marketing and place-identity has consequently emerged (O'Sullivan et al. 2009).

Much of the relevant literature focuses on evaluating economic or other impacts, with the aid of some form of impact analysis. In most cases, the analysis involves estimating an aggregate measure of income and employment change attributable to the festival and ends with the estimation of local multiplier effects, without further questioning the translation of these figures into local economic development (Kim et al. 1998; Felsenstein and Fleischer 2003). One of the specific areas which has not received much attention in festival research literature is the examination of the perceptions of key interest groups, like festival organizers, local authorities or local tourism agents, of the impacts of festivals and special events on local communities. However, as Gursoy et al. (2004) stress, understanding the perceptions of local key interest groups of the impacts of the event on local communities is of vital importance for the success of any festival.

In this paper, we focus on how international arts festivals impacts on tourism, in a medium-sized city by exploring the perceptions of residents and visitors and seeks to analyze how far the activities generated by the festival contribute to local economic and tourism development.

The paper firstly provides an overview of the background literature on cultural festivals and their role in tourism development. Next, the case studies of the Kalamata and Drama International Festivals are presented. Thereafter, this article focuses on the research design and methodology, followed by a descriptive analysis of the research results. Finally, the paper closes with concluding remarks along with identification of areas for future research.

## 2 Events Tourism Impacts

Festivals and events have a range of impacts on their host destinations, usually distinguished into economic, socio-cultural, environmental and political impacts (e.g. Allen et al. 2002; Dimmock and Tiyce 2001; Jackson et al. 2005). In event evaluation research, the main focus has long been on assessing the economic impacts of events (e.g. Chhabra et al. 2003; Dwyer et al. 2005; Dwyer et al. 1998; Tohmo 2005), with less empirical research on the—more difficult to measure, yet very important—socio-cultural impacts. Great emphasis is often placed on the economic impacts, partly because of the need of event organizers and governments to meet budget goals and justify expenditure, and partly because such impacts are most easily assessed (Allen et al. 2002; Dwyer et al. 2006).

Cultural festivals are considered as simultaneously “cultural” and “economic” phenomena (Gibson and Kong 2005; McCann 2002), since they entail audiences, use buildings, facilities, and equipment, and depend on some kind of service or entertainment provision. The critical advantages of festivals to localities are based around opportunities for generating income, supporting existing businesses and encouraging new start-ups, as well as generating revenue for governments (Huang et al. 2010; Dwyer et al. 2005).

In recent years, festivals and special events have become some of the fastest growing types of tourism attractions. As a result, the number of relevant conceptual and empirical studies has been steadily growing (Getz (2008)). Most of the research examines festivals and special events’ contribution to local development focused on economic impact analysis (Dwyer et al. 2005; Crompton et al. 2001; Kim et al. 1998; Thrane 2002). Empirical studies of small, provincial cultural festivals all point to economic benefits, usually concerned with short-term impacts and direct, tangible outcomes, such as increased jobs, hotel rooms and business revenues (Formica and Uysal 1996).

Festivals range from mega, hallmark, key and regional/local events: mega events are designed to reach a global audience and thus make a positive impact upon the national economy of the host country, whereas community events are primarily designed to deliver benefits to local stakeholders. Another festival typology



introduced by O’Sullivan and Jackson (2002) identified three types of festivals, ranging from the small scale, rural or semi-rural ‘home-grown’ festival, to the medium size, urban ‘tourist-tempter’ festival, up to the large, urban ‘big-bang’ festival, promoting numerous related activities, over a large geographical area.

This paper focuses on the role of international dance festivals with three main characteristics: (1) hosting international professional artists, (2) featuring specific artistic visions and objectives, (3) being publicly funded, and (4) achieving a consecutive long-term (more than two decades) presence, in a medium-sized city. Additionally, we seek to assess if and how international arts festivals act as mechanisms to encourage regional tourism development. More specifically, we seek to explore how a well-established and with a European reputation art festival relates to the host city and offers benefits, both for its residents and visitors. This research approaches and achieves its objectives through an exploration of the perceptions of key interest groups of the tourism impacts of these festivals on their host communities.

Both Kalamata and Drama international festivals were established in 1995, by the Greek Ministry of Culture, under the “National Network of Cultural Capitals” initiative. Among many other Greek cities named capitals of different art genres, Kalamata was named the Capital of Dance and the city of Drama was named the Capital of Short Film. The initiative faded many years ago for most cities, but these two festivals have remained successful and still publicly funded by national and local authorities, despite the country’s economic recession of the last decade.

### **3 Case Study—Kalamata International Dance Festival (KIDF)**

The Kalamata International Dance Festival is one of the most important cultural events both at the local and at the national level. The Festival was founded in 1995 with its main objective to support and promote the art of contemporary dance and to increase audience dance awareness through research, education, and numerous artistic activities. After twenty-two consecutive years of a dynamic presence in the contemporary Greek dance scene and, thanks to the support of the local and national authorities, the Kalamata Festival has earned itself a special place on the festival map of the Mediterranean South, and built bridges to international dance creativity.

Several influential international figures, whose work has shaped the history of contemporary dance, made their first Greek appearance at Kalamata. The Festival has also focused on promoting and supporting Greek creativity, by commissioning works from talented Greek choreographers and supporting new companies in their experimental explorations. In recent years, the artistic activities of the festival take place in mid-July every year and last only 8–10 days, due to the socio-economic situation of the country, as opposed to the circumstances of previous years when it

used to last 12–15 days. The program also includes dance workshops, seminars, lectures, screenings and exhibitions. Many free public events are held in open central spaces, creating a festive atmosphere throughout the city and bringing contemporary dance closer to the people.

#### **4 Case Study- Drama International Short Film Festival (DISFF)**

The Short Film Festival in Drama was first held in 1978, at the initiative of the Drama Film Club. The response of filmmakers and of the public was enthusiastic from the very beginning. A few years later, the Festival was adopted by the Municipality of Drama and then, in 1995, the International Festival was added to the National Festival. Since then, the festival has been funded by both the Municipality of Drama and the Greek Ministry of Culture. The main objective of the Festival is to promote and disseminate the art of cinema and develop cooperation with filmmakers from all over the world.

Over 2000 films are submitted each year, from which the curatorial group selects around 50–60 to screen, for entrance in the competition that is part of the festival. The final selection is approved by the Festival Direction. Short film juries of international film and media professionals select the award-winning films, that are presented and awarded during the closing Awards Ceremony.

The festival runs on a six-day schedule, in mid-September, and its main venues are the Municipal Conservatory and the Olympia Cinema. The festival holds an annual International Competition showing the best new short films from around the world, as well as parallel events, including interviews, book presentations, panels and networking platforms for filmmakers and professionals. The Drama Festival is the leading Greek and South-Eastern European gateway to the world's most prestigious short film awards nominated filmmakers can qualify for the European Film Awards (Table 1).

#### **5 Methodology**

For the purposes of this research, primary part data were collected during September 2016, for the Kalamata Festival, and during October 2016 for the Drama Festival. The questionnaire was designed based on theoretical and empirical research concerning the tourism impacts of such events around Europe. The data collection method selected for this study was a self-administered online questionnaire. Two different online questionnaires were distributed for each city, but both included the same(case adapted) questions.

**Table 1** 2016 kalamata and drama international festivals in numbers

	<b>International Dance Festival (KIDF)</b>	<b>International Short Film Festival (DSFF)</b>
Population ( <i>census 2011</i> )	Kalamata 78.100	Drama 44.823
Year of establishment	1995	1995
Duration	12 days in mid-July	6 days in mid-September
Genre	Contemporary Dance	Short Films
Artistic director	Vicky Marangopoulou (1995–2015) Katerina Kassioumi (2016-Σήμερα)	Antonis Papadopoulos (1995-today)
Theaters and venues	<b>7 Venues</b> Kalamata Dance and Concert Hall (735 seats) Kalamata Regional Theater (260 seats) Kalamata Cultural Center (450 seats) Kalamata Castle Amphitheater (729 seats) Kalamata National Stadium Kalamata Philharmonic Amphiteater (200 seats) Kalamata Seafront High School (approx. 200 seats)	<b>2 Venues</b> Olympia Municipal Cinema (approx. 350 seat) Municipal Concert Hall (approx. 350 seats)
Number of shows, projections, performances	<b>24 performances</b> 2 projections 1 visual arts show 3 dance workshops 2 lectures	<b>54 screenings</b> 1 masterclass 4 books show 4 directors' presentations
Total No. of attendees	4.360 spectators	10.000 spectators
Occupancy	95%	100%
Ticket sales	35.526,00 €	–
Permanent staff	5	3
Seasonal staff	31	20
Funding	<b>€ 400.000</b> 150.000,00 € Kalamata Municipality 200.000,00 € Ministry of Culture 16.000,00 € Sponsors	<b>€ 300.000</b> 70% Drama Municipality 30% Ministry of Culture

The survey was built using a web-based survey application on Google Forms. Primarily, the questionnaire was addressed to residents and visitors of each city and their greater metropolitan areas and were sent to the relevant populations sample via email. Their email addresses were acquired through the festival's mailing lists, as well as the Municipalities' mailing lists. Dance professionals were reached through the posting of the questionnaire on online dance websites, such as Dancetheater.gr and dancepress.gr. Film professionals were reached by such posting on online film websites, such as Sinema.gr and film clubs websites. Tourism professional (hotel and restaurant owners) were reached by email, acquired through the National

Directory. Additionally, the questionnaire was published on Kalamata and Drama resident groups’ social media and online local newspapers. The questionnaire postings were viewed by thousands of people. 186 persons answered the Kalamata questionnaire and 130 persons answered the Drama questionnaire.

Participants first read a short introductory text presenting the research purpose and informed that they would need about 5 min to answer the questions. The questionnaire consisted of 28 questions and consisted of three sections: (1) respondents’ perceptions of the festivals’ tourism impacts, (2) the respondents’ tourist profile, and (3) the respondents’ demographic characteristics.

To facilitate the expression of respondents’ opinions in measurable values of perception, the possible answers were structured in the format of a Likert-type scale of intensity, structured format responses, and one open-ended question, where all the respondents were able to contribute their comments.

## 6 Survey Findings

### 6.1 Demographic profile

The majority of the sample for both cities consisted of people aged 24–40 years (58.9% for Kalamata International Dance Festival—KIDF and 53.1% Drama International Short Film Festival DISFF) followed by the categories of the 41–60 age groups (24.3% KIDF & 37.7% DISFF). The KIDF sample consisted of 23.8% male and 76.2% female respondents, whereas the DISFF consisted 56.9% male and 43.1% female respondents. Nearly half of the respondents for both cities had a high educational profile, holding an undergraduate degree (KIDF 40% and DISFF 47.7%), followed by those with a post- graduate degree (KIDF 29.7% and DISFF 32.3%). Additionally, most of the respondents were self-employed (KIDF 35.7% and DISFF 43.1%), followed by the category of private sector employees (KIDF 34.1% and DISFF 22.3%). The most popular employment sectors were arts and culture (KIDF 36% and DISFF 47.2%) followed by education (KIDF 19.4% and DISFF 15%). Nearly half (48.6%) of the KIDF respondents lived in Athens, while 35.1% lived in Kalamata. Concerning the DISFF respondents, 42.3% also came from Athens, 37.7% came from Drama, and 12.3% of them came from

**Table 2** Demographic profile of the respondents

	Kalamata KIDF 2016	Drama DISFF 2016
Age	59% 24–40 age group	53% 24-40 age group
Sex	76% female & 24%male	43% female, 57% male
Education	40% undergraduate degrees	48% undergraduate degrees
Occupation	36% self employed	43% self employed
Sector of employment	36% arts & culture	47% arts & culture
Residence	49% Athens & 35% Kalamata	42% Athens & 38% Drama

Thessaloniki. Most of the respondents for both cities had visited the festival 1–4 times (KIDF 48% and DISFF 47.3%), during their 22 years of operation (Table 2).

## 7 Visitors' Profile

### 7.1 Kalamata

The majority of Kalamata visitors stayed for 1–3 nights (33.6%), followed by the category of those visitors staying for 3–7 nights (20.9%). Most of them stayed with friends and family (34.8%) or at their own summer houses (25.9%), while only 22.3% chose a hotel. A clear majority (78.2%) went sightseeing around the greater area of Messenia. 90% of them spent around 100 € per day. 38.5% replied that their main motive for visiting the city was that they have friends and relatives there, whereas 35.7% replied that their main motive was to visit the festival, on the basis of its program and showcasing of famous dance companies.

### 7.2 Drama

The majority of Drama visitors (63.3%) stayed in the city for 3–7 days, followed by those (26.6%) who stayed there for only 1–3 days. 74.7% of the total number of visitors stayed in a hotel, while only 21.5% stayed with friends and family. 55.7% did not do any sightseeing in the surrounding metropolitan area. 55.1% spent less

**Table 3** Visitors' profile

	Kalamata KIDF 2016	Drama DISFF 2016
Overnight stays	21% 3–7 nights 34% 1–3 nights	63% 3–7 nights 27% 1–3 nights
Type of accommodation	35% stayed with friends & family 26% own summer house	75% in hotels 22% with friends and family
Sightseeing in the greater area	78% Yes	56% No
Expenditure	90% spent 100 € approx.	55% spent 50 € approx.
Main motive for visiting the city	39% to visit friends and relatives 21% to attend the festival	48% to participate in the festival 24% to attend the festival
Main motive for visiting the festival	45% for its selection of performances 16% for its reputation	31% to participate 23% for its reputation
Times visited the festival	46% 1–5 times 20% every year	47% 1–5 times 25% every year

than 50 € per day, followed by those (30.4%) who spent less than 100 €. 48% responded that attending the festival was their main reason for visiting Drama, while 30.8% responded that they visited the festival because they participated in it, in their capacity as artists (Table 3).

## 8 Perceptions on the Tourism Impacts of the Festivals

In order to facilitate the expression of the respondents' opinions in measurable values of perception, the possible alternative answers were structured in a Likert-Type 5-scale of intensity (1 = 'I strongly disagree', to 5 = 'I strongly agree'). The gradation of the answers intended to produce a solid measurement. Most of the respondents for both festivals agreed or strongly agreed with the statement of positive tourism impacts of the Festivals on the cities (Table 4).

## 9 Comparing Residents and Visitors' Perceptions of the Tourism Impacts of the Festivals

After a few years of the main researcher's attending the festivals and discussing their impacts with the various stakeholders as part of this research, it was observed that even though visitors were quite keen and passionate about the festivals, residents were not as enthusiastic; they were rather sometimes neutral concerning their

**Table 4** Perceptions on the tourism impacts of the Festivals

Variables	Kalamata KIDF	Drama DISFF
<b>Tourism impacts</b>	Mean (St. Deviation)	
The festival contributes to the promotion of the city's image and adds value to the destination	4.02 (0.79)	4.24 (0.77)
The festival is a significant motive for attracting first time visitors to the city	4.12 (0.84)	3.91 (0.84)
The festival is a significant motive for attracting first time visitors to the greater area (Messenia Prefecture)	3.71 (1.00)	3.47 (0.97)
During the festival, the number of tourist increases	3.74 (0.86)	3.95 (0.87)
During the festival tourism and catering businesses benefit significantly	4.00 (0.74)	4.26 (0.71)
During the festival tourism and catering businesses benefit significantly in the greater area (Prefecture)	3.56 (0.95)	3.53 (0.92)
The festival is a catalyst for developing and improving infrastructure in the city	3.54 (0.98)	3.79 (0.90)
During the festival, visitors have the opportunity to taste the local culture	4.02 (0.79)	3.86 (0.76)

**Table 5** Comparing residents' and visitors' perceptions of the tourism impacts of the Festivals

Variables	Residents	Visitors	Standard deviation
<b>Tourism impacts of KIDF</b>			
	Mean		
The festival contributes to the promotion of the city's image and adds value to the destination	4.30	4.37	0.564
The festival is a significant motive for attracting first time visitors to the city	4.06	4.15	0.478
The festival is a significant motive for attracting first time visitors to the greater area of Messenia	3.74	3.70	0.780
During the festival, the number of tourist increases	3.65	3.79	0.301
During the festival tourism and catering businesses benefit significantly	3.90	4.06	0.184
During the festival tourism and catering businesses benefit significantly in the greater area of Messenia	3.55	3.57	0.886
The festival is a catalyst for developing and improving infrastructure in the city	3.61	3.50	0.445
During the festival, visitor have the opportunity to taste the local culture	3.85	4.11	<b>0.040</b>
<b>Tourism impacts DISFF</b>			
The festival contributes to the promotion of the city's image and adds value to the destination	4.40	4.13	0.055
The festival is a significant motive for attracting first time visitors to the city	4.00	3.86	0.374
The festival is a significant motive for attracting first time visitors to the greater area of Drama	3.71	3.32	0.027
During the festival, the number of tourist increases	3.77	4.06	0.070
During the festival tourism and catering businesses benefit significantly	4.20	4.30	0.470
During the festival tourism and catering benefit significantly in the greater area of Drama	3.69	3.44	0.135
The festival is a catalyst for developing and improving infrastructure in the city	3.69	3.86	0.306
During the festival, visitor have the opportunity to taste the local culture	4.00	3.78	0.126

benefits to the city. Many of the residents were concerned about the festivals' public funding, in times of serious economic recession and cutbacks on public health and education. Therefore, at the outset of this research undertaking, the hypothesis that visitors and attendees value the festivals more than the residents was formed.

Aiming to compare statistically the mean values of the residents' and visitors' perceptions, independent sample t-tests were conducted, on a level of  $\alpha = 5\%$  statistical importance. No statistically significant differences were found with the aid of our data analysis, so this hypothesis was rejected. Specifically, both residents and visitors feel positive and strongly positive about the impacts of the festivals on their respective cities (Table 5).

## **10 Discussion**

### ***10.1 Kalamata KIDF***

During the last 22 years of its operation, the KIDF has managed to add significantly to the value of the destination and to promote its image in Greece and abroad. Findings show that the festival constitutes a very important motive for first-time visitors, but most importantly a great number of the attendees seem to become regular attendees, as a significant 20% tend to revisit the festival every year. Furthermore, it is strongly perceived that the festival increases profits for local business. However, as 78% of the attendees go sightseeing around the greater area, the festival also benefits businesses in the greater Prefecture of Messenia. Kalamata is an already established and developed tourist destination, offering a wide range of hotels and accommodation, catering, cultural and sports facilities. There were no considerable findings, according to our respondents' opinions, indicating that the KIDF impacts considerably on the city's tourism infrastructure. However, the city significantly benefited from improved cultural infrastructure. The greatest example thereof is the construction of the Kalamata Dance Megaron (Hall), a modern landmark building, the only one of its kind dedicated to the art of dance in Greece and one of the very few such institutions in Europe. Improved cultural infrastructure contributes greatly to raising standards of living and leading to the attraction of more investment, in various economic sectors. Finally, the KIDF tends to attract higher profile tourists, relatively young and highly educated, as well as interested in local culture, history and sightseeing, combining the festival visit with holidays or with a weekend break. This could be the reason that Kalamata visitors seem to spend an average of 100 € per day, comparatively more than those in the case of the Drama Festival. Additionally, KIDF has definitely become a meeting place for both performing arts professionals, as well as for all sorts of arts lovers. Nevertheless, the main motive for visiting the festival is its strong art programs and cutting-edge dance companies. Finally, the KIDF seems to instill feelings of creativity, collaboration, participation and belonging in its visitors and to feelings of pride, recognition and celebration in its residents.

### ***10.2 Drama DSFF***

The results of the Drama DISFF case show that respondents' perceptions reveal an overall recognition and appreciation of the Festival's role in upgrading the city's image and enhancing its reputation. The Festival attracts a significant number of first time visitors and its successful experience leads 28% of them to become regular and repeat visitors. Drama, a rural city of Northern Greece, is a relatively new tourism destination, which offers its visitors the chance to enjoy nearby beautiful mountains, springs, forest and famous wineries. Several local cultural festivals also



take place during Christmas, spring and summer months. Therefore, the Festival extends the tourism season and attracts visitors in September, considered as a low-tourism season. Furthermore, the festival considerably contributes to an increase in local business in the city, though not in its greater area of the Prefecture. Due to the genre of this festival and the fact that the film screenings take place all day long, most of the visitors do not have the time to go sightseeing. Possibly for the same reason, its visitors spend less money per day (50 €), as compared to the corresponding Kalamata Festival visitors. Still, the visitors' profile is relatively young and highly educated. Most importantly, the festival has greatly impacted on Drama's tourism infrastructure; while, in 1995, there were only 3 3\* hotels, now there are about 8 hotels (3\* & 4\* hotels), plus the newly-built Hydrama 5\* resort and spa hotel in a renovated historical building. Similarly to the KIDF, the DISFF is one of the most important meeting places for Balkan and European film-makers, with 48% of our respondents revisiting the city, in order to participate as invited artists. Finally, due to the fact the city of Drama is half the size of Kalamata, the festival organization, its visitors and the event vibes are even more visible for local people and strongly add to a feeling of celebration, community-building and sense of pride in the city.

## 11 Conclusions

In this paper we sought to explore how a well-established and with a European reputation art festival relates to the host city and offers benefits, both for its residents and visitors. Additionally, a visitor and resident perception measuring instrument was developed, which can be used to determine the tourism impacts of international arts festivals in medium-sized cities. Festivals and events have become a critically important component of the global tourism product with various impacts on their host communities (Pasanen et al. 2009). Additionally, they offer the possibility to a group of people to express their love for arts and culture (Gibson et al. 2010) and professional artists to be promoted and recognized for their work.

The success stories of the KIDF and DISFF rely on their vision and their aim to promote successfully the art they represent, by creating well known, established and respected events, claiming a prominent place on the European map. Their long term, consecutive and loyal-to-their-art character has established them as significant international festivals attracting regular visitors, improving their host cities' cultural profiles, and leading them to achieve yearly public funding, despite the country's circumstances of financial recession.

The results of the study emphasize the importance of evaluating festival attendees' perceptions, as a framework for local and national authorities' decision-making in developing strategic tourism planning and policy. This approach may also enable festival organizers to assess audience attitudes and satisfaction and to improve the organization and the promotion of such events, towards a wider audience reach.

This study may be considered as a first step towards understanding how an international art festival is perceived and assessed and how it impacts on the tourism of a city destination. Such a study could also be undertaken at a larger scale and include various socio- demographic groups. However, future work should also consider a comparison of both cultural and tourism impacts of international arts festivals on their destination cities, in the context of a more holistic approach to overall local development.

At times when art and cultural events become major victims of economic recession and face harsh state funding cutbacks, our conclusions may add in leading tourism and culture policy-makers to a sounder basis for future planning, programming, supporting and developing international arts festivals.

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# European Policy on Culture and Prospective Synergies: A Mission not so Impossible

Sofia Boutsiouki

**Abstract** The intense competition in the global socioeconomic environment forces countries to develop their competitive advantages. Culture constitutes one of the most valuable assets for such purposes and is distinguished for its ability to extend its dynamics beyond time and space limitations. The European Union demonstrates its strong interest in deploying its cultural resources by introducing interventions that proactively protect and promote its heritage. Such interventions have a significant influence on the prospects for economic development, increase of employment and enhancement of social cohesion and active citizenship. The paper focuses on the efforts of the European Union to make the most of its cultural advantages. The paper is organized with a twofold aim. On one hand, it highlights particular dimensions of the European cultural policy context. On the other hand, it focuses on two policy actions, the European Capitals of Culture and the European Heritage Label, and attempts to analyze their role as pillars of broader synergies in the field of culture. The particular initiatives are considered able to encourage cultural cooperation and to exercise an emblematic role as motivational factors of development in different fields of interest. Besides transforming the cultural expression in its tangible and intangible form and enhancing the European identity awareness, they facilitate the better understanding of cultural diversity and the development of multilevel and interactive synergies among various stakeholders. Finally, the paper aspires to define the ability of the particular instruments to serve as useful models for action at regional and local level.

**Keywords** European Capitals of Culture · European Heritage Label Culture · Cultural policy · European Union

**JEL Classification** Z19 · Z38

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## 1 Introduction

The intense competition in the global socioeconomic environment forces countries to develop their competitive advantages. Culture constitutes one of the most valuable assets for such purposes and is distinguished for its ability to extend its dynamics beyond time and space limitations. The European Union (EU) demonstrates its strong interest in deploying its cultural resources by introducing interventions that protect its heritage and support the development of cultural and creative industries. These interventions have the ability to influence the prospects for economic development and increase of employment, as well as to enhance social cohesion and active citizenship.

The paper focuses on the efforts of the European Union to make the most of its cultural advantages by regarding them as means for increased development and deeper integration. The paper is organized with a twofold aim. On one hand, it highlights particular dimensions of the European cultural policy context. On the other hand, it focuses on two policy actions, the European Capitals of Culture and the European Heritage Label, and attempts to analyze their role as pillars of broader synergies in the field of culture. The particular actions have the ability to encourage various forms of cultural cooperation and to exercise an emblematic role as motivational factors of development in different fields of interest. Besides transforming the cultural expression in its tangible and intangible form and enhancing the European identity awareness, they are expected to facilitate the better understanding of cultural diversity and to encourage the development of multilevel and interactive synergies by including a broad range of stakeholders. Finally, the paper aspires to define the ability of the particular instruments to serve as useful models for action at regional and local level.

## 2 European Policy on Culture

The European interest in culture is neither new nor fragmentary and is expressed through various forms of policy planning and actions. Culture has been regarded as a field of great importance for the European integration since the beginning of the process and has been included in various institutional interventions. However, it gradually developed greater autonomy and a clear vision by designating its social and economic role in a more proactive and articulated way (Treaty on European Union, 1992, art. 128; Treaty of Amsterdam, 1997, art. 128, §4; Treaty of Lisbon, 2007, preamble, art. 2, § 3, and art. 151, § 5; Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, 2012, art. 167).

The European interest in cultural policies is closely related to the global developments and is significantly influenced by the UNESCO and the Council of Europe initiatives. The particular organizations are renowned for their numerous institutional contributions in favor of the protection and the promotion of culture, which

is connected with broader socioeconomic aims. The launch of the “Framework Convention on the value of cultural heritage for society” by the Council of Europe in 2005 constitutes an indicative example (Council of Europe, 2005). The Convention targets the preservation of cultural resources, the promotion of cultural identity, the respect for diversity and the encouragement of inter-cultural dialogue, while it ultimately aims at the promotion of a change in people’s perceptions regarding the role of culture in many operational dimensions of the modern societies.

Over the years the European Union focus on the field of culture has established a multilevel cultural policy context. The Framework Convention influenced the EU to undertake its own initiatives in order to establish a positive mindset about culture and to implement relevant actions that bridge the cultural and the creative industries. In 2007 a European Commission Communication (European Commission, 2007) resulted in the publication of the “European Agenda for Culture” (Council of the European Union, 2007), which endorsed the participation of people in various activities related to culture as a means for the development of greater creativity and innovation, of deeper cultural understanding and empathy. Furthermore, the year 2008 was declared as the “European Year of Intercultural Dialogue” and 2009 as the “Year of Creativity and Innovation”.

The “European Agenda for Culture” aimed to increase the community interest in the design of cultural policies and contributed to the multiplication of the interventions. The main purpose was the deployment of all available resources, of previous experience and of the arising opportunities regarding culture in order to succeed both social and economic objectives. The aims of ensuring the support of cultural diversity and of the individuals’ ability to approach and to understand each other, as well as of enhancing social cohesion, appear to go hand in hand with those of pursuing economic development and competitiveness. The “European Agenda for Culture” set five priority areas and determined the open method of coordination as the most appropriate way to promote cultural policies (Council of the European Union, 2007), which are a non-mandatory policy field and remain a national responsibility. The implementation of the open method of coordination in the field of cultural policies can also encourage other actors to be inspired by the European instruments and, thus, it can incite similar actions for cultural awareness and expression on a decentralized basis.

The initial strategic orientation was soon to be followed by the Work Plan for Culture 2008–2010 (Council of the European Union, 2008),<sup>1</sup> which restated the five priority areas and analyzed them into more concrete objectives in an effort to guide

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<sup>1</sup>Two Work Plans for Culture were implemented during the periods 2002–2004 and 2005–2007 with a certain contribution to strengthening “the aspirations towards a more practical, focused and result-oriented approach” (Council of the European Union, 2008, p. 1).

the member states' plans and actions.<sup>2</sup> The revised Work Plan for Culture for the period 2011–2014 (Council of the European Union, 2010) introduced six priorities, which were further analyzed into a large variety of actions and included the entities, the methodology and the time frame of their implementation.<sup>3</sup> The Work Plan was significantly influenced by the “Green Paper on unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries” (European Commission, 2010b) and reflected the upgraded role of cultural policies within the broader scope of the “Europe 2020” Strategy. It regarded them as instruments for socioeconomic development and connected its priorities with the Strategy’s targets. In the same context, the Creative Europe program (2014–2020) was introduced and constitutes the most recent of a series of programs targeting cultural policies for both economic and socio-cultural purposes.<sup>4</sup> In the 2015–2018 Work Plan for Culture (Council of the European Union, 2014) the priorities have been rearranged to four and include twenty four actions.<sup>5</sup> The Work Plan, which is based on the principles of the “European Agenda for Culture” and of the Creative Europe program, takes into consideration the experience from previous Work Plans and aims for synergies. Besides its efforts to upgrade the concept of cultural policies further in its internal environment, the EU is currently in

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<sup>2</sup>The five priorities of the Work Plan for Culture (2008–2010) were the following (Council of the European Union, 2008, Annex I):

- i. Improvement of the conditions for the mobility of artists and other professionals in the cultural field;
- ii. Promotion of access to culture, in particular through the promotion of cultural heritage, multilingualism, digitization, cultural tourism, synergies with education, especially art education, and greater mobility of collections;
- iii. Development of data, statistics and methodologies in the cultural sector and improvement of their comparability;
- iv. Maximization of the potential of cultural and creative industries, in particular that of SMEs;
- v. Promotion and implementation of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

<sup>3</sup>The six priorities of the Work Plan for Culture (2011–2014) were the following (Council of the European Union, 2010, Annex I):

- i. Promotion of cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue, and accessible and inclusive culture;
- ii. Promotion of cultural and creative industries (CCIs);
- iii. Development of skills and support of mobility;
- iv. Promotion of cultural heritage (including the mobility of collections);
- v. Enhancement of the role of culture in EU external relations;
- vi. Development of culture statistics.

<sup>4</sup>For an extensive analysis of the European Union policy on culture, please see Boutsiouki, 2015, pp. 101–127.

<sup>5</sup>The four priorities of the Work Plan for Culture (2015–2018) are the following (Council of the European Union, 2014, Annex I):

- i. Promotion of an accessible and inclusive culture;
- ii. Cultural heritage;
- iii. Focus on distinct cultural and creative sectors highlighting especially creative economy and innovation;
- iv. Promotion of cultural diversity, of culture in EU external relations and of mobility.

the process of strengthening its cultural diplomacy by integrating cultural cooperation in its international relations (European Commission, 2014b) and by developing the Cultural Diplomacy Platform.<sup>6</sup> In general, culture is seen as an engine for sustainable socioeconomic development, for the establishment of peaceful inter-community relations and for the reinforcement of cooperation on cultural heritage in both the EU and the international environment (European Commission, 2012, 2016).

### 3 European Actions on Cultural Policy

The paper focuses on two European actions, the European Capitals of Culture and the European Heritage Label, which constitute indicative examples of the gradual orientation of the European cultural policy towards complex, multilevel and inclusive schemes.

#### 3.1 *European Capitals of Culture*

The European Capitals of Culture is the oldest organized European action regarding the promotion of culture among European peoples. It was introduced in 1985<sup>7</sup> and Athens was appointed as the first one in a long series of European cities, which followed. Over the years the institution has established its reputation and has incited the aspirations of a large number of cities to claim the role of the European Capital of Culture. Until today it constitutes the most ambitious collaborative cultural project in both its scope and scale with budgets that exceed those of other forms of cultural events very much (European Commission, 2009, p. 3).

The action uses cultural and artistic heritage and activities as levers in order to enhance cultural expressions, to improve the quality of life and strengthen the citizens' sense of community. Fifty six cities were appointed as European Capitals of Culture during the period 1985–2017 (Table 1). Although until 2006 one city undertook the role of the European Capital of Culture every year, for the year 2000 especially nine cities were appointed as European Capitals of Culture in an attempt to symbolize the importance of the new millennium for Europe. At the same time the large number of cities encouraged the mass participation of artists, cultural organizations and citizens, and stimulated the overall dynamism of the initiative.

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<sup>6</sup>The Cultural Diplomacy Platform was officially launched on 26.01.2016. It is a two-year project that is implemented by the European Commission and the Goethe-Institut and aims at the meaningful engagement with third countries through cultural diplomacy activities. More details can be found at the Cultural Diplomacy Platform website: <http://www.cultureinexternalrelations.eu>.

<sup>7</sup>In the beginning the action was named "European City of Culture"; the name was changed to "European Capital of Culture" later.



**Table 1** European Capitals of Culture (years, cities and countries) (1985–2033)

Year	Cities of European Union (or EEA) countries
1985	Athens (Greece)
1986	Florence (Italy)
1987	Amsterdam (Netherlands)
1988	West Berlin (West Germany)
1989	Paris (France)
1990	Glasgow (United Kingdom)
1991	Dublin (Ireland)
1992	Madrid (Spain)
1993	Antwerp (Belgium)
1994	Lisbon (Portugal)
1995	Luxembourg (Luxembourg)
1996	Copenhagen (Denmark)
1997	Thessaloniki (Greece)
1998	Stockholm (Sweden)
1999	Weimar (Germany)
2000	Reykjavik (Iceland), Bergen (Norway), Helsinki (Finland), Brussels (Belgium), Prague (Czech Republic), Krakow (Poland), Santiago de Compostela (Spain), Avignon (France), Bologna (Italy)
2001	Rotterdam (Netherlands), Porto (Portugal)
2002	Bruges (Belgium), Salamanca (Spain)
2003	Graz (Austria)
2004	Genoa (Italy), Liles (France)
2005	Cork (Ireland)
2006	Patra (Greece)
2007	Luxembourg (Luxembourg), Sibiu (Romania)
2008	Liverpool (United Kingdom), Stavanger (Norway)
2009	Vilnius (Lithuania), Linz (Austria)
2010	Hessen (Germany), Pécs (Hungary), Istanbul (Turkey)
2011	Turku (Finland), Tallinn (Estonia)
2012	Guimarães (Portugal), Maribor (Slovenia)
2013	Marseilles (France), Košice (Slovakia)
2014	Umeå (Sweden), Riga (Latvia)
2015	Mons (Belgium), Pilsen (Czech Republic)
2016	San Sebastian (Spain), Wroclaw (Poland)
2017	Aarhus (Denmark), Pafos (Cyprus)
2018	Leeuwarden (Netherlands), Valetta (Malta)
2019	Matera (Italy), Plovdiv (Bulgaria)
2020	Rijeka (Croatia), Galway (Ireland)
2021	Timisoara (Romania), Elefsina (Greece), Novi Sad (Serbia)
2022	Lithuania, Luxembourg

(continued)

**Table 1** (continued)

Year	Cities of European Union (or EEA) countries
2023	Hungary, United Kingdom
2024	Estonia, Austria, Candidate/potential candidate country
2025	Slovenia, Germany
2026	Slovakia, Finland
2027	Latvia, Portugal, Candidate/potential candidate country
2028	Czech Republic, France
2029	Poland, Sweden
2030	Cyprus, Belgium, Candidate/potential candidate country
2031	Malta, Spain
2032	Bulgaria, Denmark
2033	Netherlands, Italy, Candidate/potential candidate country

Source European Capitals of Culture website

In 2006 a European Parliament and the Council of the European Union Decision (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2006) determined that from 2007 and onwards two cities would be appointed as European Capitals of Culture, which should coordinate their cultural planning and activities without disregarding their individual characteristics; moreover, it nominated the selected cities until the year 2019. The particular Decision determined two categories of selection criteria for future European Capitals of Culture (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2006, art. 12):

- I. The “*European dimension*”. It involved the cooperation of cultural organizations, artists and cities from other European countries and the designation of the cultural diversity of Europe, as well as of the common aspects of the European culture.
- II. The “*city and its citizens*”. Citizens should be encouraged to participate in the preparatory activities and in the development of the action in their city and its surroundings, in order not only to create the necessary conditions for their actual cultural and socioeconomic development, but also to ensure the long-term character of the interventions.

In 2014 a new Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council of the European Union defined the countries that will host the action every year during the period 2020–2033 (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2014). Each country is expected to appoint the city, which will become European Capital of Culture (Table 1). The reformed framework maintains the appointment of two Capitals of Culture for each year in order to ensure equal opportunities for more cities in different geographical regions. However, it introduces an innovation by

determining the inclusion of a third Capital of Culture every three years from one of the candidate or potential candidate countries for accession to the EU (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2014, art. 3).

The details of the application submission, the criteria and the decision process according to which the candidate cities are evaluated before the final selection, were redefined and broadened with new concepts by the Decision of 2014. There are six categories of criteria (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2014, art. 5):

- I. The “*contribution to the long-term strategy*” category refers to the ability of the plan of the candidate city to exercise a significant influence and to have a proactive contribution not only to the cultural and creative industries, but also to the broader social and economic environment.
- II. The “*European dimension*” category mainly describes the scope and the quality of the projects that designate the importance of the European cultural heritage and diversity, of the European history, the intercultural dialogue and the mutual understanding among Europeans. In addition, the inclusion of a strategy that can attract the interest of the broad European and international public is taken into consideration in the final selection. Such aims can be accomplished through the cooperation among European artists, as well as through the development of partnerships between the entrepreneurial world and cities from different countries.
- III. As regards the “*cultural and artistic dimension*” of the plan of each candidate city, it has to include a cultural and an artistic content with a strong vision and quality characteristics, to involve local artists and cultural organizations in its implementation, to ensure the range and the diversity of the proposed activities and to have the capacity to combine local cultural heritage and traditional art forms with new, innovative and experimental cultural expressions.
- IV. The “*capacity to deliver*” category is related to the ability of the candidate city to persuade the European selection authorities that, besides the full political consent and commitment of the local, regional and national authorities to the common aim, it has the necessary infrastructure in order to secure the plan’s sustainability and viability.
- V. The “*outreach*” category concerns the ability of the city to involve the local communities both in the preparation of the application and in the actual realization of the plan. This can be achieved by broadening the groups of people who are invited to contribute and to participate in the activities, and by including young people, volunteers or members of various disadvantaged groups.
- VI. Finally, the “*management*” category refers to the design of a feasible budget, which can be efficiently controlled during all the phases of the venture, and to the ability to draw the necessary financial resources from European Union programs and funds. Moreover, this category includes provisions regarding the administrative structure and the organizational cooperation of all parties involved in the implementation of the plan, as well as the marketing and the commercial strategy that has to be comprehensive, to be provided with the appropriate personnel, and to show that the projects are a European Union action.

As regards the benefits of the particular action, the debate appears to be contradictory and such impact is hard to identify especially in the long-term. Each city is different from an average city, whereas the nature of the effects varies a lot and their sustainability is questioned. Furthermore, the necessary data is not always available, accessible, comparable or consistent nor appropriate for processing (Myerscough, 1994; Palmer, 2004, p. 23; Steiner, Frey & Hotz, 2013, pp. 1–2, 4; Gomes & Librero-Cano, 2016, pp. 2, 5). However, in general the action is considered an excellent opportunity for cities to gain advantages at cultural, social and economic level.

The impact of the European Capitals of Culture on particular economic aspects, such as the investment in infrastructure, the financial budgets or the tourism flows, seems to be positive, although it remains uncertain whether these effects have a long-term character (Palmer, 2004, pp. 15–23). Moreover, the fact that the action has great potential to incite the collective imagination and the development of a sense of European identity is very important. In this way it can enhance the prospects for closer cooperation and for the incorporation of the European dimension in most of the cities' interventions (Palmer, 2004, p. 18; European Commission, 2009, p. 4). Increased opportunities for cultural cooperation can be found at national and international level (European Commission, 2014b, pp. 120, 130) and can lead to the renewal of the local cultural expressions at different dimensions. Also, the action has a strong contribution to a city's revitalization (Palmer, 2004, p. 17; European Commission, 2009, p. 4). The planning and the organization of cultural events, the formation of creative groups and the development of the necessary infrastructure attract the interest of many actors, whereas the final implementation of the cultural and creative interventions may have a spillover effect on many activities, although with an undefined sustainability.

A European Capital of Culture usually experiences an intense economic and artistic activity both during the period of preparation and the year of celebration, which seems to have positive impact on the hosting region and leads to a significant increase in the GDP per capita, although the source of this increased economic activity cannot be determined with accuracy (Gomes & Librero-Cano, 2016, p. 11). In addition, the willingness, the proactiveness and the contribution of the local communities is probably enhanced in an effort to maximize the expected outcomes. Furthermore, both the city itself and the broader region benefit by being placed at the epicenter of the attention of other countries and by becoming more recognizable among other cities, thus attracting greater numbers of visitors and potential investors (Palmer, 2004, pp. 17–18, 20, 24; Eurostat, 2016, p. 35; Gomes & Librero-Cano, 2016, pp. 4, 7),<sup>8</sup> while they can create international cultural links that operate as an alternative field of action for the EU external relations (European Commission, 2014b, pp. 120, 130). The infrastructure of a newly appointed European Capital of Culture is improved, although there are justified concerns whether it will be properly sustained and used after the end of the celebration period

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<sup>8</sup>For indicative examples of particular cities, please see European Commission, 2009.

(Palmer, 2004, p. 8). Finally, it cannot be ignored that there are important benefits for the city during the process of candidacy, too. The intense competition mobilizes and coordinates various forces and resources in the candidate city towards common aims, and may result in the development of more effective strategic and policy interventions compared to the past. The candidacy of a city may have a significant positive contribution to the redefinition of the region's goals and prospects, even if the final outcome of the selection proves to be unsuccessful.

### 3.2 *European Heritage Label*

The European Heritage Label is one of the most recent European Union actions that refer to culture. It derived from a joint initiative for cooperation among national governments that was introduced in 2006, but since 2011 the European Commission has undertaken its administrative responsibility (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2011). The particular action promotes the establishment of a pan-European network of heritage sites that symbolize the history, the ideals and the integration of Europe. More analytically, this action has been designed in order to designate specific sites in the European region, which have a distinguished role in the historic development of Europe and incorporate a strong symbolism that extends beyond their aesthetic value.

Different kinds of sites are offered the opportunity to become parts of this network; monuments, natural, underwater, archaeological, industrial or urban sites, cultural landscapes, memorial places, as well as cultural objects and intangible heritage (even modern heritage) that are related to a particular site. The European Union recognizes their cultural importance and considers that cultural visits and relevant activities organized at these sites can actually reinforce the relation between Europe and its citizens, and can ensure its long-term and interactive character. Two kinds of sites are eligible to apply (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2011, art. 2, 12–13):

- I. *National thematic site*. It includes several sites that belong to a particular member state and are interconnected with a specific thematic link.
- II. *Trans-national thematic site*. It includes several sites, which belong to different member states (at least two) and are associated with a common thematic connection, or a site that extends in the territory of at least two member states.

The sites that receive the European Heritage Label are carefully selected at national and EU level on the basis of their symbolic value and of the activities they are able to offer to visitors. The selected sites are considered to highlight in a unique way their place and role in the European history, as well as in the development and the dissemination of the values that underpin European integration. A pre-selection process takes place at national level every two years and each member state can nominate up to two candidate sites. A European panel of independent experts

evaluates the applications and submits its recommendations to the European Commission, which takes them into consideration in order to proceed to the final selection. The same panel of experts is responsible for the monitoring of the compliance of the selected sites with their commitments in order to reaffirm their entitlement to the Label (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2011, art. 8, 15). After their selection the sites must be closely monitored by the national authorities (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2011, art. 15) and are to be evaluated every four years by the European authorities, which are called to ascertain whether the sites continue to fulfill the criteria and to adhere to their commitments and work plans successfully (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2011, art. 15–18; European Heritage Label, n.d., pp. 11–12). For this purpose, since 2016 the labeled sites can access a monitoring folder in 13 languages, which helps the site’s administrators to keep a record of the planning and the management of projects in order to designate that the site continues to meet the criteria.

There are three criteria according to which the European Heritage Label is attributed to a site (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2011, art. 7; European Heritage Label, n.d., pp. 5–7):

- I. *The symbolic European value of the site.* Every candidate site is evaluated according to its ability to clearly demonstrate its strong symbolic value for the European cultural expression at different dimensions. Its place and role in the European history and integration, its links with key European events, personalities or movements, and its participation in the development and promotion of the common values that underpin European integration or have cross-border or pan-European nature are taken into consideration.
- II. *The promotion of its European dimension through a project.* A site that is interested in applying for the European Heritage Label has to include a project for action in its application and to identify the activities, the target group, the partners and the timeline for its implementation. The project has to aim at raising awareness of the European significance of the site and to define appropriate educational and informative activities, in order to proactively enhance the sense of Europeans regarding their common heritage and to support its promotion.
- III. *The demonstration of operational capacity.* The application has to be supplemented with a work plan that articulates the necessary management, accessibility and communication arrangements regarding the site in terms of a long-term institutional, regulatory and operational capacity.

The action does not offer any form of financial support. However, the sites that participate in the competition can request financial aid from other European programs, while synergies and complementarities with the UNESCO and the Council of Europe initiatives are encouraged. In an effort to support the European Heritage Label sites to designate their cultural value to the public, the European Union

introduced a toolbox,<sup>9</sup> which includes promotional materials. This toolbox serves both as a model of best practice and as an inspiration for the development of further promotional interventions. It is useful not only for the labeled sites, but also for all those organizations that would be willing to promote the action. The toolbox has been prepared in many different European languages in order to ensure the accessibility for interested entities. Besides the audiovisual material, which consists of videos of the 29 labeled sites,<sup>10</sup> the toolbox includes four sections with branding elements:

- The graphic design charter with directions for the logo design according to particular rules.
- Logos in 22 languages and posters in 20 languages. The special symbolism used in the logo design actually represents the message which the action aspires to disseminate. The different elements are combined in the form of a star, which is inspired by the EU flag and reflects the depth and the breadth of the European heritage. The diversity that is at the heart of Europe is symbolized by the different shapes and colors of the constituent pieces, which may evoke stones, petals or a footprint, depending on the individual's imagination.
- Leaflets with basic information about the action's symbolic role and the application process.
- Four different forms of postcards in different languages.

The European Commission attributed the first European Heritage Labels to four sites in 2013 (European Commission, 2013). In the following year eighteen member states submitted applications for thirty six sites, sixteen of which were awarded the Label (European Commission, 2014a). In 2015 nine more sites were added to the list (European Commission, 2015) raising the total number to twenty nine sites (Table 2).

The formation of a pan-European network of European Heritage Label sites, which are distinguished for their cultural characteristics and value, ensures multiple benefits for them with a tangible and an intangible dimension. Each site gains greater visibility as part of the EU's communication and promotion strategy, it features on the European Heritage Label website<sup>11</sup> and can make use of the communication tools provided by the EU that can be adapted to the site. In addition, by displaying the plaque bearing the European Heritage Label logo each site signifies its cultural excellence and symbolic power, while the local authorities have the

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<sup>9</sup>A more detailed presentation of the toolbox can be found at the official European Heritage Label website: [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/heritage-label/managing-your-labelled-site\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/heritage-label/managing-your-labelled-site_en).

<sup>10</sup>The videos present the labeled sites and operate as "pull" factors for potential visitors or investors. This material has been developed under the Creative Europe program and shows the importance of pursuing combined interventions within the framework and the implementation of the EU cultural policy.

<sup>11</sup>Detailed information on each site can be found at the European Heritage Label website: [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/heritage-label\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/heritage-label_en).

**Table 2** European Heritage Label sites by country and year of award

Year of award	European Heritage Label site—city	Country
2013	Archaeological Park, Carnuntum	Austria (2)
2015	The Imperial Palace, Vienna	
2015	Mundaneum, Mons	Belgium (1)
2015	Krapina Neanderthal Site and Krapina Museum	Croatia (1)
2015	Olomouc Premyslid Castle and Archdiocesan Museum	Czech Republic (1)
2013	Great Guild Hall, Tallinn	Estonia (2)
2015	Historic Ensemble of the University of Tartu	
2014	Abbey of Cluny	France (3)
2014	Robert Schuman's House, Scy-Chazelles	
2015	European District of Strasbourg	
2014	Münster and Osnabrück—Sites of the Peace of Westphalia	Germany (2)
2014	Hambach Castle	
2014	The Heart of Ancient Athens	Greece (1)
2014	Pan-European Picnic Memorial Park, Sopron	Hungary (2)
2015	Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music, Budapest	
2014	Museo Casa Alcide De Gasperi, Pieve Tesino	Italy (1)
2014	Kaunas of 1919–1940	Lithuania (1)
2013	Peace Palace, The Hague	Netherlands (2)
2013	Camp Westerbork	
2014	Union of Lublin	Poland (4)
2014	The May 3, 1791 Constitution, Warsaw	
2014	The historic Gdańsk Shipyard	
2015	World War I Eastern Front Cemetery No. 123, Łużna–Pustki	
2014	Charter of Law of Abolition of the Death Penalty, Lisbon	
2014	General Library of the University of Coimbra	Portugal (3)
2015	Sagres Promontory	
2014	Franja Partisan Hospital	
2014	Archive of the Crown of Aragon, Barcelona	Spain (2)
2014	Residencia de Estudiantes, Madrid	

*Source* European Heritage Label website

opportunity to attend the annual conference of site managers and to benefit from networking opportunities and peer-learning. Furthermore, the particular action contributes to the increase of cultural tourism towards the sites, because the attribution of the European Heritage Label distinguishes them and makes them more attractive to visitors. The European Heritage Label designates the sites' distinct role in the European historic evolution and projects their unique symbolic character in



the development of the European collective identity. The selected sites can act either as separate destinations or as parts of a visitors' tour, where one can experience a uniquely inspirational approach of the common history, the cultural heritage and the values that have been formed by the European civilization over its long historical continuity. In addition, the action encourages the development of networks among the sites and the professionals involved in the management or the utilization of cultural heritage, in order to promote the unity of the European mindset and to enhance the socioeconomic development of the broader region. Also, the particular sites offer opportunities for the organization of educational or informative activities, thus affecting the formation of common principles and values and promoting European integration further (European Commission, 2010a, 2010c; European Heritage Label website).

#### **4 Conclusion and Recommendations**

The paper attempted a critical approach of two European cultural actions, the European Capitals of Culture and the European Heritage Label. The specific actions constitute expressions of the European focus on cultural policies, which seem to maintain their key position in the modern debate concerning the socioeconomic dimensions of the European integration. An overall evaluation of the two particular European actions is difficult to be achieved especially with regard to their long-term effects. However, their contribution appears to be significant. The paper aspired to highlight particular aspects and relevant trends of their implementation in order to designate them as useful models of good practice for regional and local cultural interventions and to indirectly indicate potential deficiencies that should be avoided by the respective actors.

The paper argues that both actions project interesting characteristics and have accumulated valuable experience. Therefore, they can have a positive contribution to the efforts of other cities and regions to design their own cultural policies and to proceed to their organization and implementation with greater effectiveness. Furthermore, the expansion of the actions' influence can actually enhance the cooperative spirit in the field of cultural policies and can lead to the increase of synergies. The framework of the Community Led Local Development (CLLD), a valuable instrument of the EU regional policy (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2013, art. 32–35), can also be enriched with the experience and the tools of the European Capitals of Culture and the European Heritage Label; such experience can be utilized in order to support activities contributing to local, intra- or cross-border regional development. A stronger cooperation not only helps to the protection and the promotion of cultural heritage with greater efficiency, but also mobilizes the cultural and the creative industries by broadening the common vision and ensuring their dynamism and viability through more innovative products and services. Targeted and better coordinated developmental initiatives may result into the ecological and sustainable management of the available resources, the creation of

new jobs and the enhancement of the region's brand-name. The probability of establishing a stronger willingness of local actors for a conscientious cooperation based on solidarity, tolerance and sense of fair-play should also be taken into consideration. It can lead into broader cultural alliances and increase the visibility and the attractiveness of various interconnected sites in the global environment by designating their cultural foundations and highlighting their socioeconomic advantages.

Finally, the utility of the various tools that have been developed and successfully tested in the framework of the two cultural actions cannot be overlooked. The paper argues that the development and the use of similar tools should be encouraged in the implementation of local and regional cultural policy interventions; they can raise greater awareness of common interests, can contribute to multi-level approaches of cultural ventures and, ultimately, can add to the interventions' validity and symbolic power in the collective consciousness.

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# Tourism and Ethnic Identity Development: The Impact of “Heritage Greece” Program

D. Gavriili-Alexandris and G. Katsas

**Abstract** Can tourism provide the context for the development of ethnic identity? As research and practical experience indicate, the answer is yes. But the context varies and so does the level of impact. The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to explore the impact of cultural immersion programs for the strengthening of ethnic identity. The impact of such programs is considerable, especially in relation to their implications on major economic, social and political dimensions for all parties involved. This paper uses the Heritage Greece program as a case study, employing a time series analysis of responses to two surveys of participants: one before arrival to Greece and the other at the conclusion of the program. The Heritage Greece program, run by Deree College and funded by the National Hellenic Society, brings every summer about 50 college students of Greek descent from the USA to Greece for a two-week experiential visit. The findings suggest that the impact is considerable, especially as it relates to breaking misconceptions and stereotypes about ethnic identity. However, it is understood that the findings may not apply to any such program, as they are reflecting Greek cultural context. On the other hand, they are indicative of the possibilities of similar programs. This connects to practical and social implications: the paper relates to experiential learning as a tool to explore ties to ethnic identity. In addition, it establishes cultural tourism as a vehicle for bringing together heritage and ethnic identity and highlights the opportunities emerging for the destination as a result of the bridging of heritage to ethnic identity. The findings of the paper can help establish cultural immersion programs or redesign existing ones.

**Keywords** Diaspora tourism · Ethnic identity · Heritage tourism  
Cultural tourism · Cultural immersion program

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## 1 Introduction

The purpose of the paper is to explore the impact of cultural immersion programs on ethnic identity. Ali and Ivanova (2015) state that interdisciplinary research in the tourism of diaspora is scant, and argue that further empirical research is required in order to better identify the various aspects of diaspora tourism seen by many different disciplines, including tourism. On the other hand, both research and practice show that the impacts of cultural immersion programs are considerable, especially in relation to their implications on major economic, social and political dimensions of the destinations visited. Paradoxically, when it comes to diaspora tourism, one may claim that the destination coincides with the origin.

Employing an interdisciplinary approach, combining the fields of tourism management and Sociology, the research question in this paper is whether tourism can provide the context for the development of ethnic identity.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 *Diaspora Tourism*

A first definition of diaspora tourism could be that of visiting for the first time, or returning to one's country of origin; a purposeful visit to discover one's roots and become connected with the homeland's heritage (Wei-Jue, Haller, & Ramshaw, 2013); a trip associated to an effort, not necessary conscious or intended, to identify roots, connections with family, ties with ethnicity, and heritage referring to one's own ancestral homeland (Frost et al., 2013). As the same authors notice, diaspora tourism has extended as a notion to include any visitor who has an emotional connection to a visiting destination, which may not necessarily be one's own birthplace.

The creation of the feeling of ethnic identity has often been considered of major importance, even a tool that may lead visitors in making important tourism decisions. Frew and White (2013) discuss such an example in which the notions of origin, ethnic identity and diaspora tourism have been used to the advantage of promoting a tourism destination. Taking into consideration Pine and Gilmore's (1998) experience framework in which the tourist immerses into the experience, diaspora tourism may become the stage to set a unique and unforgettable experience that relates in an optimum way to the visitor's definition of self and identity. This notion is also reinforced in Shengnan, Nyaupane, and Andereck (2015).

### 2.2 *Diaspora and Roots Tourism—Locus and Differences*

Cheer and Reeves (2013) discuss the links but also the differences between roots and diaspora tourism, supporting that roots tourism develops much stronger ties

with homeland than diaspora, given the involuntary circumstances that were used in order to put the visitor's ancestors in the move. Roots tourism would not seem to precisely define the Greek diaspora, given that most immigrants left the country at their own will.

### ***2.3 Heritage Tourism and Cultural Tourism (Locus)***

Timothy and Boyd (2003) define heritage tourism as “experiential tourism in the sense of seeking an encounter with nature or feeling part of the history of a place” (p. 5). In the same source cultural tourism is defined as “experiential tourism based on being involved in and stimulated by the performing arts, visual arts and festivals.” (ibid, p. 5). It becomes clear that both heritage and cultural tourism share this experiential component; yet, cultural tourism could relate to a newly established cultural event, while heritage tourism almost always refers to a pre-existing structure, event or piece of history, either man-made or naturally formed. Within this context, it is interesting to review the conceptual framework for cultural tourism given by Du Cros and McKercher (2015), in which they stress the undoubted multiplicity of cultural tourism and its inherent difficulty in being strictly defined as only a single-dimension type of tourism.

### ***2.4 Interpretation of Heritage***

An important dimension in the discussion on diaspora, heritage, culture and tourism is the interpretation of heritage. Many authors have addressed this issue and its effect on the visitors; notably McKercher and Du Cros (2002), Timothy and Boyd (2003), Du Cros and McKercher (2015), have developed the argument that the interpretation of heritage plays an important role in the process of identifying oneself with a destination. Kim (2014) examines the importance of training on the cultural tourism interpreters, by focusing on the training program content; McKercher and Du Cros (2002) convey a similar message when arguing that, for the visitor to successfully assimilate in the cultural experience, there has to be a narrative provided by the host, arranged in such a way that engages the visitor in meaningful participation. On other hand, Daniels et al. (2015), place emphasis on the state of the heritage sites, and the impact they have on the visitor's enthusiasm and sense of pride—or embarrassment to that extend—when not properly maintained.

### ***2.5 The Conceptual Framework of This Article***

Timothy and Boyd (2003) have argued that heritage and heritage tourism can be examined through a model in which the “phenomenal ‘heritage’ environment”

(p. 8) sets the context for the perception of heritage. This context, comprising “natural phenomena, cultural and built environments, altered or created by human activity” (p. 7) nests the heritage tourism experience, which, in turn, is formulated by a set of “experiential heritage environments” (p. 8). In other words, there is a set of elements that formulate the way people experience, and eventually interpret, heritage; such elements may be supply & demand of tourism as well as of the specific piece of heritage; nature, conservation and protection of heritage landscape; impacts of heritage on destination regions; management of heritage attractions and resources. Two important elements that relate to the discussion of diaspora tourism and the formation of ethnic identity could be the presentation & interpretation of heritage and the role of politics in forming the heritage experience.

It is also important to note that, apart from the phenomenal environment, Timothy and Boyd’s (2003) model also considers the behavioural world, aka “where the social and cultural facts existing within the phenomenal environment are passed through a filter of human values” (p. 7). The behavioural environment plays a distinctive role in influencing people’s perception of the importance of heritage and its identification as a valuable piece of their own history. According to the authors, “heritage is perceived by society and cultures to have value & utilitarian function as it becomes part of the behavioral environment” (p. 7). The visitor becomes an element of the heritage experience, pretty much in the same way Pine and Gilmore’s (1998) visitor immerses in the experience and shapes it through his participation in it. In this way, the visitor plays an active role in formulating and reformulating uniquely the experience along with the definition he has formulated for himself and his own heritage.

There is a “constant discourse” that relates to the “significance of heritage” (Timothy & Boyd, 2003, p. 7) with the destination, because of the impact this heritage immersion creates to the visitor, as well to the destination; in regard to the destination the impact is multiple: Economic, social, political, scientific, in the sense that heritage tourism often acts as a driving force that reinforces the preservation and the study of heritage landscapes. It is with this context in mind that the Heritage Greece program was viewed as significant both for the visitors and for the destination.

The impact of heritage on the destination is discussed in the literature. Early on, Smith (1989) touches upon this topic through the relationship that develops between hosts and guests. McKercher and Du Cros (2002), Timothy and Boyd (2003), Du Cros and McKercher (2015) are only but a few of the most notable authors that have explored the topic comprehensively and in depth. Being a multi-faced topic, it has been approached differently by various authors (Li & McKercher, 2016; Li & Chan, 2017; Harvey, 2006; Daniels et al., 2015; Hollinshead, 2015; Ivanova & Hollinshead, 2015). For the purpose of this paper, the focus will be on the relationship between heritage and diaspora tourism as a factor for the formation of ethnic identity.



### 3 The Heritage Greece Program

The ‘Heritage Greece’ program, delivered by DERE—The American College of Greece in partnership with the National Hellenic Society since 2010, is an educational program aiming at preserving and strengthening the ethnic and cultural heritage of young adults of Greek ancestry and fostering bonds to the homeland. It has been designed to provide students with a means of connecting with the Greek culture within the context of lived experience.

The program brings to Greece about 50 college students every year in mid-June for about 15 days. They originate from various areas of the United States and, while in Greece, they stay in the residences of American College of Greece. All educational and social activities are organized in a way that they all serve the common purpose of augmenting Greek American student immersion in the Greek culture. Every educational and social activity is an opportunity for participants to deepen their understanding of what it means to be Greek. The structure of the program includes the following:

- Experiential language and culture learning in the sense that classroom experience is integrated with real-life experience. Participants are given ample opportunity to practice language in real-life situations.
- Supporting educational activities, such as small genealogical research, informal briefing sessions on cultural, social and economic issues, a reflection journal or blog and learning and dance and cooking lessons.
- Visits to sites of historical and archaeological importance.
- Social activities designed to entertain but also provide a complete picture of what Greece is. These include: going out to local taverns and restaurants, going swimming.

Experiential learning could be viewed as a tool to explore ties to ethnic identity, as well as function as a context for ethnic identity formation. This, in turn, has considerable social implications, when considering diaspora tourism as a vehicle for bringing together heritage and ethnic identity. There may be opportunities emerging for the destination as a result of the bridging of heritage to ethnic identity. Wei-Jue et al. (2013) argue that, unlike ordinary tourists who become attached to a place after spending time there repeatedly, diaspora visitors develop a connection with their country of origin long before they visit it for the first time. Even more, when they actually visit their place of origin they develop a sense of being at home, a sense of feeling welcomed. Often the use of *props* or place-of-origin memorabilia amplify this feeling (Chhabra, 2013). The role of props has also been extensively discussed in Pine and Gilmore (1998), when showing how these memorabilia establish the creation of an experience, thus encouraging the visitor to become one of its integral components. As Frew and White (2013) notice, it seems that a new trend is being developed towards identifying one’s own roots, and, what is more, go on a trip to the homeland with the purpose of tracing one’s own ancestry.

## 4 Methodology

Based on the program “Heritage Greece”, the paper attempts an analysis of ethnic identity as reported by participants through an exit survey filled out at the conclusion of the program. The “Heritage Greece” is a program, run by Deree College and funded by the National Hellenic Society that brings every summer about 50 college students of Greek descent from the USA to Greece for a two-week experiential visit.

The data presented in this paper come from an exit survey, filled out by the Greek–American participants at the conclusion of the program. The goal of the survey is to measure the effectiveness of the different components of the program and see how participant’s notions of Greek identity may have changed as a result of the program. It has to be noted that the results represent the subjective opinions as reported by the participants themselves.

The paper utilizes data from the 2016 Heritage Greece program, which included 44 participants of Greek–American descent. Fulfilling a goal of the program, the participants represent all regions of the USA. Concerning gender, the distribution is about balanced, with 47% males and 53% females. In connection to college class standing, all College classes are represented, creating a diverse group. The specific breakdown is 20% freshman 32% sophomores 20% juniors and 28% seniors. Finally, a wide variety of fields are represented, 33 different majors ranging from Accounting to Statistics.

It has to be noted that, as this paper focuses exclusively on the development of Greek identity on American-born students, the findings and arguments may not apply in the same way to other ethnic contexts.

## 5 Factors Defining Greek Identity

Ethnic or cultural identity is not static but it changes as defined by the social context. As such, the self-definition of Greekness varies according to the environment of cultural influence. This simply means that the participants who come to Greece are influenced both by their family and social environment in the United States as well as the immersion environment while they are in Greece. Participants define themselves actively through the interaction with parents and family or other Greek Americans in the United States. Similarly, they are expected to be influenced by interaction with other Greeks or Greek Americans in an immersion program, such as Heritage Greece. In the heritage experience the visitor is the center of this experience and perceives him or herself as an active agent who may change self definition. The connections here are evident with the theoretical approaches presented earlier. Table 1 lists the characteristics that may be used to define a Greek ethnic identity together with the average scores for each characteristic for the participants.

**Table 1** Factors defining Greek identity

Characteristic	Average score
Language	3.6
Religion	2.9
Place of birth	2.5
Food	3.5
Music	3.4
Dance	3.4
Family	3.7

Likert scale (1–4)

The above scores tell a very interesting story: The two highest ranking characteristics are Language and Family, with 3.6 and 3.7 average score respectively. This is to be expected as these two characteristics have been connected to Greek ethnic identity formation, as argued by Balodimas-Bartolomei (2012).

At the opposite side of the spectrum, we find “place of birth” with a low score of 2.5. This is to be expected, as the participants by definition have not been born in Greece, but at the same time they define themselves as partly Greek. The place of birth, being the smallest figure in the set of factors that define Greek ethnic identity, shows that the respondents “acknowledge their “otherness”” (Frost et al., 2013, p. 225), despite the fact that they develop a sense of belonging and formation of ethnic identity, based on a different set of factors.

Food seems to be a common factor in forming ethnic identity. Alder (2015) discusses how Polish diaspora of 2nd and 3rd generation feel connected to the homeland via food. In fact, the author argues that food is the strongest of all connectors to the ensuing generations of diaspora, far more powerful than rituals, language or other factors. Heritage Greece program responses show that formation of Greek ethnic identity also relates closely to food, with an average score of 3.5 on the Likert scale.

## 6 Impact Measures

### 6.1 Overall Impact

As discussed earlier, one of the major goals of such programs is to have a measurable impact in shaping of ethnic identity among participants. One indirect measure of impact is the longevity of the program. Heritage Greece has been going on for 7 years. Through those years a large network of participants has developed. These individuals redefine their greekness and use it extensively in their homeland. There already exists an e-community that is active and engaged and discusses outcomes, produces newsletters and cultivates the ground for sustainability of the program for the future.

**Table 2** Overall impact measures

Statement	Average score
I believe that my personal goals for this program were fulfilled	4.5
I would recommend this experience to other students	4.8
This experience was fun	4.8
This experience was educational for me	4.6
This experience was meaningful to me	4.7
I better understand and appreciate my ancestry as a result of this program	4.4
I understand Greek culture better as a result of this program	4.7
I have grown closer to my Greek heritage as a result of this program	4.6
As a result of this experience, I would plan another trip to Greece	4.7

Likert scale (1–5)

In the long-run, the program aspires in becoming a permanent structure that will assist youth from the USA to reconnect to their heritage. Finally, the program anticipates that the Greek–American participants will be encouraged to become more involved and seek their participation in formal and informal Greek American fora leading to awareness raising and citizenship promotion.

As such, the responses in the “impact” questions of the survey are very revealing of the short-term and long-term role that the Heritage Greece program has for its participants.

The success of this program is measured though the impact it has on the participants and the extent to which expectations are met. Table 2 quantifies the strong positive impact of this year’s Heritage Greece program.

When we average out the numbers above, we get an impact index of 4.6. These results are quite optimistic and are indicating that the Heritage Greece program is successful in meeting its goals.

## 6.2 *Future Engagement Impact*

One of the desired impacts of the Heritage Greece program, is to further develop the sense of common ancestry and use it for networking and community building among Greek-Americans in the USA. A measure of this can be derived from the following three questions found in the exit survey (Table 3).

When we average out the numbers above, we get an index of 4.5. As far as these statements are concerned, they are a very hopeful indicator of continuing Greek–American networking. In addition, the index above is a strong indicator that the participants see themselves as part of the larger Greek–American community.

**Table 3** Indicators of future engagement

Statement	Average score
As a result of this program, I intend on exploring my ancestry further	4.3
I am considering engaging actively with Greek–American community in the United States	4.4
I would support a strong connection for all Greek American students	4.8

Likert scale (1–5)

Source Heritage Greece Exit Survey 2016

**Table 4** Learning indicators

Statement	Score: 1 (lowest)–5 (highest)
My knowledge about ancient Greece has increased	3.5
My knowledge about modern Greece has increased	4.2
I believe that the knowledge that I have gained will help me with my studies	3.6
The knowledge that I have gained will help me define myself better	4.2

Likert scale (1–5)

Source Heritage Greece Exit Survey 2016

### 6.3 Learning Impact

The overall learning experiences of the participants were quantified through the following questions. These aspects are important because they relate not only to the learning experience, but also to the overall impact of the program (Table 4).

When we average out the numbers above, we get an index of 3.9. These positive results are a strong indication of the fulfillment of the goals of the program. Given that participants are more likely to be knowledgeable about ancient Greece through their families, they are more eager to learn about modern Greece, as the relevant score indicates. Finally, the learning impact seems to be more long term, as participants indicate that the experience will help them define themselves better.

## 7 Future considerations for research

Mackellar and Derrett (2015) and Laing and Frost (2013) examine the positive impact of diaspora tourism on the local destination by the use of local festivals. It might be worth exploring whether a similar impact could be identified in the local community in Athens and rest of Greece. Could the use of origin, heritage and diaspora act as leverage to increase traffic to a destination? Even more, could it *instill* new economic growth by connecting this heritage/diaspora trend to festivals

organized by the locals, addressed to the diaspora visitors, and honoring their common past?

The use of ICT, with a special emphasis on user generated content and examples taken from the student's own comments in the social media could be insightful as to the way students choose to describe the experience to their peers. Also studying the use of interactive maps could give a better understanding to the destination stakeholders as to the student's preferences in terms of geospatial information for the destination that would allow (the students) to move more freely in the destination. A similar study by Strielkowski, Riganti, and Jing (2012) showed that in mature destinations of important cultural heritage, the integration of relevant information with ICT was considered of paramount importance by the diaspora tourists.

## 8 Conclusion

Considering the impact of cultural immersion programs for the strengthening of ethnic identity is increasingly needed for the evaluation of such programs and the establishment of their long-term effects. Using Heritage Greece program as a case study, our data indicates that it has reached a point where it is established as a high quality program in the eyes of participants. Possibly, one of the reasons that the Heritage Greece program has been successful, can be attributed to the trend described earlier where persons are traveling to the homeland in order to strengthen their notion of heritage. All measures are indicating that the impact of the program is high, setting strong foundations for the future of Greek America. At the same time, the findings are confirming the arguments of the literature concerning heritage tourism. All the above point to the usefulness of similar programs to strengthen ethnic identity among groups coming from increasingly diverse environments. Further understanding of impact of such programs, can help establish cultural immersion programs or redesign existing ones.

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# The Perception of European Identity Through the Cultural & Educational Tourist Experience of Greek Students

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**Abstract** The research highlights the cultural and educational aspects of Greek students' tourist experiences with other European countries and the way in which these aspects shape their perception of European identity, especially given the challenges of globalisation, such as the financial crisis, the rise in social inequality, and the recent refugee crisis. Without doubt, the more complicated social, political, and economic environment has increased the importance of European identity, which now can be seen as an internal transformation of identities through constant re-interpretation. However, the unstable global system has led to a crisis of European identity and has fuelled Euro-sceptic tendencies. In its place the potential for cultural and educational experience to develop and sustain the European identity has been argued. Cultural and educational tourism can also become an opportunity to challenge socio-cultural standardisation, due to its role in the visualisation, preservation, and even reaffirmation of an individual identity. Our case study focuses on students who have visited European countries as travellers or participants in the EU educational exchange program. Our methodology is based on pilot research using quantitative methods in which students especially from the Technological Educational Institute of Central Greece and Ionian Islands participated. Findings indicate that students' cultural or educational experiences have a positive influence on the interpretation of European identity.

**Keywords** Student experience · European identity · Culture · Perception

**JEL classification** Z10 general

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## 1 Introduction

The main purpose of this research is to investigate the way in which cultural and educational aspects of the tourist experience influence the perception of Greek students concerning European identity during their contact with other European countries. Furthermore, the research focuses on the factors through which students acquire insights during their visit abroad and on the ways the foreign experience affects students' own European identity. In this light, the article attempts to explain individual variations in the strength of identification with Europe. Within the limits of our questionnaire-based survey, we illuminate the main factors that affect Greek students' attachment with Europe and the ways that Greek students interpret the meaning of European cultural heritage. In this study, we quantitatively examine such impact to students of the Technological Education Institute (TEI) of Central Greece and Ionian Islands.

In the era of globalisation, the experience of living, visiting, or studying in a different cultural, political, and economic context exposes students to “best practice”—preparing them to have a more cosmopolitan viewpoint and to feel proximity toward a European identity (Marcotte, Desroches, & Poupart, 2007). When one refers to the concept of European identity “one may be denoting the development of an individual or collective sense of belonging to Europe and of the meaning to be European” (Citrin & Sides, 2004, p. 167). In this respect, the sense of belonging in late modernity can no longer be considered as a static, coherent, and enclosed entity (Giddens, 2007). The “inherited” belonging is replaced by multiple identities, “which are overlapping, hybrid and coexisting” (Delanty, 2003, p. 79). Despite academic interest in how identification with Europe contributes to the process of European integration, little attention has been paid to exploring the individual-level factors that elucidate the differences in the degree of perceived identification with Europe (King & Ruiz-Gelices, 2003). The purpose of this research is to examine to what extent there are factors that reinforce or impede students from approaching European identity.

For this reason, we focus on the way European identity is formed by the cultural and educational experiences of young people. The outcomes of these experiences are attributed to cultural enhancement and personal development, and they simultaneously have a profound impact on students' self-identity (Kantner, 2006). Without doubt, educational and cultural experiences abroad have become an important means by which students reach an adequate level of intercultural competence and efficiency. In this respect, this research highlights the ways Greek students perceive European integration and European identity after their short or longer educational or cultural experiences abroad. The premise of this study is that educational and cultural experiences abroad bring young people closer to different cultures, fostering European identity. The findings suggest that encouragement to travel abroad has a positive impact on the perception of students.

## 2 Literature Review

The focus on European identity is a relatively recent field of research. Europeanization and globalisation are affecting the sense of belonging for Europeans, “altering its logics of formation, which are conditioned by the multifaceted socio-political progress, cultural history and institutional structure” (Medrano & Gutiérrez, 2001). Cultural diversity, migration flows, and the expansion of digital media are also challenging “the traditional spatial and symbolic references of belonging and are affecting the boundaries of social action and interaction, which are disembedded from the national contexts and replaced in the transnational dimension” (Giddens, 2007, p. 137). Studying identity means dealing with an abstract concept that is characterized by ambiguity. According to the socio-psychological perspective, identity refers to “the dynamics of self-conception and recognition. It concerns the tendency to define oneself as individual or as part of various groups and the capability of finding a proper coherence over time” (Eder, 2009, p. 431). Moreover, identity deals with the meanings of social norms that form and connect individual with social behaviour; “they are the value systems and social representations of reality that can be found in the cultural heritage of a society” (Karolewski & Kaina, 2006, p. 154). Social meanings and norms allow individuals and groups “to have a reorientation for themselves and for the way they perceive the otherness” (Kohli, 2000, p. 117). It is difficult to conceptualize identity without referring to relationships with others (Crespi, 2004). Identity formation, defined as “a reflexive social and historical process which is developing through symbolic exchanges learned in social relations”, will be connected with the structural change related to European integration (Petithomme, 2008, p. 21). In this light, an important aspect of cultural and social change has been the Europeanization of identities. This can be seen first as “the increasing interest in the importance of European identities involving to some degree a reference or orientation to Europe” (Ricoeur, 1991, p. 191). According to Wodak (2004, p. 118), “European identity is more diluted, so it is also open to more interpretations. For this reason, there is a necessity for constant re-interpretation”.

To this extent Europe is not “a fixed reference point, but a variable term whose meaning will always change in response to changing circumstances” (Recchi & Favell, 2009, p. 117). Subsequently, more issues are framed in terms of Europe—both in positive and negative senses “bringing into existence not just an order of discourse but a new reality that has normative significance” (Kauppi, 2003, p. 779). Focusing on the diverse theories about European identity, it is possible to find two main interpretative trends. Some academics believe that European history and civilization are a cultural heritage in which all Europeans can recognize themselves (Scalise, 2015). Other researchers indicate “the variety of national and regional traditions, norms, institutions and values, which are so different and sometimes even contrasting, that it is not possible to find either a European society or a European identity” (Crouch, 1999, p. 54). Reactions to this tendency also include the re-emergence of particularistic identities, “which are locally defined and related

to rediscovered territorial, ethnic or traditional roots” (Sinnot, 2005, p. 218). As has emerged from many empirical studies, such responses sometimes have “an effect of marginalization from the ‘cosmopolitan center’ and a way of re-establishing strong social ties in late modern society” (Bauman, 2000, p. 67).

The contradictory aspects mentioned above reflect difficulties in the possibility of developing a European identity. It involves theorists who believe that “European identity can be realized as a political project, a post-national citizenship in which identity can be based on the founding principles of the EU, on civic solidarity and constitutional patriotism” (Habermas, 1999, p. 113). Different arguments are expressed by those who think that some prerequisites like a community bond and a common cultural background are essential in order to “make people perceive a common sense of belonging” (Herrmann, Brewer, & Risse, 2004, p. 74). New forms of spatial re-embedding and different cultural and institutional references enable original and composed identities to be experienced, allowing people to feel attached to disparate, distant, and culturally different places (Beck & Grande, 2007).

In this regard, there is a great interest in empirical evidence for the existence of a European sense of belonging. Large-scale, cross-national, and longitudinal surveys on attitudes, values, and opinions of Europeans have increased in number. Survey research programs such as the “European Values Survey, European Social Survey and Eurobarometer provided data for a rich academic literature, where European identity is measured using indicators on support for the EU and attitudes of attachment, loyalty and pride toward EU institutions, compared with national ones” (Siapera, 2004, p. 133). Specifically, the Eurobarometer contains questions that more directly measure the degree of identification with Europe, e.g., by asking people “how often they think of themselves as Europeans”. Many research studies highlight that EU citizens do identify themselves with Europe, “but national and regional identities are also highly predominant and this result does not seem to vary over time” (Risse, 2004, p. 256). Although survey questions of Eurobarometer have been improved over the years, this tool has been criticised as seeming to assume a tension between European and national identities (Bruter, 2005). The European Union has deployed considerable resources to measure and instil a sense of Europeanness in the populations of the member states. In this respect, European identity among young and educated people, especially, is much stronger than what is often thought to be (Carlson & Widaman, 1988).

European identity may co-exist alongside other identities, “since individuals generally have more than one identity. The European dimension is only one level and interrelates with other levels” (Sigalas, 2010, p. 247). In light of this, European policy makers put into effect mobility as a key aspect of European identities. A characteristic example is Erasmus + , the single largest program at the European level aimed at facilitating organized student mobility, teacher mobility, and cooperation between universities across Europe. Erasmus + is widely considered to be the most successful of the European Commission’s educational programs, acquiring the status of a “social and cultural phenomenon” (Teichler, 2002. King and Ruiz-Gelices (2003, p. 241) see Erasmus + as “the main tool for students’ mobility and an important component of the new map of European mobility in general which

is motivated less by traditional economic factors and more by a mixture of educational, leisure, travel and experiential goals". One of the most frequently defined objectives in having educational or cultural experiences abroad is that of creating a more positive attitude toward other European countries and of strengthening the sense of belonging to Europe. For example, several studies have demonstrated that there is a greater attachment to Europe among young people who have had an experience of studying abroad, as opposed to those who have not had such experiences showing higher levels of attachment to their country of origin (Kehm, 2005).

Below we will present some theoretical views that clarify this stance. Reports in the research literature evaluating the impact of travelling abroad on students have found that participants acquire global-mindedness, intellectuality, and personal development (Carlson & Widaman, 1988). In an open-minded environment within Europe, cosmopolitan narratives and a generally positive attitude toward Europe are shared. In contrast, in a more closed context, shared meanings are based on traditional common symbols, experiences, and close relationships (Trenz, 2008). Inglehart (1977) explains mostly individual variability in the strength of identification with Europe through cognitive mobilization and education. As he mentioned (1977, p. 152), "high levels of cognitive mobilization and education contribute to the development of a European identity by embedding individuals in more cosmopolitan networks of communication; individuals can thus be classified in a parochialism-cosmopolitanism continuum, depending on their level of cognitive mobilization and education, and their position on this continuum determines their level of identification with Europe". According to Inglehart, there is a positive correlation between national identity and European identity. Moreover, Janssen in 1991 (p. 463) concludes that "the relationship between cognitive mobilization and European identity is robust". Many studies demonstrate a generalized and multiple European identity, which is not the expression of homogeneity, but fosters and includes differences (Fritz, Möllenberg, & Chen, 2002). Additionally, Duchesne and Frogner (1995, p. 197) analysed trends in identification with Europe, exploring the relationship between national and European identity across countries and examining the determinants of European identity. This analysis reveals a relatively low level in perception of European identity during the 1980s and early 1990s in many west European countries, and a high level after the late 1990s in countries of southern Europe. The authors also explore correlations between different variables and European identity, supporting the fact that there is a "network society". In such a society, "in which the individual's sense of self is increasingly threatened by the forces of globalization, one would expect local identities, as mechanisms of differentiation, to gain as much strength as supranational identities, as mechanisms of inclusion" (Duchesne & Frogner, 1995, p. 197). Furthermore, Castells supports the possibility that the content of European identity may be perceived differently by individuals and across nations. Thus, "a European identity may be perceived as threatening national identity in some nations and not in others, not because of contrasts in the way national identity has been conceptualized but rather because of contrasts in the way the European identity itself has been constructed in each

nation” (Castells, 1996, p. 84). Under these circumstances, “what is needed is to understand the ways by which European societies interpret themselves, their past and their collective goals and aspirations using the formation of an appropriate narrative for the future” (Medrano & Gutiérrez, 2001, p. 767).

Finally, another important factor that enlightens the aforementioned is the need for self-efficacy. Schwarzer & Jerusalem claim that “the belief in efficacy is the product of the cognitive processing of diverse sources of information acquired through action, observational learning, social persuasion and the interpretation of emotional states and socio-psychological processes. The most significant factor determining one’s self-efficacy is, specifically, experience” (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995, p. 43). It is, therefore, believed that an intense experience such as a period abroad inevitably influences the efficacy of the belief of young people, especially when that experience is evaluated positively. “However, efficacy’s beliefs are not simple products, but also producers of experience, since they affect the way in which the actual situation will be managed and, furthermore, reconstructed in memory. Once formed, efficacy’s beliefs regulate aspirations, behavioural choices, the maintenance of commitment and affective reactions” (Brewer & Gardner, 1996, pp. 91–93). As we have seen, European identities presuppose a cosmopolitan world view. This world view is primarily acquired by individuals with high levels of cognitive mobilization. That is achieved by individuals who through educational or cultural experiences have developed the ability to have flexibility “in understanding the abstractive and ambiguous meaning of European identity” (Hewstone, 1986, p. 44).

### 3 Methodology

The main goal of this study is to offer insight into the way educational and cultural experiences abroad may affect students’ perception of their European identity. The research quantitatively examines the role and the effect of cultural or educational experiences in constructing students’ perception about Europe when visiting abroad. The methodology is based on a pilot quantitative research study of students using questionnaires. Based on the theories presented above and for the purpose of this study, students’ experiences are defined as “memorable and enjoyable activities, events and perceptions in a cultural destination that engage students personally and positively affecting their perception about their European identity” (Larsen, 2007, p. 8). Our research sample comprised students from the Department of Management & Communication in Cultural & Touristic Organizations of The Technological Education Institute (TEI) of Central Greece in Amphissa and from the Department of Digital Media & Communication of The Technological Education Institute (TEI) of Ionian Islands in Argostoli. The empirical data collected through the questionnaire survey were designed to find out to what extent students’ experiences for a short time abroad affect them in terms of their knowledge, feelings, and thoughts about Europe.

The survey was designed and employed to measure the perception of the students of both departments as well as their attitude toward European identity. For purposes of developing a suitable questionnaire and conducting analyses of the attributes that are used for assessing students' perception, namely cognitive and affective perception on cultural valance, we chose closed questions as well as some open-ended questions to encourage students to identify as many cultural similarities or differences between visited country and homeland as possible. In our first hypothesis, we consider that educational and cultural experiences of students reinforce positively their perceptions of European identity. In our second hypothesis, we posit that students' perceptions of European identity are partially influenced by their national identity at large. Hence, their perceptive cultural or educational experiences when travelling abroad are not something completely new, but are formed under the prism of preconceived notions by national identity. Some of the questions were designed specifically to match with data from questions drawn from the periodic Eurobarometer reports. The questionnaire consisted mainly of Likert-scale questions reflecting some of the ideas found in the literature relating to European citizenship and identity. The questionnaire was drafted and then piloted for clarity to five respondents before being implemented. Its final version contained a total of 25 items dealing with cultural or educational experiences in the visited country.

The questionnaire started with a filter question asking students to self-identify as having visited at least one country, in order to ensure relevant participation in the study. Using quantitative analysis, we tried to find out how students perceived the cultural aspects of the visited country, how much this cultural immersion influenced the way they viewed their European identity, and how distant or close they felt with the European idea after their visit. We also tried to examine whether their knowledge about European culture increased during visits abroad. Some questions asked respondents to rate, on a scale of 1–5 (from totally disagree to totally agree), how much they assessed the significance of the cultural heritage and customs of the visited country. Moreover, we focused on the interest of students in assessing cultural similarities and diversities between the visited country and their homeland. There were 202 participants in the study, both male and female, and they represented all levels of study (first through fourth years). The questionnaire was distributed electronically via Google Forms, and the research took place between 14th April and 4th May of 2017. The number of currently active students in these university departments was 568, yielding a response rate of 35%. Given the short duration of this research, we consider the response rate to be adequate.

## 4 Results

Of the 202 respondents, 71% were female and 29% male, reflecting the prevailing gender disproportion in both departments. In age, 35% of respondents were between 20 and 21 years old, 23% were between 18 and 19, and 42% were above

22. Approximately 45% of the participants had visited one country, 27% two or three countries, 12% four to six and 15% more than six. The majority of students had stayed in a hotel (71%), while only 6% stayed in a hostel, 7% preferred accommodations via Airbnb, and 16% stayed with relatives or friends. Most students (51%) stayed abroad from three to seven days, 24% from one to three days, 16% for 15 days, 6% for one month, and only 3% longer than one month. From the open-ended question, the most visited countries were Italy, France, and Germany, followed by Spain, the Czech Republic, the UK, and Cyprus. The main motivation for visiting was tourism (84%), followed by education (8%) and other reasons (8%). The question “How much do you think that some cultural aspects of the visited country are parts of the European culture?” asked for ratings regarding architecture, museums, local customs, festivals, education, and the behaviour of locals toward students. To this question, for architecture 86% agreed and 14% disagreed, for museums 91% agreed and 9% disagreed, and for local customs 70% agreed and 30% disagreed. Moreover, regarding festivals 77% agreed and 23% disagreed, for food 80% agreed and 20% disagreed, and for education 86% agreed and 14% disagreed. Finally, as to locals’ behaviour toward students, 78% agreed and 22% disagreed. In contrast, with respect to the question “How much do you think that some cultural aspects of the visited country are similar to modern Greek culture?” for architecture 33% agreed and 67% disagreed, for museums 53% agreed and 47% disagreed, and for local customs 33% agreed and 67% disagreed. Additionally, regarding festivals 53% agreed and 47% disagreed, for food 46% agreed and 54% disagreed, and for education 30% agreed and 70% disagreed. Finally, as to locals’ behaviour toward students, 46% agreed and 54% disagreed.

In the next questionnaire section, questions assessed the degree of influence of visiting abroad from students’ point of view. Specifically, for 33% of respondents their visit abroad strengthened their belief in belonging to a common European place, while 33% disagreed and 34% were neutral. Hence, students’ opinions are divided. With regard to participants’ perception of cultural heritage, the vast majority (80%) professed better knowledge about European culture and history after visiting abroad. About one out of two (53%) stated that experience abroad had strengthened their national identity, while 30% of students were neutral and 17% disagreed. It is also noteworthy that 70% of students expressed a desire to search for a job in the visited country, while 30% did not intend to immigrate. With regard to participants’ perception of the European idea before they visited abroad, 54% admitted that they were very sceptical about the future of Europe, but they wanted to be a member of the European family, while 39% believed that the European idea facilitated their role as global citizens, and only 7% rejected the idea of being a member of the European family. An overwhelming majority of respondents (about 70%) had the same belief about Europe after visiting abroad, while 30% mentioned that experiences abroad had changed their perception of Europe. The vast majority of students (89%) agreed that visiting abroad had changed their respect for the customs of other countries, compared to only 11% who disagreed. It is also noteworthy that a major percentage of participants (88%) accepted the idea of multiculturalism more easily after travelling abroad, while only 12% disagreed.

According to 60% of students, experiences abroad contributed to adopting some other way of life, but for 40% there was no such influence. With regard to participants' perceptions about European culture, 77% stated that they had a positive attitude, 20% were neutral, and only 3% were negative. Approximately 70% of participants agreed that after their experience of travelling abroad, Greece was held to constitute a significant part of European culture, while 30% did not believe this. Moreover, the vast majority of students (80%) believed that despite cultural diversities among European countries, the inhabitants of Europe share "a common cultural heritage" that brings them closer.

In the last section of the questionnaire, students were asked to consider some important cultural aspects of European identity by rating elements according to whether they could be considered as characteristic of European identity, namely, a common history, common beliefs, common difficulties, and common European unity. It is notable that 63% of participants did not think that Greece shared a common history with the rest of Europe. Over half of participants (53%) did not think that they shared common beliefs with other Europeans, while 47% disagreed. Importantly, 42% of students did not feel part of a common European family, compared to 58% who did have such feelings. Furthermore, 35% of respondents thought that they had common problems with other Europeans, but 65% disagreed. Finally, the overall experience of visiting abroad was positive for the vast majority (88%), and only 12% assessed their experience as negative. Approximately 80% of students agreed that experience abroad contributed to their feeling proximity toward Europe, whereas 20% reported that their connectedness with Europe was low. However, it is also notable that 80% of students felt proximity to their homeland, while 20% disagreed. This finding is remarkable in demonstrating that for students both identities—Greek and European—had a major influence on them.

Finally, in responding to the open-ended question, many respondents referred to perceived cultural differences between Greece and Europe, including cultural and educational factors. These comments included the following: "Europe has a well preserved cultural heritage compared to Greece." "The educational system in Europe is well organized, they have impressive libraries." "Great buildings with astonishing architectural style." "What impressed me is the protection of nature." "They have other customs." "Other religious rituals." "All drivers show respect to pedestrians, something that in Greece happens seldom." Regarding perceived cultural similarities between Greece and Europe, students mentioned the following: "Europe and Greece have a common cultural heritage." "We have similar gastronomy." "Many museums in Europe have many archaeological exhibits from Greece and this fact shows the interconnectedness between Ancient Greek and Western civilization." "Same hospitality." "There are many monuments with great interest." "A lot of interesting festivals." On the whole, we see that feelings of cultural proximity and a shared European identity among students do emerge when they have cultural experiences abroad. The students easily discern cultural differences or similarities between Europe and their homeland. In these students' view, Europe is not perceptibly different, and they try to approach the common European culture and beliefs.



## 5 Conclusions

The research literature seems to be inattentive to the role of cultural experience in altering students' perception of European identity. Students' evaluation and interpretation of cultural experiences abroad is a major factor with great impact on their perception of European and national identity. Although additional research is needed in order to investigate the links between student awareness and perception of European identity, and students' interpretation of their cultural experiences abroad, this preliminary study seems to indicate that there is a correlation between the two. Future research should also focus on qualitative analysis of the dimensions of students' active participation and interaction with a place's cultural heritage using a variety of methods, such as focus groups or in-depth interviews. Students' cultural experiences, perceptions, and awareness are primarily formed by means of emotion and cognition. Emotive and informational reflections arising from the experiences in a place and its cultural heritage, whether in regard to customs, lifestyle, history, or habits, were all seen as important factors that contributed to the overall perception of students' European identity. These social processes that prompt young people to rethink their belonging to Europe still need to be explored further.

Hence, more focus should be placed on cognitive and emotional perceptions *per se* formed through different experiences during a student's stay abroad and on the role such perceptions have in influencing positively or negatively the evaluation of the meaning to be European. In turn, the personal context of visiting other European countries becomes an essential component in the interpretation of the significance of European being. Even though we might see Europe as the sum of all the cultural diversity that it contains, the perception of European countries as part of a bigger multicultural entity is not prevalent. Yet this study also found that a sense of European identity is felt when students compare the cultural aspects of their homeland to other European countries. In their answers, there is some misgiving about the common European future. In general, despite their positive attitude toward Europe, there is something that interferes with their having a clear perception of what constitutes a European identity. Maybe this happens due to the underlying strong bonds with their national identity. At the same time, the short period of travelling abroad is a factor that hinders students in having an overall view of the common cultural aspects of European identity. At first glance, it seems that a "hybrid identity", made up of local, national, and supranational layers of attachments, is built through students' short experiences abroad (Herrmann et al., 2004). Such an identity is open to different types of belonging and aware of its diverse components, leading us to a potential conclusion that what is promoted through travelling abroad may be not so much a European identity as a more general "Euro-national" identity. The students in our study identified general values that they saw as being shared by some countries. Though our findings suggest predominantly noncommittal attitudes among students to the idea of a European identity, there is one positive view of Europe that did intensify after travelling

abroad. Nevertheless, our research clarifies that the simple fact of spending some time abroad is not sufficient to change deeply rooted attitudes and views relating to European and national identity and culture.

From our literature review, it is also clear that there is an emphasis on examining the diverse range of factors by which student experiences when visiting abroad can be influenced and determined. The strongest influencing factors to this end are the interplay of national identity to European identity, and vice versa. Our quantitative analysis seems to corroborate this, and the open-ended questions in our study reinforce this further. While the experiences of students abroad are influenced, determined, and particularized through cultural influencing factors, students' emotional evaluations of such experiences are, in turn, influenced by indicators such as heritage, customs, and education.

This study indicates that experiences can (re)shape student perceptions by impelling students to become more closely attached to the culture and heritage of Europe. Our findings indicate that students' experiences within cultural settings do in fact significantly influence the interpretation of heritage more positively than negatively and, in turn, such cultural perceptions and experiences may newly reinforce the interpretation of the European idea. These findings highlight the importance of placing greater emphasis on the consideration of the sociocultural context in which these experiences are shared. Such emphasis should also include investigating the correlation of the sociocultural dimensions of students' tourist experience abroad to the socio-psychological causes of students' perception of Europe.

On this note, certain limitations of this study should be pointed out, creating even higher demands for an interdisciplinary focus in future research. Most importantly, the questionnaire was designed only to research students within two academic departments, and due to the small sample size, it is therefore not safe to make generalizations, despite some strong indications (i.e., that cultural experiences abroad generally influence positively student perceptions of Europe), beyond the results pertinent to this specific group of participants.

Future research should pay more attention to the role of experience in altering students' perception of European identity. Without doubt, the economic crisis and inequalities in welfare, education, and employment conditions affect cohesion among Europe's population. On the other hand, the dynamics of identity formation and openness toward Europeanization are related to variables such as education, participation, and experiencing Europe. This paper demonstrates that experience abroad exposes students directly to different European cultures and helps them develop their multicultural skills and European consciousness. This is reflected in the direct perception of a European identity, as well as in the recognition of common European values.

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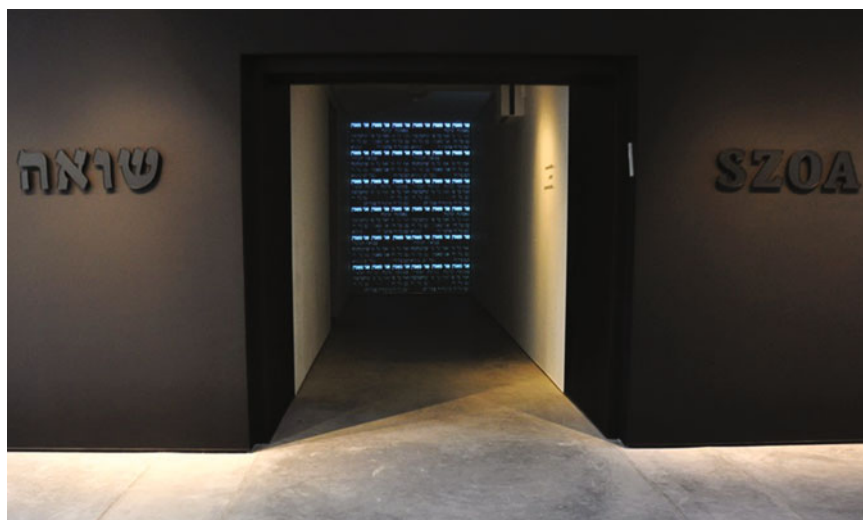
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# ‘Extremely Far and Incredibly Quiet’ Block 27—The Jewish Pavilion—Shoah: Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, Poland

Architect Tal de Lange

**Abstract** In April 2010, following a competition, held by Yad Vashem-The World Holocaust Remembrance Center, on behalf of the Israeli Government, Studio de Lange was nominated to plan and design the permanent exhibition in block 27, the Jewish Pavilion at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum. The site is UNESCO Heritage since 1979.

## ENTRANCE-SHOA



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*The name “Extremely Far and Incredibly Quiet” is a correspondence with Jonathan Safran Foer’s book.*

*“Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close” on September 11th attacks.*

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The pavilion is open to the public since July 2013.

After studying the proposals for the new exhibition, we came to the conclusion that the design within Block 27 of the Polish State Museum must be suffused with two primary features: Simplicity and the Senses. This derives from the paramount difficulty of conveying—both as human beings and as Jews—what transpired during those years. As the French novelist George Perec, whose mother was murdered in Auschwitz, said: “A gap will yawn, achingly, day by day, it will turn into a colossal pit, an abyss without foundation, a gradual invasion of words by margins, blank and insignificant, so that all of us, to a man, will find nothing to say.”

Our challenge was to create an exhibition that expresses such a historical event in an unpretentious, clear and accurate manner to the visitors—most of whom are young, non-Jewish, European citizens.

The design process comprised hundreds of hours of discussion and contemplation, occurring during three years of consultation with the project’s steering committee, as well as with experts from the fields of architecture, art, visual communication, media, typography and cinema. We also worked with specialist engineers, who assisted with the building and preservation works in the Block, voice and sound technicians, acoustical experts and more.

The results of this collaborative effort are spaces with clean, minimalist lines that impart the historical facts clearly and directly. Each space in this objectless exhibition presents its specific content differently, but all of them invoke the basic human senses so that the visit becomes experiential as well as educational. Each space has another dominant sense such as extreme quiet,

## ANNIHILATION



### IDEOLOGY FOR MURDER



strong sound

### THE PRE WAR JEWISH WORLD



and human scale video projection.

Our aim was to allow visitors to absorb and internalize what they encounter over a relatively brief period of time, and depart with renewed insights regarding their own contemporary existence.

## BLOCK 27 THE JEWISH PAVILION



**BLOCK 27, JEWISH PAVILION - SHOAH**

The red-brick building inside the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum complex, comprising 1000 m<sup>2</sup> spreads over two stories. Block 27 is one of dozens of other similar structures at Auschwitz, now dedicated by the Museum to relating the wartime experiences of different national groups at the concentration and extermination camp.

For us, as designers of the Jewish Pavilion, it was important to maintain the original spaces inside the Block as far as possible, including keeping the windows uncovered in order to underscore the connection between the exhibition and its authentic, historic surroundings. Thus, also, in contrast to the other Blocks, the visitors' route through the exhibition purposely concludes at its rear exit, which faces the barbed wire surrounding the camp.



## EXIT



EXIT

The “Book of Names” (designed by Prof. Chanan de Lange) is a site-specific installation that brings out Yad Vashem’s mission of collecting the name of each and every individual Shoah victim.

## THE BOOK OF NAMES



This project, ongoing for six decades, has resulted in the recording of 4.2 million names so far—a remarkable accomplishment, but one that is not simple to impart experientially.

Our goal was to create a permanent memorial to these murdered Jewish men, women and children—one that would encompass both their inconceivable numbers as well as their individual identities. Every name, birth date, home town and place

of death is clearly printed on the meter-high pages, illuminated by a gentle strip of light that lies between each page. Thus one can search for, pinpoint and even touch the data of any individual victim, and thus commemorate him or her in a private, intimate and personal way.

### THE BOOK OF NAMES - DETAIL



However, the monumental size of the exhibit—58 volumes of 140 pages each, 500 names per page, measuring 2 m high and 14 m in circumference, also attest to the collective, immeasurable loss to the entire Jewish people, and to humanity. The blank pages of the book's final volume, await the names still to be redeemed, recorded and memorialized in perpetuity by Yad Vashem.

### THE BOOK OF NAMES WITH YOUNG PEOPLE



## Credits

The exhibition was created by the State of Israel and Yad Vashem, with the assistance of the Claims Conference and in coordination with the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum.

Chairman of the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee

Dr. Shimshon Shoshani

Chairman of the International Advisory Committee

Prof. Elie Wiesel

Executive Director and Exhibition Curator

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Acquisition of Original Film Footage

Mimi Ash

Architecture and Design

Studio de Lange Ltd. – Chanan de Lange & Tal de Lange, Shirley Marco

“The Book of Names”

Design: Chanan de Lange

Source: The Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names – Hall of Names, Archives Division, Yad Vashem

Production: Information Technology Division, Yad Vashem

Visual Communication Design

Adi Stern, Yael Burstein, Ori Succary

Exhibition Production Manager

Orit Hall

Construction Management

Shimon Kornfeld – Tafnit Wind Ltd.

Construction Firm

Tomasz Francuz

“Ani Ma’amin, I Believe – Prayer”

Video installation: Hagit Shimoni

“Jewish Life Between the Two World Wars”

Multimedia installation: Niv Moshe Ben David

Produced by 8ND

Music: Moshe Baavour

Sound design: Chen Nevo

“Nazi Antisemitic Ideology”

Sound design: Ishai Adar

“How Jews Coped During the Holocaust” films

Directed by Noemi Schory

Produced by Alona Schory, Belfilms

“Traces of Life,” wall drawings and voices

Michal Rovner

“Return to Life”

Multimedia installation: Niv Moshe Ben David

Produced by 8ND

Photography for Online Exhibition: Niv Moshe Ben David, Pawel Sawicki

**Keywords** Dark tourism • National museum • History • Archive  
Preservation • Remembrance

**Part II**  
**Smart Tourism—Current ICT**  
**Developments of Tourism in a**  
**Sustainability Context**

# How New Technologies Influence the Perception of Athens as a Tourist and Cultural Destination

Efthymia Sarantakou, Paris Tsartas and Christina Bonarou

**Abstract** New technologies play a pivotal role within the travel and tourism sector, especially by affecting the tourism distribution channels, by transforming the tourist experience and, also, by influencing drastically the tourists' perception towards destinations. Aim of the present study is to discuss how new technologies influence the perception of Athens as a tourist and cultural destination.

**Keywords** Tourism image · Culture · Destination · Sharing economy

## 1 Athens' Tourism Facts & Figures

The period after the Olympic Games and until 2011, Athens can be considered as a mature stop-over destination with a monodimensional image (Acropolis, Plaka, cruise in the Argosaronic gulf). In 2005 only 33% of tourists arrive for the first time in Athens (AAAHA, 2017), while there is a recession on arrivals, nights spent and capacity (Hellenic Chamber of Hotels, 2015). There is also lack of capitalization of infrastructure, resources, and fame after the Olympic games, whereas social unrest causes damage to the reputation of Athens as a tourist destination.

The following years (2012–2016) show an increase in tourist arrivals, since Athens becomes open to new markets and there is a gradual development of city break, congress tourism and youth tourism. In 2016, 79% of the visitors in Athens state that their incentive for vacation has been city break (AAAHA, 2017). Moreover, there is a systematic promotion of the city's multiform character and the various experiences that may offer to the visitors. New hotels are being built, upgrading the existing ones, while emblematic cultural centers are created (Onnasis, Niarchos, Kakoyiannis, etc.).

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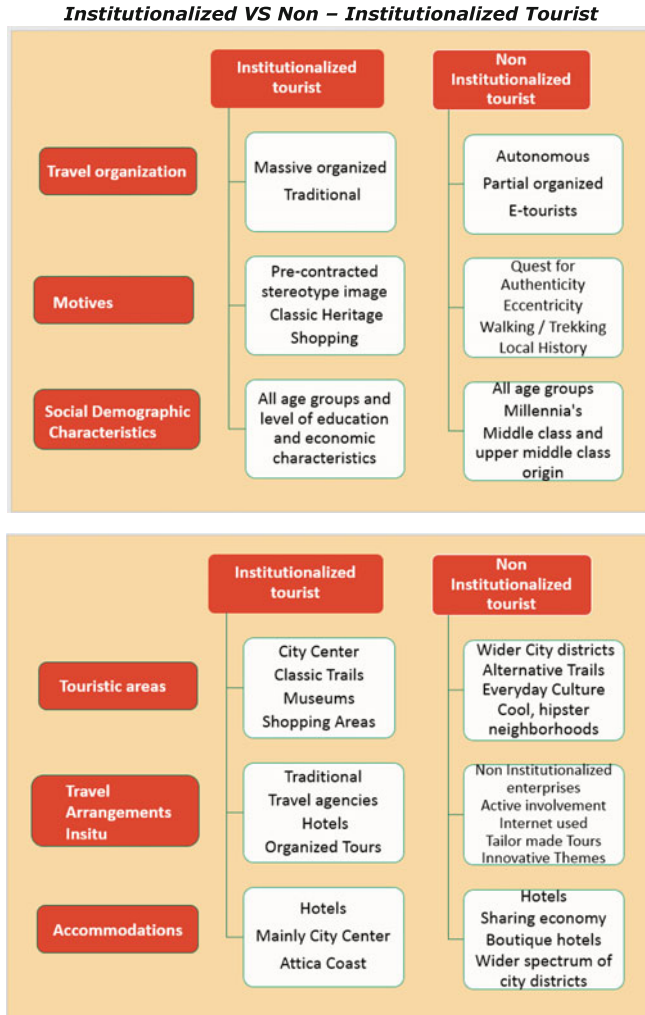
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## 2 The Upgrading of Athens' Tourist and Cultural Image

The basic parameters affecting the evolution and the improvement of the city's image are: the coincidence of an extremely wide increase of tourist arrivals all over Greece, wider tourism policy measures, the stable politics of Athens' Municipality in close cooperation with other stakeholders (AAAHA, Marketing Greece, Athens International Airport, Aegean, Regional and State Administration), and in addition, the wide use of new technologies by institutional and non-institutional bodies, operators and tourists in Athens.

## 3 Case Studies: The Market of Sharing Economy Extends Athens' Tourist Map

- (a) **Airbnb 2017:** During 2013–2016, Athens shows a significant development in sharing economy of accommodation. Only via the Airbnb platform the number of residences officially rented in Attica has risen from 523 in 2013 to 5000 in 2016. Tourists choosing the market of accommodation sharing belong, to a wide extent, to the group of the millennial city break travellers. 71% of Airbnb visitors being in Athens for the first time, choose Airbnb due to low cost, but also because they seek authentic experiences. New tourist areas emerge (Koukaki, Exarchia etc.) and, indicatively, properties that use Airbnb extend in 25 Athens' neighborhoods, out of which 69% are outside the traditional tourist areas (Skoultzos, Kontis, & Sarantakou, 2017).
- (b) **New Cultural Trails enriching the perception of Athens as a cultural destination:** Many new, innovative tourism enterprises (some of them startups), mainly providing tours for tourists, are gradually creating a “non-institutionalized” innovative business market, with the following characteristics:
- Tailor made products and services meeting the standards of modern tourist consumption. According to various studies, visitors choose Athens not only because of history but also because of modern culture, food, and entertainment.
  - A continuously extending group of tourists. From millennials (18–30) to older age groups (30–50) (29% according to AAAHA, 2017).
  - A more “authentic” approach to the visit. Locals are involved as active tour guides and hosts in tourists visit and accommodation; street art and graffities become a theme of a tour, etc (Sarantakou & Tsartas, 2016).



## 4 Conclusions

New technologies meet the requirements set by the new forms of cultural consumption and create tailor made products and services. Networking, information, and interactivity options offered by new technologies, as well as a number of facts, such as the liberation of tourism law, the development of sharing economy and voluntarism, reinforce the unregulated forms of tourism. A mature, established destination, such as Athens, may use soft actions based on public and private sector



partnerships, on voluntarism and on the appropriate use of new technologies in order to capitalize old and new tourist and cultural infrastructure, as well as to improve its image and upgrade its reputation.

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# Evaluation of E-Service Quality in the Hotel Sector: A Systematic Literature Review

Anna Kourtesopoulou, John Kehagias and Alkistis Papaioannou

**Abstract** *Background* Delivering high quality e-services is a key strategy to achieve competitive advantage, due to its positive correlation with the increase of customers purchasing decisions. This systematic literature review attempts to develop a conceptual model of hotel's e-service quality determinants by examining the different perspective of customers and professionals in the field of tourism. *Methods* Four sources were used to locate all relevant and eligible studies: specific electronic databases; existing related bibliography and meta-analyses; reference lists of the research papers; and indivisible search on indexes of journal articles in tourism industry. *The results* Only 66 studies met the inclusion criteria and were selected as primary studies, with a total number of 6162 evaluating hotels. The majority (38%), used as evaluators of hotel e-services users-customers and professionals (30%) in the tourism field. Only 32 studies included hotel customers as evaluators with previous online purchasing experience. Half of these indicated significant impacts of quality determinants on customer purchase intentions. Regarding user-customer approach, the most determinant factors of e-service quality were information quality (n = 23 studies), trust/security (n = 13) and the ease of use (n = 12). From the professional's perspective, studies also recognized the importance of information quality (n = 19), customer orientation of the hotel website (n = 19), followed by the usefulness level (n = 16), and the communication channels (n = 16). Finally, major differences were identified based on hotel type (chain or independent), size (number of beds) and category. Hotel Chains and 4–5 stars hotels appeared to provide better e-marketing and customer relations strate-

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gies, greater level of technology and innovation application, greater value of entertainment and higher level of trust in their websites. *Conclusions* The research evidence provides valid information for hotels directing them to improve their website design, which corresponds to customer service quality perceptions and has a major contribution on customer experience in sourcing information or making an online purchase.

**Keywords** E-services · Quality · Hotels · Evaluation · Quality determinants  
Website

**JEL classification** L8 Industry Studies: Services (L83Sports · Gambling · Restaurants · Recreation · Tourism or/and L86 Information and Internet Services · Computer Software) · Z3 Tourism Economics (Z39 Other-e-commerce)

## 1 Introduction

The Internet represents a fundamental tool of interaction exerting significant influence on the user-consumer satisfaction, their trust level and commitment. In order to gain competitive advantage, tourism industry business try to understand the demands, needs and desires of consumers and seek to produce positive value. The Travel and Tourism (T&T) industry has managed to remain approximately resilient, regardless of the economic uncertainty.

People's life today is highly dependent on both computers and the internet and its dynamic nature has been supported by a multi-layer global network, which serves private, public, business, academic and government purposes. The biggest challenge nowadays is the transformational technology, due to increased number of people who are mobile users. Virtual reality transforms the travel experience, and the existence of big data aid in solving complex problems is faster than before and by connectivity through electronic devices, the travel experience becomes superior. Respectively, according to Google manager Rob Torres, the world of travel & hospitality has entered a new era of growth and transformation. Travel companies have moved from thinking beyond the simple creating of new technology innovations to understanding what technologies consumers are ready to adopt and more importantly what experiences will drive real value (Torres, 2017). The internet has become one of the most significant platforms for tourism service businesses (Ho & Lee, 2007).

From a customer perspective, the access to information is instant, plenty of choices and they are able to easily make direct price comparisons through the offered discounts based on their expectations and their perceived value (Buhalis & Law 2008). There are a series of benefits that customers can gain through visiting a hotel website, such as customized services in level of searching functions, due to the system's capability of remembering customers' preferences as well as the

opportunity to gather information related to the surrounding area of their stay (Jeong, 2004).

Some distinguished determinants of the perceived quality of e-services in the field of tourism are the following: the ease of use, the content of information, the usefulness of a website (Park, Gretzel & Srakaya-Turk, 2007; Kim & Lee 2004; Ho & Lee 2007), the sense of security and personal information privacy (Yoo & Donthu 2001; Zeithaml et al. 2002). Another crucial determinant of customer perceived quality is the degree of interaction and personalization of the offered information and services (Barnes & Vidgen 2001). Meanwhile, Loiacono et al. (2007) added the following three dimensions: the entertainment including the visual appeal, the level of innovativeness and the emotional effect of the website, the complementary relationship and the customer service.

The purpose of this systematic literature review is to investigate the factors that associated with the quality of hotels e-services. By collecting and analyzing the result of empirical studies, this study aims to contribute to the best planning and operational performance of the hospitality industry.

## 2 Objectives

This particular systematic review has a special focus on the quality investigation of the electronic services (e-services) provided by hotels either in Greece or globally. Its purpose is the synthesis of the empirical research on quality issues of hotel e-services, thereafter to investigate the factors associated with the quality of the provided e-services and to contribute to the best planning and operational performance of the hospitality industry. Initially, this review paper attempts to answer the following questions: (1) which the assessment quality factors of hospitality websites are; (2) which the major service deficiencies at level of supporting qualitative hotel e-services are; (3) whether there is a correlation between quality factors and a hotel's operational performance, taking into account either the economic performance indicators (e.g. online sales), or non-economic indicators such as customer satisfaction or consumer's future intention; and (4) whether there are differences in perceived quality either of the hotel type and its characteristics, such as the size, or in terms of demographic customer data, the age or level of education.

## 3 Methods

### 3.1 Data Sources

For the conduction of this systematic review, four sources were used to identify relevant and eligible studies. The first source of information was specific electronic

databases such as: EMERALD, ScienceDirect, EBSCOhost, SAGE, SCOPUS and Taylor & Francis. The second extraction source was the existing published literature review research relevant to the evaluation of e-service quality in tourism (Buhalis & Law 2008; Chiou et al. 2010; Deshwal 2013; Law et al. 2014, 2009; Ip et al. 2011). The third source was the references of preselected articles through electronic databases, where a large volume of most specialist literature is stored. The fourth source was the indivisible search either (a) on indexes of journal articles focused on research of tourism industry such as the following: *Annals of Tourism Research*, *Journal of Travel Research*, *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, *International Journal of Tourism Research*, *International Journal of Hospitality Management* *Tourism Management*, or (b) on large specialized conference records such as: *International Conference on Hospitality & Tourism Management*, *World Tourism Conference and Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism*. Finally, several keywords were used: hotel website evaluation, hotel website quality, website quality determinants, e-tourism quality, e-hospitality quality, e-tourism customers' perspective, hotel industry e-services quality, online quality and purchase intention, hotel website quality dimensions, online hotel visitors, and online hotel purchasers.

### ***3.2 Including and Excluding Studies Criteria***

For the guidance of this review the assessed inclusion and exclusion criteria which will be analyzed need to be determined. Every single included study has to meet the above specific criteria in order to be included. The original language of the articles published in Greek and English and also the updated range of publishing year between 2000 and 2016. Also, studies need to include hotels in their sample, including information about their operation such as the size and hotel category. Furthermore, they need to include information that depends on the customers or the users that evaluate the hotel webpage, such as gender, age, and their educational level. Another very important inclusion criterion appeared to be the use of an appropriate research method among three major categories: qualitative, quantitative or a combination of both, providing sufficient statistical analysis of their data. Lastly, all the study outcomes need to concern the potential impact of the quality of e-services that may have on the operational performance of the hotel industry. This potential impact is displayed either as economic benefits such as increased deductions, or nonfinancial ones, such as increasing the level of customer satisfaction.

Respectively, studies undertaken for the evaluation of e-services other than hotel business such as travel agencies or tourist destinations were excluded. Studies that had lack of sufficient information for the research method they followed, along with their sample, were also excluded. Concluding, studies were excluded due to their interest in alternative outcomes beyond their operational performance. In summary, all inclusion and exclusion criteria of the study are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1** Study inclusion and exclusion criteria

<b>Included populations</b>
Hotel business of all categories
<b>Excluded populations</b>
Travel agencies, tourist, destination sites, airlines, online groups of tourist interest
<b>Evaluation Fields</b>
Users-customers satisfaction related to website quality
Estimation of e-services perceived quality
Impact of the perceived quality on hotel's operational performance
<b>Subgroups of interest</b>
Demographic characteristics of (a) customers: <i>age, gender, level of education, income, nationality, previous internet experience &amp; online purchase</i> (b) Hotel business: <i>category, size, type independent or chain, country.</i>
Study design (qualitative, quantitative or mixed method) & instrumentation details (reliability & validity of measurements used)
Year of study (between years of 2000 & 2016)
Publishing language (Greek & English)
<b>Included outcomes</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satisfied users-customers</li> <li>• Greater purchase intention</li> <li>• Better operational business performance (e.g. increased sales)</li> <li>• Higher level of customer satisfaction &amp; loyalty</li> </ul>

### 3.3 Process of Included and Excluded Studies

Initially 178 studies were identified on the following electronic databases: EMERALD (n = 25), ScienceDirect (n = 50), EBSCOhost (n = 12), SAGE (n = 13), SCOPUS (n = 40) and Taylor & Francis (n = 38), while another twenty (n = 20) were added from used bibliography of studies that had already been selected, counting a total of 198 studies. After reviewing the research titles and their resume, eight (n = 8) studies were found to be identical (duplicate) and therefore were removed, with the majority of them to refer either to graduate/doctoral thesis or to an earlier publication in conference proceedings. In the case of a subsequent publication of a study that had been included either in the form of a dissertation or in the form of a presentation at a conference, what was preferred was the one which was published in a prestigious journal. After removing duplicate studies the total number reached 190. From those studies twenty one (n = 21) were declined, as failed to answer the research questions of this systematic review. However, another seven (n = 7) were literature reviews and thus were not included.

From the total studies (n = 162), a relevant amount of them (n = 96) did not meet any of the inclusion criteria. More analytic, forty four (n = 44) were referred to a different sample population instead of the hotel websites. Those that came into light were travel agencies (n = 18), tourist destination sites (n = 11), airlines

( $n = 7$ ), and others such as online groups of tourist interest ( $n = 3$ ), ski centers ( $n = 2$ ), diving centers ( $n = 2$ ), and recreational companies ( $n = 1$ ). In addition, fifty two ( $n = 52$ ) studies evaluated their results that were not related to the perceived quality of the e-services and its impact on the operational performance of the hotel. More specific, the majority of the studies ( $n = 19$ ), focused its interest on the effect of the formulated comments and reviews on services (electronic or non electronic) of a hotel. Furthermore, another large number of studies ( $n = 13$ ), evaluated the specific role of social media in purchase intention and customer loyalty levels. Similarly, eight articles ( $n = 8$ ) were investigating the evaluation of search engines, but also the hotel listings in major intermediaries as a means of its promotion. Another six studies ( $n = 6$ ) examined the influence of music and other technical specifications of the website. Finally, the rest of studies ( $n = 5$ ) examined the impact of the website in marketing strategy, and only one ( $n = 1$ ) in corporate responsibility strategy of a hotel. Overall, only 66 studies met all the criteria and were included in this systematic review.

### **3.4 Data Extraction**

The following data was extracted from the included studies: author's name, year of publication, country, type of hotel (category, ownership), data samples (hotels, customers, and evaluators), evaluation factors, measuring tools, research method and results.

## **4 Results**

### **4.1 Hotel Characteristics**

The total number of the evaluated hotels was 6162, from which 1855 is hotel chains, 21 Bed & Breakfast (B&B) and four belong to the Boutique hotel category. In the team of independent hotels ( $n = 4282$ ), the majority are 3-star hotels ( $n = 1376$ ), 4-star ( $n = 1052$ ), and 5-star ( $n = 936$ ). However, for 536 hotels the information about their category was not available.

The majority of the studies ( $n = 32$ ) took place in Asia. Analytically, 2008 hotels were evaluated for their e-service provided to the customer-users in the following countries: China ( $n = 19$  studies); Singapore ( $n = 3$ ); Taiwan ( $n = 3$ ); Turkey ( $n = 3$ ); and others countries within Asia ( $n = 2$ ); Malaysia ( $n = 1$ ); and Iran ( $n = 1$ ). The biggest percentage 67% of the examined hotels emerged independent ( $n = 1345$ ). Respectively 14 studies were conducted in America in 661 hotels, with the most of them appeared to be chains ( $n = 510$ ). Also, 12 studies of 1022 hotels around the world, with the majority ( $n = 569$ ) being chains. Moreover, in 11 studies

which were conducted all over Europe, including 2238 hotels, the majority of the hotels were independent. Particularly, four of these studies took place in Switzerland, two in Greece, two in other European countries, one in Austria, one in Germany and one in Croatia. The rest of the studies were conducted in Africa ( $n = 2$ ) in 195 hotels, in 24 hotels in Australia ( $n = 2$ ), and lastly 14 hotels in Brazil.

## 4.2 *Evaluators Characteristics*

The special characteristics of the sample of quality evaluators, will be analysed in this section. The greater number of the studies was conducted by customer- user with a sample variance from 70 to 4038 ( $M = \sim 610$ ). In total, 38% ( $n = 25$ ) studies used as an evaluation sample 15,335 customer-user, who had visited a hotel website or had completed online booking in less than a year. Likewise, professional experts and academics in tourism areas, IT and technology professionals consisted the second more applied category of evaluators. In total, 30% ( $n = 20$ ) of the studies used 135 evaluators from this specific category, with sample variance from 2 to 54 ( $M = \sim 11$ ). However, information on the exact number of assessors was absent in almost half of the studies ( $n = 9$ ), which does not assist in calculating a representative of their average.

Furthermore, studies were also used sample evaluators, which were either managers or hotel staff ( $n = 8$ ) or combination of specialized members and customers—users ( $n = 7$ ). For the studies that used as evaluators the work force of the hotels, appeared to have a total sample of 623, with a range from 8 to 167 ( $M = 80$ ). Respectively those studies use combined sample, numbering 1305 evaluators in the range from 26 to 408 ( $M = 186$ ). Essentially, those studies were simultaneously evaluating the user-customer perception of quality and tourist professionals' observation on the key components of web quality. Lastly, few studies ( $n = 6$ ) used software program or experimental method for the evaluation of the quality of a hotel website.

In all the selected studies, information concerning participants' demographics in the evaluation process of the quality of hotel e- services were analyzed with the intention of delineation of the profile of the average user-visitor of a hotel webpage. Specifically, it appeared that both genders use the hotel e-services almost with the same frequency, and with a minimal precedence in men (50%) than women (48%). Also, their educational level seemed to be high, with 33% of them to be university graduates. Similarly, the majority of them belonged mainly in two age categories, which is the age of 35–44 years (15%) and the 26–35 years (10%).

Regarding the choice of users, it was noticed that hotel customers or the members of a club or hotel chain, are perhaps the best example of quality evaluators of the offered online services. Approximately 3700 (23%) hotel customers were approached in the reception areas of hotels, or through online surveys. The tourists were another evaluator's category in total 1600 (12%), which were approached



either in big airports, or in tourist information centres of large towns. Finally, another interesting source of evaluators was the conference participants, although their frequency was very low, at just 1, 7% (n = 240).

Also specialized professionals and academics came into view as an equally important category of evaluators. In total, 690 professionals offered accurate observations and assessments about the perceived quality of hotel web pages. In this category executive members with expertise on tourism (n = 160) and also on information systems (n = 156), tour operators (n = 269), university researchers (n = 37), and tourism students (n = 68) were included. Finally, a valuable opinion about the quality evaluation was offered also by hotel directors (n = 637) and divisional hotel managers (n = 164).

### **4.3 Methodological Assessment**

The greater number of the studies 52% used qualitative research methods (n = 34), another 38% quantitative (n = 25) and a small percentage of 10% a combined survey methods (n = 7), such as interviews and questionnaires or web observation and questionnaires. In qualitative methods, the most common way of assessing was the observation of the hotel website through checklists. Also, there were three (n = 3) case studies, and four (n = 4) experimental studies which used data analysis software. Indicative qualitative research methods were the prioritization criteria, either through technical analysis as the PROMETHEE and undercover customer (mystery shopper analysis), or by specialized softwares: Automatic Website Evaluation System, or Google tools such as the Popularity Checker.

The questionnaires that used in most studies (n = 24) were created through existing scales with theoretical background and were completed by customer-user-manager, or used as checklists for the website quality evaluation. Measurement instruments varied greatly among the studies with the dominance of studies using standardized and validated quantitative measures such as: The Electronic Scale satisfaction, trust and loyalty (Anderson and Srinivasan 2003), the hotel reliability questionnaire (Jarvenpaa et al. 2000), and the customer relationship management electronic scale.

## **5 Outcome Measures and Results**

Almost half (n = 32) of the total studies (N = 66) used clients-users as a sample for the evaluation of hotels e- services. A prerequisite to participate in the evaluation was to have visited the site to obtain information, or to make an online reservation in a period not exceeding one year. It appears interesting at this point, to investigate the number of those studies that identified statistically significant effects of the perceived quality of websites on purchase intentions. Specifically, 16 studies (24%)

supported significant effects of a series of quality factors in purchase intention. The most common factor that seemed to affect consumer intentions was the adequacy of the offered information ( $n = 8$  studies). Users recognized the importance of quality information at accommodation level (e.g. updated prices), offered services, instructions for making electronic transactions, and information on local attractions and points of interest. An equally significant factor appeared to be the ease of use ( $n = 7$  studies), in comprehension and navigation level. The third factor in frequency was the degree of trust and security that users perceived within electronic services ( $n = 5$ ). Less important factors seemed to be: the utility ( $n = 5$ ), reputation/recommendations ( $n = 4$ ), technology familiarization ( $n = 3$ ), price benefits ( $n = 2$ ); aesthetics/entertainment ( $n = 2$ ), interaction ( $n = 2$ ), communication approaches and customer orientation.

### ***5.1 Differences Between Users-Customers and Hotel Categories***

Five studies provide evidence for significant differences in perceived quality between visitors (users) and customers (online purchasers) of hotel websites. According to Law and Hsu (2006), customers, in comparison with visitors, judge the quality level of electronic services offered by hotels belonging to the category above 3-stars, to a greater extent. Also, the importance of the quality in total (Polites et al. 2012) and more specifically, the one related to reservation information (Rong et al. 2009) appeared to be a more important attribute for buyers of a hotel service than website visitors. Finally, it is argued that participants that belonged to the category of 25–30 years old, with a university education, high income and being a female, showed higher online booking rates (Qi et al. 2013).

A second group of studies supports respective differences between the categories of hotels ( $n = 4$ ). More analytic, they stated that the luxury hotels excel at information quality level as regards to reservations, services, attractions and destination (Leung et al. 2016), and on information accuracy level (Jeong et al. 2003). They also added that the luxury hotels have a higher level of online aesthetic presentation. An advantage of the luxurious hotels is that through their website, they effectively promote special offers and discounts on their offered services (Jeong, 2002).

### ***5.2 Determinants of Customer-Perceived E-service Quality***

In terms of the user-customer view, specific critical factors ensure the quality of the offered services in an online environment. The first most important one, is supported to be the information adequacy ( $n = 23$ ). Regarding the information quality,

significant shortcomings were identified such as the absence of providing details on the arrival/departure, updated prices and available offers, destination advice (e.g. weather, attractions) and corporate data such as an annual report and shareholders information. The second most relevant dimension of quality refers to the degree of trust and security (n = 13), that the user-client perceived through electronic transactions with a hotel. The existence of a security policy for the personal data protection and the secure transaction is considered as crucial. Given the importance of trust, it is important for the hotel to provide different ways of online booking and payment, and also particular procedures, such as direct confirmation of successful transaction that gives a sense of security and confidence to customers.

The third fundamental quality aspect, is related to the level of ease of use (n = 12), the degree to which a user believes that the text and the navigation is easy to understand. Equally considerable arose the utility factor (n = 11), which is the way the customer-user perceived that this particular webpage responded to their visiting needs (e.g. seeking information or making a reservation). Website visual appeal (n = 10) including various entertainment elements, such as video and virtual, is also becoming of critical importance followed by the different communication approaches (n = 8) and the interaction/personalization (n = 7) through social media, membership pages, electronic guest log, chat options, and customer service line. Less important factors were found to be the customer orientation (n = 6), the price benefits (n = 6), the technology familiarity (n = 4), and the hotel reputation and recommendations (n = 3).

### ***5.3 Determinants of Tourist Professional-Perceived E-service Quality***

Professional members of the hotel industry indicated that the most critical aspects of e-service quality are the adequate information (n = 19) and the entire online hotel operation to be customer-oriented (n = 19). In terms of information they mentioned the significant role of hotel business news, accessibility details and price fluctuation. Moreover, professionals believe that it is an essential priority for a hotel to have a customer loyalty program, which is considered as a powerful marketing tool of customer-oriented strategy that the hotels seem to neglect. Equally significant factors appeared to be the overall website utility (n = 16) and the communication approaches (n = 16). Interaction and personalization (n = 15), a sense of trust and security that ensures the user-client safety (n = 13) were also recognized as key areas of quality determinants. Finally, the ease of use (n = 12) and the aesthetic website presentation (n = 9) were indicated.

### 5.3.1 Differences Between Hotels Categories

In 56% of the studies, where tourism and hospitality professionals evaluated the quality of the offered e-services, identified significant differences among the hotels in relation to their category and capacity. They noted that large-scale and upscale chain hotels offered more quality online services, excelling at a number of factors and components which are analyzed. By using the observation and assessment of service quality criteria, they offer valuable insights into the overall quality effectiveness of hotels online services.

From their observational analysis it is supported that medium size, 3-star ratings and chains have a higher level of electronic trade performance in comparison with 2-star rating, small sized hotels and independent hotels (Ayob & Manaf 2015). Examining the components of their electronic performance, it seems that the chains and large sized hotels, the online customer relationship management apply to a greater extent (Bai et al. 2006; Essawy 2011; Schegg et al. 2002) mainly by using the technology (Gan et al. 2006; Leung & Law 2013). Also, the 5-star hotels seemed to excel at the following factors: interaction and navigation (Baloglou & Pekcan 2006; Ibrahim 2016; Murphy et al. 2003), visual appeal, by using more graphics and a greater number of hyperlinks (Chan & Law 2006; Gruter et al. 2013). A closer investigation by Diaz and Koutra (2013) also showed that luxury hotels have a strong presence on social media, give greater emphasis to the overall aesthetic, beauty and visual appeal and the entertainment elements of their website, along with the security and privacy policies even in communication level or in online transactions.

Significant differences were also supported, relating to the information about available activities, communication, booking processes, destination and hotel management (Chung & Law 2003; Musante et al. 2009; Salavanti & Hashim 2015). Alongside, large size and upscale hotels provided the user- client with a friendlier and a more attractive online environment (Pranic et al. 2014; Yeung & Law 2004). Another noteworthy finding from Gazzoli et al. (2008) revealed that the largest chains in the US, experienced on average a high level of direct online booking ratio, by guaranteeing a better rate and hence, offering price benefits to their customers, compared to travel agencies. Finally, it is recommended that smaller hotels adopt online offers (Scharlr et al. 2003) as well as the implementation of high quality electronic customer relationship management systems (Tian & Wang 2017). These two effective strategies appear to lead to a greater value creation in small size and middle scale hotels compared to large size and upscale hotels.

### ***5.4 Differences on Quality Assessment Between Clients-Users and Professionals***

Having obtained valuable information from user–customer and professionals, it is meaningful to investigate the possible convergences and divergences on the perceived quality. From the hotel website customers' point of view, the most determined quality factor is the adequacy of the information, which is verified from the hotel managers. There seemed to have been similarly small differences in the usefulness or utility, which is estimated to have a strong impact on purchase intentions. The reason of the desired convergence in the above two quality factors is due to the fact that sufficient information and usefulness of a website is considered as the most decisive factors consuming intention. The same optimistic result appears in the case of factors of ease of use, visual appeal and trust/security, where the two sides are identical.

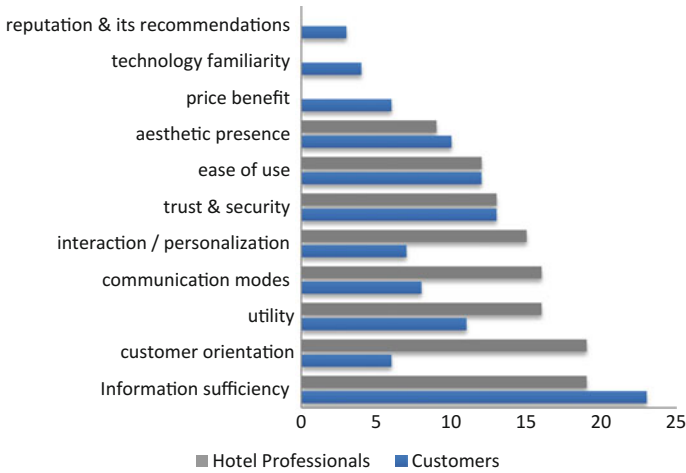
Although through the analysis of individual attitudes of both sides, large differences were emerged between evaluators. For example, hotel executives consider that through their websites, hotels provide an extended range of communication ways, interaction options and personalized services to users-customers. However, the extent to which customers perceive the quality of the provided communication and interaction, differ significantly. Specifically, the hotel executives seem to overestimate almost twice as much the means of communication and the degree of interaction offered.

The degree of the perceived quality differs considerably, since the customer orientation dimension is added to the above differences. Despite the fact that hotels realize that their online presence and their overall performance is customer-oriented, it does not seem to dissipate appropriately to either online visitors or purchasers. This large discrepancy in assessment level appeared earlier on the individual differences of the two sides on issues such as communication channels and provided opportunities for interaction and personalized services. Lastly, the reputation, the price benefits and the familiarity with the technology are factors that shape the perceived quality only in case of clients- users. In Fig. 1 graphically shows the distribution of perceived quality factors on the part of customers and professionals.

## **6 Discussion of the Systematic Review Results**

The purpose of this systematic literature review was to investigate the factors associated with the quality of a hotel e-services. By collecting and analyzing the result of empirical studies, valuable insights were identified, which the tourism and hospitality industry can adopt in order to improve their operational performance.

Since business websites are designed mainly to communicate with potential customers, either via displaying and promoting its products and services, or by providing information or making it possible to carry out electronic transactions.



**Fig. 1** Customers and hotel professionals perceived quality factors distribution

Customers, on the other hand, are sophisticated buyers that want or need to buy services, and that is the main reason of visiting an e-commerce site. However, there is a great variance on customer perceived value compared to other distribution channels. These values or perceived benefits appear to be: the potential of time saving the high degree of personalized services, support directions for the online transactions by appropriate software programs, and other elements regarding the visual appeal of the website.

Recognizing the diversity which exists among the consumers and the dynamic role of e-business in promotional level and in maximizing consumer intentions, this study contributes by identifying which quality factors and service improvement in the hotel e-operations can bring value to their guests. Hospitality management needs to view and think from a customer’s perspective aiming to meet or exceed its service quality to customers’ expectations.

From the total studies, only 24% referred to significant effects in the quality of e-services to consumer intentions. Specifically, the significant role of information quality (n = 8 studies) was recognized, where a website should provide current and sufficient information about the accommodation, the services offered, transaction processes, and the surrounding area. An equally influential factor in delivery of e-service quality recognized the ease of use (n = 7 studies), including judgement criteria related to the efficiency of navigation and reading comprehension. The third crucial quality factor was found to be the privacy/security (n = 5) involving all those transactional functions, which enable customers to feel the website as safe, simple, and user-friendly for completing transactions. The results, however, reveal that the hotel websites shown major deficiencies identified not only from users-customers but also from tourism industry professionals. Such deficiencies were related to the absence of information on the arrival/departure of clients,

updating room price, economic and other hotel operational data. Similar weaknesses were diagnosed in the perceived level of security, since most hotels seemed to lack policies of privacy and personal data protection.

Also, by gathering all the available demographic characteristics of user-customer, it seems that young people at the ages 25–30 years old, college educated, with a high income and mostly women, appeared to have the highest rates of online booking (Qi et al. 2013). Moreover, several empirical studies suggest that hotel category and size play a decisive role in the quality of e-services. The findings of this study highlighted that, large sized hotels, greater than a 3-star category (upscale hotels) and usually chains, provide more qualitative e-services to the customers. A closer investigation showed that this classification of hotels superior in overall quality of their online services by providing for example information relating to a booking or financial data of the hotel. As with consumers, hoteliers viewed the use of online customer relationship management, the greater extent of applied technology and the advanced user interface, as very important strategic tools in navigation and interaction level.

Comparing the survey results, crucial differences of perceived quality were identified between the two categories of evaluators, that of top specialists in tourism and clients-users. From professionals' point of view, it was estimated that the online hotel presence and their overall performance is customer-oriented. While the online browsers or purchasers appeared not to perceive to the same degree the customer orientation. This significant difference is mainly reflected in two particular factors which are the different communication approaches offered by a hotel as well as the provided opportunities for interaction and personalization of e-services.

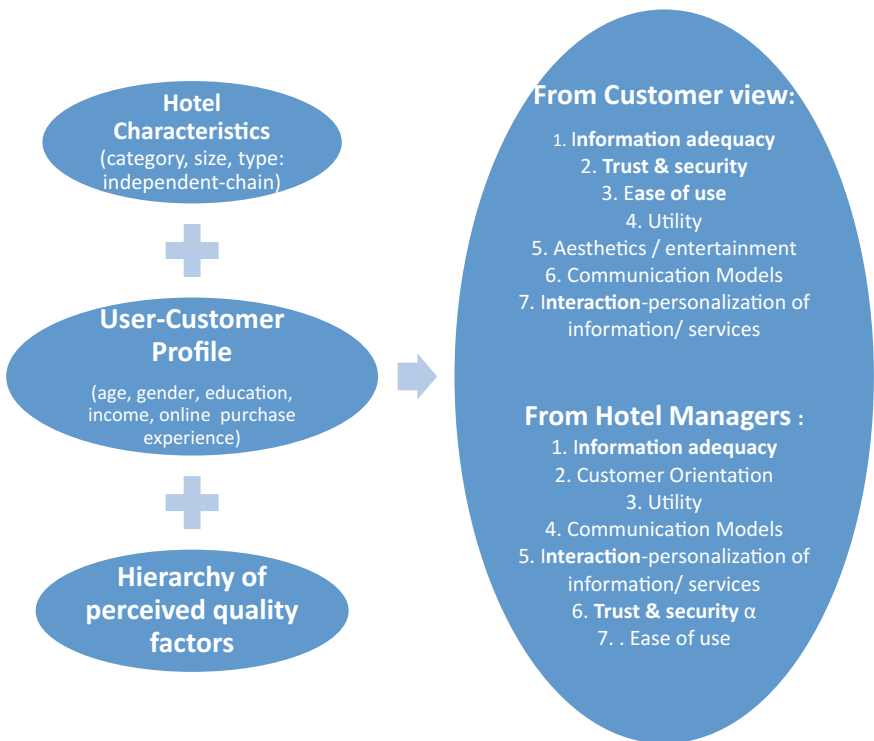
## **6.1 Originality/Value**

Summarizing the main points of this study, it is necessary for hotels to understand, how users estimate the quality. Knowing also the users' profile, hotel managers are able to design tailor-made online services for their current visitors and potential customers. The proposed model can be implemented as a knowledge-based decision support in designing and maintaining a high quality level hotel website.

## **6.2 Implications**

In the Hotel E-services Multidimensional Quality Model, a summary of quality determinants are presented by hierarchy of significance, separated into two categories: the customers (online browsers or purchasers) and hotel managers. Other major contributors to the perceived quality are (a) the demographics of users such as age, gender, education level, income, online purchase experience and (b) hotel characteristics such as category, size and type (chain or independent). The findings

from the proposed model analysis can assist managers to give a greater emphasis on other factors, such as the quality of information, the degree of ease of use, the whole website visual appeal, the effectiveness of communication methods, and the degree of customer-oriented strategy implemented. Future empirical research in the field of hospitality, is recommended to use quality evaluation models that include different aspects of stakeholders, such as the customer voice, the judgement of specialized professionals, IT and tourist business management staff members. This multi-dimensional view of different interest groups is believed to contribute significantly to obtain more detailed data and valuable elements in terms of an optimum performance of the hotel industry. Figure 2 is drawn to present the Hotel E-services Multidimensional Quality Model.



**Fig. 2** Hotel E-services Multidimensional Quality Model (Kourtesopoulou 2017)



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# The Impact of Website Persuasiveness on Luxury Hotels Financial Performance

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**Abstract** The primary objective article was to investigate the websites' persuasiveness of the luxury hotels in Greece and its implications for their financial performance. As a result, a content analysis was applied primarily as a quantitative research method, with website characteristics classified into distinct categories and then described using statistics; 335 websites of luxury hotels were reviewed and data were analyzed by means of STATA 12. Persuasiveness measured using six dimensions, namely: informativeness, usability, credibility, inspiration, involvement and reciprocity. The research divulged a comparatively low degree of the hotels overall persuasiveness, specifically in involvement dimension. Furthermore, current research attempted to pinpoint the relation among the hotels' website overall persuasiveness and its impact on their financial performance. The findings could offer the hotel managers useful insights into enhancing their website's persuasiveness and accordingly their financial performance.

**Keywords** Website · Persuasiveness · Financial performance · Hotel

**JEL Classification** Z3 tourism · Marketing and finance

## 1 Introduction

The Internet revolution has greatly reformed the business model worldwide, equipping enterprises with a plurality of effective strategic planning tools, to assist in doing them in obtaining substantial benefits by enhancing and exaggerating their competitiveness. In view of their expected effectiveness in cost decrease, in customer relationship management and in supply chain management, internet tools

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have been utilized by numerous enterprises for their market penetration (Ganesan, George, Jap, Palmatier, & Weitz, 2009).

The evolvement of Internet has reformed the hospitality sector via the development of an abundance of tourism associated websites and applications (Wang & Qualls, 2007). The increasing the Internet has inescapably augmented the percentage of online booking channels for touristic objectives, with the use of which hotels attract their visitors (Chiang, 2003). The use of the Internet expedites intercommunication between hotels and their website clients, as it provides an appropriate way for clients to gain a greater insight into the hotel's services, thus enhancing reservations (Bonson & Flores, 2011; Hsu, 2012).

Among the predominant characteristics of the tourism sector is the essentiality to procure information to many individuals (Werthner & Klein, 1999), a need that interprets hotels' expanded use of the Internet for communication objectives (Li & Wang, 2010; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Websites in the hospitality sector constitute a primary communication vehicle, incorporating internet usage and marketing theory into an integrated experience (Li & Wang, 2010), in order to offer useful data online clients along with the perseverance and management of their relation with the hotel (Lee & Morrison, 2010).

Website and Internet use is effective not just for large hotel chains but also for independent or small hotels, as well-designed and conveniently navigated websites offer hotels a low cost marketing communications tool, which has the capacity to intensify their competitiveness in the tourism sector (Parets, 2002). Past studies have led to the conclusion that the plurality of companies in the tourism industry contemplate their websites as a decisive competitive advantage over the competition and as being crucial in attracting new clients (Mullen, 2000).

In order to capitalize upon the web advantages as well as being in alignment with technological development, hotels steadily improve their websites for user-friendly, tailor-made personal and reciprocative access for online customers. Moreover, hotels exploit their websites for web campaigns, evolving and consolidating their marketing strategy on the web, gathering online client information, amplifying client care, and allowing online booking. (Karpinski, 2001; Mullen, 2000).

The advancement of the World Wide Web has created a unique opportunity for hotels to put aside any intermediaries, such as tour agencies, and cooperate directly with customers. The online channel provides a contact point that is an efficient way to attract more customers and to enhance a hotel's image. Notwithstanding the increasing significance of online hotel booking, a significant share of online reservations is accomplished by tour agencies instead of through hotels websites (Nelson, 2004). In spite of the intense effort made by the management of hotels to drive online reservations to their webpages (Shellum, 2004), there is an inadequacy of information concerning the predispositions of their online customers regarding their webpages overall persuasiveness.

Prior researchers focused on the hospitality sector, have investigated the various determinants responsible for the success of hotel webpages (Jeong, Oh, & Gregoire, 2003; Vrana, Zafiroopoulos, & Paschaloudis, 2004). Nevertheless, the majority of them have concentrated on individual aspects and characteristics instead of the

overall persuasiveness of websites, while empirical evidence regarding the impact of overall website persuasiveness on the financial performance of hotels is very scarce. The main purpose of the present paper is to explore Greek luxury hotels' strategy concerning their websites, evaluating their overall website persuasiveness and its impact on their financial performance.

## 2 Literature Review

Persuasiveness in the Internet framework can be delineated as the communication procedure which is outlined to manipulate individuals' presumptions, inceptions, or perspectives (Simons, Morreale, & Gronbeck, 2001). The webpages generate significant opportunities for persuasive interactivity, as the target audience can be conveniently contacted with the potentiality of utilizing both interpersonal and mass communication (Oinas-Kukkonen, 2010). A website's design embodies persuasiveness by administering various persuasive techniques in its design, in order to enhance individuals' motivation and trust, modifying their perspective and emboldening online purchase intentions (Cheung & Law, 2009).

Concerning the assessment of the persuasive characteristics, various studies have incorporated factors related to persuasiveness in websites, with the most influential being the in-depth analysis of Kim and Fesenmaier (2008), who describe persuasiveness as a website's capability to generate an assertive impression. The above mentioned study provoked much further research as it enhances the persuasiveness context (Dickinger & Stangl, 2013; Guadagno, Muscanell, Rice, & Roberts, 2013) and depicts how basic perception is strongly associated with the visual appearance of a website (Lindgaard, Fernandes, Dudek, & Brown, 2006; Phillips & Chaparro, 2009). According to Kim and Fesenmaier (2008), website visitors take rapid decisions concerning a webpage based on their basic perception from an instantaneous interactivity with the webpage. Such a condition is encountered in hotel websites, so it is essential to have an impact on users' basic perception. Due to this fact, hotel managers ought to be informed about specific persuasive methods, their usage and their impact on visitors, as well as the way audiences anticipate them.

In accordance with Kim and Fesenmaier's (2008) classification, the importance of six variables must be taken into account when evaluating the persuasiveness of webpages, which are: informativeness, usability, credibility, inspiration, involvement and reciprocity.

Their study was based upon the theoretical context proposed by Ping Zhang (2001), concerning webpage layout and assessment. The above mentioned theoretical framework utilizes Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory in order to recognize and distinguish characteristics which might be regarded as hygiene factors from those which might be regarded as motivators in the Internet context (Herzberg, 1987). They suggest that hygiene factors are crucial characteristics, but inadequate to assure webpage visitor's satisfaction. Furthermore, they propose that motivational factors conduce to visitor satisfaction and to repeated webpage visits. Based

on Kim and Fesenmaier's classification (2008), informativeness and usability can be considered to be the hygiene factors. Correspondingly, credibility, inspiration, involvement, and reciprocity can be considered to be the motivating factors. The indicated motivating factors play a crucial role in configuring the exceptional components of hotel websites. More expressly, the classification of hotel webpages in accordance with the persuasive factors, benefit hotels in improving their accessibility and communication with clients. This categorization may consecutively increase online reservations and enhance website attempts to ameliorate their attractiveness to potential visitors, by directly encouraging them.

Informativeness can be delineated as the level at which a webpage offers convenient and constructive information to visitors. Hotel websites provide a lot of information (e.g., services, prices, room photos) in order to strengthen their service packaging and intensify their internet marketing. Given the constantly growing number of webpages, as well as the increasing volume of online information, the fundamental criteria for website information quality assessment are: correctness, diversity, coherence, validity and repleteness (Jeong & Lambert, 2001). Informativeness of the webpages can be pragmatically associated with attitudes toward them and, sequentially, with their persuasiveness capacity. Informativeness improves service quality and provides hotels with the ability to intersperse beneficial information to potential visitors through the internet (Luo, 2002).

Another important characteristic of webpages is the degree of their usability, which refers to website anticipated usefulness and ease of use (Benbunan-Fich, 2001). Ease of use encompasses two distinct components, easiness of comprehending and navigating. Easiness of comprehending recognizes that webpage design must facilitate visitors so that they may effortlessly anticipate the owner of the site, the objectives of the site, the plurality of provided online services, as well as to ensure visitors' access to accurate and up to date information. Easiness of navigating supports that webpages must be carefully designed to assist users in finding the desired information quickly, providing a web map and a search tool (Nielson, 2000). On this wise, a webpage offers individuals the chance to quickly assimilate the required information, contributing to the hotel's goal accomplishment. As a result, usability is correlated with the rapidness and easiness of online booking.

In line with past researches, credibility is classified as an important characteristic of persuasiveness and could be sorted into cue-based and experience-based (Díaz & Martín-Consuegra, 2016). Cue-based credibility pertains to the extent to which a visitor entrusts a webpage, being contingent on primary inspection of its basic credibility characteristics. It contemplates those who seek information conjecture the grade of trustworthiness of a webpage in the course of their first visit relying totally on circumstantial cues. The major signals of trust in a webpage are privacy and security, as well as the identification of the webpage owner through the provided information about the organization and its history (Yang et al., 2003).

Inspiration may be delineated as a motivation factor containing the dynamism and guidance of behavior and can be provoked by stimuli (Thrash & Elliot, 2003). As a result, in the case of hotel webpages, the great significance of aesthetics (i.e.



usage of visual features) illustrates the aspiration of the hotels to inaugurate a cohesive and constructive correlation or perception and to provoke engaging experiences in such a way that the positive perceptions embolden potential visitors to proceed with the online booking.

Involvement could be delineated as an indiscernible force of motivation concerning an item which is provoked by the consistency or signification of the item (Díaz & Martín-Consuegra, 2016). In the online context, interactivity has been qualitatively verified as a significant factor regulating the strength of involvement with web use. Past work has validated that an increase of webpages interactivity plays a significant role in augmenting compassion and exploration (Liu & Shrum, 2009).

In a web environment, reciprocity ascribes to the grade to which a webpage supports bilateral interaction between hotels and online customers (Häubli & Trifts, 2000). As far as the hotel business is concerned, discounts or particular quotations are types of benefits typically granted to online customers with the purpose setting up a mutually beneficial relationship. On various occasions, webpage users are summoned to provide personal information such as name and e-mail and/or address as compensation for the advantages experienced.

The effectiveness of website quality on the services provided to customers and the customers' online purchase intentions have been examined by previous studies (Cheung & Law, 2009), yet there are fewer studies trying to establish a direct connection of website effectiveness and persuasiveness on the business performance of the hospitality firms in terms of sales or profits (Scaglione, Schegg, & Murphy, 2009). According to Lee and Kazar (2006), the success of a company operating an effective web-based platform is contingent on the quality of services that are provided through it to the customers. Their findings asserted that firms with high quality websites were associated with higher profitability as measured via ROA and ROE. This finding has been corroborated by Ghose and Ipeiritis (2006) who tested the impact of online reviews of products on sale revenues and verified a positive association.

Also, Ye, Law, and Gu (2009) provided evidence of a positive impact of online reviews on the number of bookings in hotels in China and practically a 10% improvement in reviewer's rating can increase sales by 4.4% which is translated to enhanced financial performance. Moreover, Ögüt and Taş (2012) examined the association between room sales and higher customer rating on the internet in a sample of hotels in London and Paris and found a positive association. Also they argue that hotels with higher quality ratings and reviews on the web tend to increase their prices. Practically, a 1% increase in online customer ratings increases sales per room up to 2.68% in Paris and 2.62% in London.

These findings are attributed to the fact that online sales of hotel rooms has increased over the years and this channel represents a major proportion of hotel sales, thus making its contribution to business performance irreplaceable. Furthermore, the internet has been developed as an important significant connecting link among clients and hotels which helps towards information exchange or even strengthening business performance via costs reductions in the distribution process,

increased revenues though enhanced guest loyalty and improved marketing and market penetration. Furthermore, the online sales channels give potential visitors the opportunity to gain insight information about the experience and views of existing or previous clients, therefore providing means of information dissemination (Ögüt & Taş, 2012). Scaglione et al. (2009) found empirical results supporting the view that website adoption contributes positively to revenues per vacant room (RevPAR) and this association was stronger at hotels with their own domain in Valais, while on the contrary hotels lacking a website were associated with a negative flow of profits. Consequently, based on the abovementioned discussion we expect positive association between website persuasiveness and the ability of the Greek hotels to generate revenue.

### 3 Methodology and Research Design

In accordance with the methodology of content analysis, the research assessed hotels' website persuasiveness. In accordance with previous studies (Díaz & Martín-Consuegra, 2016), six dimensions were taken into consideration; namely, informativeness (28 items), usability (6 items), credibility (3 items), inspiration (5 items), involvement (8 items) and reciprocity (4 items). Every item was encoded as "1" and "0" to reduce subjectivity in the process of data collection (Lee & Morrison, 2010 as cited in Escobar-Rodríguez & Carvajal-Trujillo, 2013). The final score was calculated based on the sub-score of each dimension (summing the "Yes" observations) which was divided by the sum of the items that it was comprised of. Proportionately, the highest possible result of each dimension is 1 and 0 is the base level (Escobar-Rodríguez & Carvajal-Trujillo, 2013). Furthermore, the size of each hotel was calculated using the quantity of beds in accordance with literature (Pikkemaat & Peters, 2006).

The focus of the present study is Greek luxury hotels and the sample was collected from the Hellenic Chamber of Hotels. A sum of 443 luxury hotels were listed in Greece while 335 had a webpage. Data were obtained from each website of the given sample. As far as the financial data is concerned, they were hand collected from the annual financial statements of the hotels in the sample.

In order to examine the impact of website persuasiveness on the financial performance of Greek hotels we followed a cross-sectional Seemingly Unrelated Regression (SUR) methodology since the persuasiveness of hotels websites is determined by hotel size. Practically, the functional form of the model is as follows and is estimated simultaneously as a system of equations:

$$\text{PERS}_i = b_0 + b_1 \text{SIZE}_i + u_i \quad (1)$$

$$\text{LnSALES}_i = a_0 + a_1 \text{PERS}_i + e_i \quad (2)$$

LnSALES is the natural logarithm of annual sale revenues as extracted from each hotel's annual financial statements. We have used the log transformation of sales because it is possible to compute elasticities of the independent variable with regarding to total sales and secondly because the use of log values of sales, the relationship of the model variables is closer to linear (Öğüt & Taş, 2012).

PERS is a factor of web site total persuasiveness extracted via a principal component analysis from the aforementioned six variables proxying for website informativeness, usability, credibility, inspiration, involvement and reciprocity. This factor was determined using eigen values greater than 1.0. The principal component analysis was used since the solutions generated from principal component analysis do not have significant differences from the factor analysis techniques. In this context, the authors utilized the orthogonal method of extraction and particularly Varimax which tries to maximize the dispersion of loadings within factors. Eventually, for including the factor scores as an independent variable in model (2) we employed the Anderson–Rubin. The outcome of the principal component analysis supported that data do not suffer from multicollinearity since the KMO statistic of sampling adequacy had a value up to 0.91 indicating that this kind of analysis is appropriate for our data. Eventually the extracted communalities are close to 1 proposing that the factor explains the original data adequately, and the factor loadings are above the critical value of 0.70 proposing that the estimated factor is of statistical significance.

Finally, SIZE is the number of hotel rooms and is used to proxy for hotel size following the work by Öğüt and Taş (2012) who also use the number of rooms as an indicator of hotel size because bigger size hotels are expected to be associated with higher revenues. Based on the discussion on the theoretical background we expect hotel size to impact positively on website persuasiveness and at the same time higher website persuasiveness will impact positively on sales.

## 4 Results

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the sample variables indicating that the sample hotels have an average number of 175 rooms ranging between 10 and 788 available rooms indicating a significant dispersion of rooms in our sample. Also, the average website persuasiveness factor is negative indicating that the sample hotels achieve rather mediocre customer persuasiveness through their websites. Table 2 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients between the sample variables. As expected, revenues are positively and significantly associated with the persuasiveness factor and hotel size. Also, hotel size presents a positive and significant correlation with website persuasiveness. Consequently, univariate evidence provides initial support for our expectations regarding the association between hotel size and website persuasiveness and between website persuasiveness and sale revenues.

**Table 1** Descriptive statistics of sample variables

Variables	Mean	Std. deviation	Min	Max
LnSALES	15.342	1.647	8.377	17.743
PERS	-1.521	1.305	-11.096	3.194
SIZE	175.08	147.72	10	788

**Table 2** Pearson correlation coefficients of sample variables

Variables	LnSALES	PERS	SIZE
LnSALES	1		
PERS	0.234 <sup>a</sup> (0.035)	1	
SIZE	0.364 <sup>b</sup> (0.001)	0.223 <sup>b</sup> (0.001)	1

<sup>a,b</sup>Indicate statistical significance on the 5 and 1% statistical significance level. *P*-values in the parenthesis

LnSALES is the natural logarithm of annual sale revenues as extracted from each hotel's annual financial statements, PERS is a factor of web site total persuasiveness extracted via a principal component analysis, SIZE is the number of hotel rooms.

Table 3 shows the results from the simultaneous estimation of Eqs. (1) and (2) jointly as a system employing the SUR estimation technique. As we can see the  $\chi^2$  statistic is highly significant indicating that the estimation of the model provides valid inferences. Empirical evidence corroborates theoretical arguments and specifically, that hotel size has a significant positive impact on website persuasiveness corroborating previous findings in the literature by Ögüt and Taş (2012). Moreover, website persuasiveness contributed positively on sale revenues suggesting that hotels which manage to construct a website contributing to enhanced informativeness, usability, credibility, inspiration, involvement and reciprocity are able to improve their financial performance (Bai, Law, & Wen, 2008).

**Table 3** Results of seemingly unrelated regression (SUR)

Variables	(Equation 2)—LnSALES		(Equation 1)—PERS	
	Coefficients	Z-stat	Coefficients	Z-stat
Constant	15.20 <sup>b</sup>	82.69	-0.009	-0.06
PERS	0.519 <sup>b</sup>	2.78		
SIZE			0.002 <sup>a</sup>	2.10
$\chi^2$ -stat	7.73 <sup>b</sup> (0.0054)		4.40 <sup>a</sup> (0.036)	
R <sup>2</sup>	5.08%		4.23%	

<sup>a,b</sup>Indicate statistical significance at the 5 and 1% significance level respectively. *P*-values in the parenthesis

## 5 Conclusion, Limitations and Further Research

The purpose of this study was to investigate the websites' persuasiveness of the Greek luxury hotels, as well as to single out relationships among the degree of websites' persuasiveness and the financial performance of the hotels. Empirical evidence indicated that hotel size has a significant positive impact on website persuasiveness and simultaneously website persuasiveness contributed positively to sale revenues, suggesting that hotels which succeed in constructing a website contributing to enhanced informativeness, usability, credibility, inspiration, involvement and reciprocity are able to improve their financial performance. This study has important policy implications for hotel managers since it proves a direct association between website persuasiveness and financial performance, making a hotel's web page a significant tool which can lead to enhanced revenues.

Even though the current research administers a context for enduring research on this significant sector of the tourism industry, a supplementary study is necessary to advance the findings of this research as various limitations continue to exist. First, current analysis was in accordance with Kim and Fesenmaier's method (2008) and upcoming studies could investigate further dimensions of website persuasiveness and correlate these findings with the available data from the current analysis. Future studies may wish to be based on preliminary qualitative and quantitative data in order to elucidate online customers' needs. Additionally, forthcoming studies would explore how website persuasiveness affects consumer behavior. Additional research could gather information concerning web clients' loyalty and retention, reservation history as well as collect data from individuals who have proceed to make reservations from a hotel's website and those who did not, in order to find out the reasons behind such a behavior. In spite of the limitations mentioned above, it can be argued that the findings of the current research contribute considerably to the comprehension of the persuasive design of hotel websites and serve as a base line for further studies in investigating the Internet as a persuasive marketing tool.

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# The Importance of Search Engine Optimization for Tourism Websites

Agisilaos Konidaris and Erato Koustoumpardi

**Abstract** In this paper we initially present the importance of search engine optimization (SEO) for tourism Websites. We present the most important metrics that affect SEO such as display speed, quality and quantity of content, mobile responsiveness, inbound links and the technologies that they use. All these metrics greatly affect search engine rankings and consequently online bookings. To assess how SEO is implemented on a tourism related domain we examine a sample of almost 400 Tourism business websites on the island of Kefalonia in Greece. We provide cumulative results for more than 20 important SEO metrics for these Websites. Our case study shows that SEO metrics have been optimized for about 25% of these Websites and need extensive optimization for the rest. The basic idea in this paper is to study and evaluate the state of SEO on a specific tourism destination (Kefalonia) and provide insights for the next steps that need to be implemented in order to improve search engine rankings. We also correlate SEO optimization to search engine position. This has been done by introducing a general SEO grade as a combination of important SEO metrics for every Website, taking into account their relative significance. This correlation proves that more optimized websites rank better for generic queries in their category. SEO is very important in Tourism since it helps search engines figure out what each page is about, and how it may be useful to users. This paper proves that SEO plays a significant role for tourism website rankings and that there is a lot of room for improvement for a large number of tourism websites.

**Keywords** Search engine optimization · Web performance · Tourism websites  
Google ranking · Tourism destination

**JEL Classification** Z33

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## 1 Introduction

The Tourism Industry today relies heavily on search engines. The results of a Google study (Think with Google, 2015) show that online search engines continue to dominate the travel industry with 60% of leisure travelers and 55% of business travelers using them to research and plan travel. Other studies (Chitika, 2013) show that around 92% of natural clicks come from page one of Search Engine Result Pages (SERPs), 4.8% of clicks come from page two and only 1.1% come from page three. Also, 41% of unsuccessful searches after the first SERP choose to refine their keyword/search phrase or their chosen search engine (O'Neill & Curran, 2011). Finally, 80% of completely unsuccessful searches are followed by a keyword refinement (O'Neill & Curran, 2011). Users also seem to trust the first SERP results, even in cases where an unknown brand appears before than a well-known one (Dou et al., 2010).

Most tourist bookings today start on a search engine (Think with Google, 2015). As a result, more and more tourist businesses pursue an effective presence on search engines. The success of a website on SERPs is a result of various coexisting factors such as: page speed, quality and quantity of content, clarity, accuracy of page titles/descriptions and page refresh rate. Better SERP positioning leads to more website visitors which in general leads to an increase in online sales (Heinze et al., 2010; Hsing et al., 2010). SEO is a marketing discipline focused on growing visibility in organic (non-paid) search engine results (MOZ.com, 2016-2). Search Engine Optimization (SEO) should be a main component of any industry's marketing plan, but for the travel industry it's absolutely essential (Pan et al., 2011). Usually, an optimized Website is rewarded by a good position on SERPs (Parkinson, 2016). SEO techniques require a number of constant actions in order to improve SERP rankings. In this paper we study SEO optimization and its implications for tourism related websites on a well known Greek destination, the island of Kefalonia. We have studied a sample of over 400 tourism business websites belonging to businesses on the island and report on the results concerning SEO adoption and implementation on these websites. We argue that the online visibility of a tourism destination relies on the quality and rankings of the destination's websites. A destination doing well in terms of tourist flows must be doing well in online visibility and tourism business websites. Furthermore, based on the data collected from these websites, we attempt to create a new cumulative SEO metric that relies only on technical SEO factors in order to research the correlation between technical SEO and SERP rankings. In this paper we focus on the largest web search engine which is Google and provide a novel methodology to evaluate tourism destination websites.

## 2 Related Work

The tourism industry is one of the world's largest industries (Statista, 2017). In travel and tourism, search engines have become one of the important sources for Internet users to access travel products (TIA, 2008). The essential factors for any e-business include website design as well as techniques that increase website visitors. SEO is nowadays more important than ever and it is necessary for every webmaster to understand its true meaning as well as its potential. Many researchers have extensively studied the effect of SEO on search engine rankings and its influence in increasing website visitors.

An overview of search engine optimization strategies and pitfalls are described in (O'Neill & Curran, 2011). Optimized websites obtain better rankings, and typically get a higher number of visitors (Yalcin & Kose, 2010).

Other authors (Wang et al., 2011) suggest the creation of profiles for user's behaviors while searching information on the Internet, and then optimizing websites based upon the characteristics collected through the profiling in order to acquire the desired results of achieving higher page rankings. This approach helps in grabbing attention of web surfers.

In (Cui & Hu, 2011) the authors highlight the specific requirements for optimizing search queries, and present novel website building and design concepts based on empirical research. Another research study (Zhu & Wu, 2011) proposed a research analysis on SEO by using reverse engineering factors and built a system that automatically crawled 200,000 web pages. For that the authors used five factors of SEO: URL length, keyword that appears in URL domain, keyword density in HI, keyword density in title and URL layers.

The use of SEO plug-ins and its positive impact on increasing the number of visitors to a website is discussed in (Hidayanto et al., 2012). In (Rimbach et al., 2007) the authors examine various page ranking techniques and their impact on marketing and sales. They conclude that various strategies should be used in order to attract potential customers. The pros and cons of using SEO techniques on websites is described in (Akram et al., 2010). The authors have concluded that they are essential to increasing profits.

The identification of the SEO techniques that have the most impact on search engine ranking has been discussed in (Duklan, 2015) with the use of k-means cluster analysis for clustering various SEO techniques.

A very interesting white paper (Tober et al., 2014) deals with the definition and evaluation of factors that have a high rank correlation-coefficient with organic search results, a methodology similar to ours. They found that content is the most important factor for ranking which is the same result that we have concluded in this paper.

### 3 Methodology

In this paper we present the results that were the outcome of a study of over 400 local tourism business websites on the island of Kefalonia in Greece. We evaluate the state of SEO on a specific tourism destination (Kefalonia island in Greece) during the period between September 2016 and January 2017. The websites were selected based on specific criteria (presented below) and the goal was to evaluate them in terms of successful SEO practices and conclude on what was done right and what still needed to be implemented. We selected the websites based on the following criteria:

1. The websites should represent individual tourism related businesses (e.g. hotels, restaurants, villas etc.) of local interest. This means that web travel portals and websites belonging to large international brands were not included. We aimed to evaluate websites that actually belong to local small businesses.
2. The websites should be present in the 100 first results on Google for a popular keyword in their category. We used Google Trends to identify the most popular keywords for every tourism business category we included in our study.
3. The tools that we used to evaluate more than 50 metrics that affect SEO were the following: Seoptimer, Seoprofiler, Website Grader, W3techs, Builtwith and Wappalyzer.

The methodology that we followed is summarized in the following steps:

1. **Identify tourism related categories.** Initially we identified 24 business categories broadly related to tourism that we aimed to include in our study. These were: Activities, Boat rentals, Yacht rentals, Cruises, Café-bars-clubs, Civil engineers, Construction, Ferries-tickets, Hotels, Lawyers, Real estate, Rent a car, Pastry shops, Restaurants, Shopping-gifts, Local products, Services, Suites-apartments, Studios-rooms, Super market, Grocery stores, Travel agencies, Villas, Weddings-Catering-Flowers-Wedding services.
2. **Use Google Trends to identify the most popular keywords used in every category.** This process was not straightforward because we were studying a very niche market (tourism in Kefalonia) that does not experience a substantial amount of web searches in many of the identified categories. Thus it was a difficult task to identify the most popular keywords in some of the aforementioned categories.
3. **Use Google Search to research the identified most popular keywords in every category.** During this step we were cautious so that personal browsing preferences would not interfere in the SERP rankings. To ensure that browsing preferences would not interfere in the ranking process we always used anonymous browsing. Our research was conducted on google.co.uk because the basic travel market of Kefalonia island is the UK.
4. **Analyze every identified Website URL homepage.** We used Seoptimer, Seoprofiler, Website Grader, W3techs, Builtwith, Wappalyzer to analyze the identified domains for more than 50 SEO metrics.

## 4 SEO Metrics

In the following paragraphs we present and analyze the most important metrics that were documented and then summarize our key findings for every metric in Table 1. The key SEO metrics that we evaluated for the 400 websites that were in our sample were the following:

**Top level domain (TLD).** The TLD selection should rely on the website target audience and the type of business. For example a “.gr” TLD gives a signal to a search engine that the websites content is targeted towards users in Greece. This is not true for a tourism related business. Every domain name has a suffix that indicates which top level domain (TLD) it belongs to. Nowadays there are many TLD options. It can be a country suffix or ccTLD (such as .gr, it, .zm, .de), a generic suffix or gTLD, indicating a business or organization category (such as .com, .net, .org) or even one of the new TLDs (.holiday, .villas, .apartments, .blog etc.).

**Second-level domain (SLD).** The SLD is the portion of the domain name that is located immediately to the left of the dot of the domain name suffix (TLD). Research has shown that the average SLD characters for the 100,000 top domains worldwide are 9 and domains with up to 10 character SLDs are considered easy to memorize (Gaebler.com, 2009; Search Engine Journal, 2013). Also we study the use of dashes in the SLD which has proved not to be necessary for word separation in search engines.

**Page title tag and the meta-description.** These are some of the most important factors when it comes to On Page optimization. These elements work together and can influence a Web page’s CTR (Click Through Rate) on a SERP since this is the information about a page that search engine users first see when searching. The content of the title and description tags is very important as is their length, since Google has a uniform SERP structure providing a very specific space for every result. This space is about 60 characters for the title and about 155 characters for the description. This space should be fully taken into advantage and used in the best way as to get users to click on it.

**The content of the title.** This is another important SEO metric. The title summarizes what a user will expect to find on a website and must be completely relevant to the content. In our case we have researched the presence of the toponym “kefalonía” which is the name of the island all of the websites in our study refer to. It is a good practice to include the toponym in the title of a tourist business website because the toponym is almost always among the most popular keywords that a user searches for according to our Google Trends research.

**Use of Heading tags.** The existence of heading tags in website pages provides a visible structure to a page. It is extremely useful to have heading tags on a page since they make the content stand out and more legible. For search engines, headings provide a good signal about the quality of a page. They also use them to “understand” what the webmaster thinks is important on that page.

**Multiple occurrences of a key term in page text.** The multiple occurrence of a key term implies that a page is related to this term. In the case of this study it seems

**Table 1** SEO results and best practices

Metric	Result	Best practice proposed
Top level domain (TLD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 57% of Websites use the .gr suffix</li> <li>• 39% use the .com suffix</li> <li>• 4% use the other ending</li> </ul>	Use of .com domain
Second-level domain (SLD).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18% 3–10 char</li> <li>• 69% 11–20 char</li> <li>• 13% 21–34 char</li> </ul>	9 characters max
Use of dashes in SLDs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 73% of websites do not use dashes in SLD</li> <li>• 27% of websites use dashes in SLD</li> </ul>	Dashes are not necessary for word separation
Generic keyword (toponym) in SLD (Study toponym: kefalonia)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 31% of SLDs contained the term kefalonia in some spelling variation</li> <li>• 97% of those using the term used the exact spelling (kefalonia)</li> </ul>	Google prefers branded domains
Title tag	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 64% of the websites had up to 60 characters in their title</li> <li>• 36% of the websites had more than 60 characters</li> </ul>	60 characters max
Meta description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 40% had descriptions up to 155 characters</li> <li>• 60% had descriptions longer than 155 characters</li> </ul>	150–160 characters max
Toponym in title	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 65% had the term “kefalonia” in the title</li> <li>• 35% did not have the term “kefalonia” in title</li> </ul>	Use toponym
Toponym in description tag	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 52% use the term “kefalonia”</li> <li>• 48% of the websites do not use the term “kefalonia”</li> </ul>	Use toponym
Use of heading tags	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 29% of the websites do not use any headings</li> <li>• 8% of use the H1 heading</li> </ul>	Use headings
Multiple occurrences of a key term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kefalonia (1264 occurrences)</li> <li>• villas (606 occurrences)</li> <li>• hotel, studio, apartments (220–250 occurrences)</li> </ul>	Use important keywords with caution not to overuse (write for users not search engines)
Hosting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 35% were hosted in Greece</li> <li>• 25% hosted in Germany</li> <li>• 18% hosted in the US</li> <li>• 22% hosted in other countries.</li> </ul>	Host your website in a country or as close to a country where your target audience resides

(continued)

**Table 1** (continued)

Metric	Result	Best practice proposed
Content management system (CMS).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 23% of the Websites use Wordpress</li> <li>• 20% Joomla</li> <li>• 51% did not use a CMS or a CMS could not be detected</li> <li>• 6% use another CMS</li> </ul>	Use a CMS
Page speed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 25% had a loading speed between 0.5 and 3 s</li> <li>• 40% had a loading speed between 3.1 and 6 s</li> <li>• 35% had a loading speed greater than 6 s</li> </ul>	3 s max loading speed
Overall performance grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 28% of the Websites scored between 0.1 and 0.49</li> <li>• 35% scored between 0.5 and 0.69</li> <li>• 37% scored between 0.7 and 0.96</li> </ul>	Scale of 0 (worst) to 1 (best)
Mobile optimization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 45% scored an overall mobile grade between 0 and 0.59</li> <li>• 0.5 scored an overall mobile grade between 0.6 and 0.79</li> <li>• 54.5% scored an overall mobile grade between 0.81 and 1</li> </ul>	Scale of 0 (worst) to 1 (best)
SSL and data security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 79% do not have an SSL certificate</li> <li>• 21% have an SSL certificate.</li> </ul>	Add an SSL certificate to every website
Wordpress version	96% of Websites using Wordpress were not running the latest version of the CMS	Always update to latest version of CMS
Analytics tool availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 52% of the websites were not connected to any traffic measurement tool</li> <li>• 48% used Google Analytics</li> </ul>	Connect your site to an Analytics tool
Social media connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 24% of websites linked to Facebook page</li> <li>• 76% did not link to Facebook</li> </ul>	Create a Facebook business page and link to it from Website
SEO plugin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 96% of websites didn't use a SEO plugin</li> <li>• 4% used Yoast SEO</li> </ul>	Use a SEO plugin
Inbound links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1% had over 70 inbound links</li> <li>• 4% had inbound links between 41 and 70</li> </ul>	Increase quality (high MDA) links

(continued)

**Table 1** (continued)

Metric	Result	Best practice proposed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7% had inbound links between 21 and 40</li> <li>• 88% had inbound links between 0 and 20</li> </ul>	
Moz Domain authority (MDA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All websites had an MDA lower than 40</li> <li>• The vast majority had an MDA ranging from 10 to 15</li> </ul>	Scale of 0 (worst) to 100 (best). Higher MDA is better (MOZ.com, 2016-1)

logical for a website to include several occurrences of the term Kefalonia. The occurrence of a term (not the abuse) is an important SEO factor.

**Availability of a Sitemap.** The availability of a sitemap helps search engines determine the structure of a website and visit its pages.

**Hosting.** Every website is hosted on a Web server. There are many companies that provide hosting around the world. Depending on the technologies used by a Website and their requirements, an appropriate hosting package must be selected. In terms of SEO, hosting is mostly related to page load speed. The hosting country of a Website is generally suggested to be as close as possible geographically to the target group of the Website because this increases their access speed. The geographic location of a company's servers hosting, interconnection speeds and other factors affect the speed of serving requests to sites which they host.

**Content Management System (CMS).** A CMS is online software that can be used for website management. It is usually available for free and removes much of the technical details when implementing and managing a website. Two of the most popular CMS are Wordpress and Joomla. The use of a CMS nowadays is suggested in order to reduce website design, implementation and management cost and time. At the same time the use of a CMS provides expandability with the use of plug-ins and security through constant updates.

**Webpage loading speed and overall performance.** The loading speed of a Webpage is the time it takes for a page to fully load in a browser after a user request is initiated. Studies have estimated that if a page takes longer than 3 s to load the user is more likely to bounce (Schwartz, 2016). Webpage overall performance takes into account several performance factors such as the volume of data, the number of additional files required by a page, loading speed and others.

**Mobile optimization.** Nowadays more than half of Internet users access the web through a mobile device. Mobile optimization of Web pages is the process of ensuring that users will have the optimal mobile experience when accessing a Webpage. This is many times referred to as responsiveness, meaning that a Website should be able to respond and transform its design features according to the user's device specifications. Google is obviously interested in improving user experience and that is why mobile optimization is considered a major factor for SEO.

**SSL and data security.** Data security is one of the most important parameters for internet users, especially when personal data or credit card data are exchanged. SSL (Secure Sockets Layer) is a standard security protocol for establishing encrypted links between a web server and a browser in an online communication. A website may use an SSL certificate to encrypt the data it exchanges with its users something that is considered essential by search engines today (Murray, 2017).

**Analytics tool availability.** Even though this is not considered to be SEO metric we have measured it in our sample of websites to get an idea on how many of the websites are really providing useful feedback to their owners. If a website uses a traffic analytics tool the webmaster can find out how many users visit the website, which country they came from, what pages are visited frequently and a lot of other useful information. The most popular traffic measurement tool is Google Analytics which is free to use.

**Social Media connectivity.** Social Media connectivity is the link between a website and its social media profiles. Since social media is a great way to refer traffic to a website, social media connectivity is considered a SEO factor. In our study we measured the connectivity of Websites to the largest social media network which is Facebook.

**Availability of a SEO plugin.** The most popular CMS software can take advantage of guided SEO software that enables website owners to easily optimize pages. This software is available in the form of plug-ins. The most popular SEO plug-in for Wordpress is Yoast SEO.

**Inbound Links.** Inbound links are considered to be the epitome of Off Page website optimization going back to the Pagerank Algorithm days of Google. More incoming links to a page are a good indication of the value of its content. To evaluate this SEO metric we initially examined the number of links to the homepage of the websites in our sample.

## 5 SEO Results

There are several challenges that websites face in order to improve their SERP presence and position. As far as Kefalonia is concerned, in our sample we observe that there is a group of Web sites (about 25%) that are quite good at SEO. The rest of the websites (about 75%) have many problems in terms of SEO. In Table 1 we present our results in detail and also propose best practices that websites should follow.

The Table above shows that most of the websites in our sample need a lot of work in order to optimize their pages in terms of SEO. The most important factors that they need to look into are:

1. Increasing inbound links
2. Adding SSL certificate



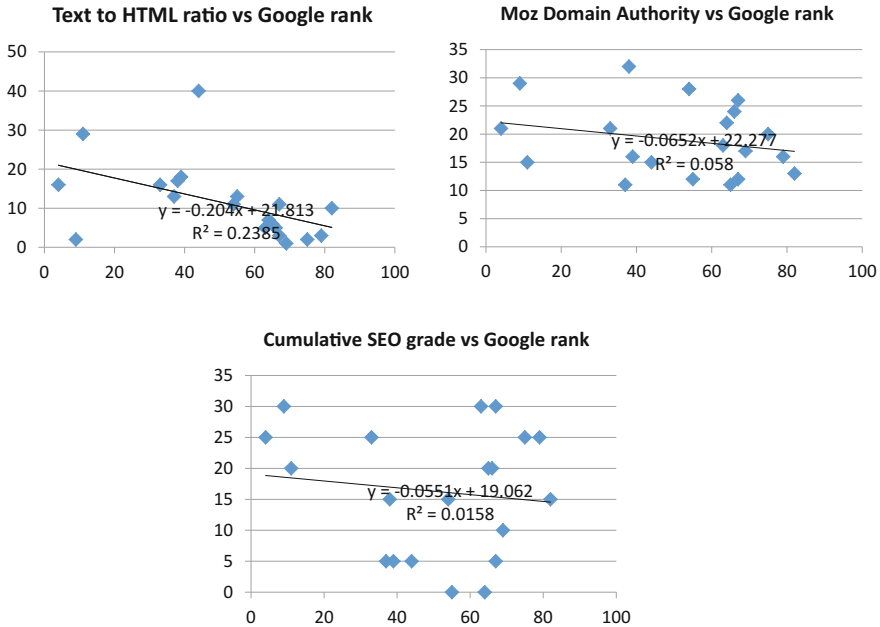
3. Constant renewal of CMS versions (Wordpress or Joomla)
4. Loading time performance
5. Mobile optimization
6. Using the correct keywords in titles and descriptions of Websites as well as keeping title and meta description length within proposed character limits
7. Using headers in text

## 6 SEO and Search Engine Rankings

After presenting the results in our website sample, in this paper we also investigate the correlation of technical SEO factors to Google rankings. There have been other studies that correlate Google rankings to various factors as the number of referring domains, the domain link authority or the length of content (Dean, 2016-2). This study was conducted on a large website sample of 1 million websites. In our case we wanted to study the correlation of technical SEO parameters to the rankings of Tourism related websites in a much smaller domain. The basic question that we wanted to answer is whether there can be a correlation between specific technical SEO factors and Google rankings for travel related websites and if by looking at these technical SEO factors one can have a good idea of where a website will rank compared to another website. Of course this is not an easy task because there are so many factors that play a role in Google rankings. In the context of this paper we narrowed down our travel website sample that we had collected data for to the hotel category. This is because hotel websites showed a better overall score compared to other categories. Our methodology was the following:

1. We initially collected Google rankings for hotels in Kefalonia by using the most popular search term: “kefalonia hotels”. This search term was the result of Google Trends research.
2. We narrowed the research to the 100 first results in Google search and included only the hotel websites that ranked on Google for the selected search term.
3. We then selected 3 key technical SEO metrics based on (Dean, 2016-1) and the knowledge that 3 of the most important ranking factors in Google are Content length, Inbound Links and technical SEO factors. The only metric that we had to depict content length was Text to HTML ratio. Of course this is not a metric of content quality which plays a major role in rankings. It is just an indication that there is significant content on a web page. The second metric selected was Moz Domain authority which is a metric that depicts the probability of a web page to rank well on search engines. The third metric selected was a cumulative SEO grade provided by Hubspot’s Website Grader.

First we analyzed each factor independently in order to find the correlation between Google rankings and each of the selected metrics. In order to do this we



**Fig. 1** Scatter plots of selected SEO metrics versus Google rank

**Table 2** Correlation coefficient of selected metrics to Google rankings

Metric	Text to HTML ratio versus Google Rank (THTML)	Moz Domain authority versus Google rank (MOZ)	Cumulative SEO grade versus Google rank (CSEO)
Correlation coefficient (R)	0.488	0.241	0.126

created the scatter plots of Google ranking versus each selected metric and found the correlation coefficient R for each metric (Fig. 1).

The results for the correlation coefficient are shown in Table 2.

The results above show that the most correlated technical SEO metric to Google rankings is Text to HTML ratio. We found a moderate relationship between Text to HTML ratio and Google rankings. Moz Domain authority and Cumulative SEO grade show a very weak relationship to Google rankings.

Even though the three metrics show moderate to weak correlation to Google rankings for hotel websites for our sample we then try to create a cumulative weighed new metric. We call this metric TMS and calculate its value through the following formula:

$$\text{TMS} = a1 * \text{THTML} + a2 * \text{MOZ} + a3 * \text{CSEO}$$

The idea behind this formula is that we can create a new technical SEO metric which is the product of three other SEO metrics but each does not hold the same weight in its calculation. We include a1, a2 and a3 as weighing constant values which are proportional to the correlation coefficient that was calculated for each of these factors and normalized. This means that a more correlated value to Google rankings should hold more weight in the calculation of the new TMS metric. By normalizing the correlation coefficients shown in Table 2 we calculated a1, a2 and a3 as follows:

$$a1 = 0.5713$$

$$a2 = 0.2818$$

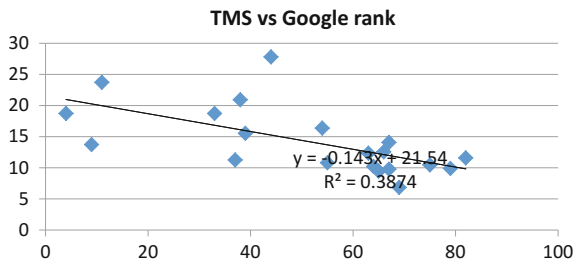
$$a3 = 0.1469$$

After the definition of a1, a2 and a3 we went on to calculate the new TMS values for all the websites in our sample and created the scatter plot for TMS versus Google rankings shown (Fig. 2).

The scatter plot above shows that the correlation coefficient for the TMS to Google Rank (R) is 0.622 which proves a strong relationship between the new TMS cumulative metric to Google rankings. This technique was then used for all other website categories in our sample and showed that TMS improved the actual correlation between technical SEO and Google rankings.

The calculation of the TMS metric relies on the concept that content is the most important factor for improving Google rankings. This seems logical and has been the result of numerous other studies. In this paper though we correlate pure technical SEO factors that can be easily extracted with the use of free tools to Google rankings. Even though the actual position on Google cannot be calculated this concept can have very positive results in comparing websites and concluding on how they would rank comparatively on Google.

Fig. 2 Scatter plot of TMS versus Google rank



## 7 Conclusion

In this paper we analyzed over 400 travel related business websites on a well known Greek travel destination which is the island of Kefalonia. Our analysis has shown that these websites need more work on SEO and that they need to especially improve specific SEO factors. Correlating SEO to Google rankings is not easy because it is well known that Google ranking takes into account more than 200 parameters. Furthermore content quality is a major factor for better Google rankings and this is not a technical SEO issue. In this paper we have attempted to correlate Google ranking to 3 key technical SEO metrics through the creation of a new cumulative and weighed metric called TMS. We have shown that Text to HTML ratio is a significant factor in Google rankings and TMS has a strong relationship to Google rankings. Of course our research can be extended much further to other website categories besides travel and it would be interesting to compare Website TMS between samples of different travel destinations to conclude on destination online reputation based on Google rankings.

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# Multi-Criteria Decision Making in the Evaluation of the Thematic Museums' Websites

Katerina Kabassi and Aristotelis Martinis

**Abstract** The scope of this paper is on presenting an evaluation model for evaluating and comparing the websites of thematic museums. The particular evaluation model has been used for evaluating the websites of thematic museums on olives and olive oil using a multi-criteria decision making theory called Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP).

**Keywords** Websites of thematic museums · Multi-criteria decision making Software evaluation · Inspection method · Museums of olives and olive oil Cultural tourism

## 1 Introduction

Museums have traditionally been among the most popular tourists' attractions. Lately, cultural stakeholders are using the websites as a powerful tool for attracting tourist audiences. The usability and functionality of a museum website can only be confirmed through an evaluation experiment. The scope of this paper is on presenting an evaluation model for evaluating and comparing the websites of thematic museums.

The particular evaluation model has been used for evaluating the websites of thematic museums on olives and olive oil using an inspection method. Inspection methods are mainly conducted by experts that comment on specific evaluation criteria. The criteria used in the described evaluation experiment have been selected after a review of the criteria of the inspection models used for evaluating museum website. Furthermore, the proposed method use an elegant way of combining these

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criteria using a multi-criteria decision making theory called Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP). AHP uses pair-wise comparisons between criteria and alternative museum websites. This process results in calculating a final value for each museum website and form a final classification of the websites of the olives and olive oil museums in Greece. The comparative study of the websites of the thematic museums of olives and olive oil in Greece can provide useful conclusions for software engineers and cultural stakeholders, in general.

## 2 Evaluation Experiment

AHP (Saaty, 1980) is one of the most popular MCDM theories. The choice of AHP amongst other MCDM theories is easily made as it presents a formal way of quantifying the qualitative criteria of the alternatives and in this way removes the subjectivity of the result (Tiwari, 2006). The basic steps of the method are:

### 1. Developing a goal hierarchy

- (a) **Forming the overall goal:** The overall goal is to evaluate museum websites
  - (b) **Forming the set of criteria:** The criteria that are used are Usability(uc1: Currency/Clarity/Text comprehension, uc2: Consistency, uc3: Accessibility, uc4: Quality Content, uc5: User interface and metaphors, uc6: Overall presentation-Design, uc7: Structure/Navigation/Orientation, uc8: Interactivity & Feedback, uc9: Multimedia Usability, uc10: Learnability, uc11:Efficiency), Functionality(fc1: Multilingualism,fc2: Multimedia features, fc3: Services-Mechanisms, fc4: Web communities, fc5: Maintainability—Compliance—Reliability, fc6: Adaptivity/adaptability, fc7: Technical issues)
  - (c) **Finding the websites to be evaluated:** The websites that are evaluated are opt-1: Cyclades Olive Museum- Chelmis Olive Mill, opt-2: Olive Tree Museum of Vouves, opt-3: Olive Oil Museum of Thassos, opt-4: Olive & Oil Museum of Pelion, opt-5:Eggares Olive Press.
  - (d) **Forming the hierarchical structure:** In this step the hierarchical structure is formed so that criteria and the alternatives could be combined to pairs.
2. **Setting up a pair-wise comparison matrix of criteria:** In this step a comparison is implemented among the criteria of the same level. As, in this experiment, an inspection method is used, 4 human experts were used to make the pair-wise comparisons of criteria. The group of human expert was formed by 2 experts of software engineering and 2 archaeologists, so that different aspects of view could be taken into account.
  3. **Calculating weights of criteria:** After making pair-wise comparisons, estimations are made that result in the final set of weights of the criteria.

4. **Ranking the relative importance between websites:** In this step, the relative importance between each pair of websites in terms of a criterion will be assessed in order to calculate a value for each one of the websites evaluated.
5. **Calculating AHP values:** Finally, an AHP value is calculated for each website and these values are used for ranking the websites. The calculation of the AHP values revealed that the best alternative was opt-2, which was rather expected as it is a complete webpage and, additionally, has VR tour of the museum. However, the distance from the second is not big. Indeed, the AHP value of opt-5 is also very high, which shows the good quality of the website. A medium website was considered opt-1 and the other two had very low AHP values which show that their quality should be improved either by enriching their content and/or improving their design.

### 3 Conclusion

AHP has not been used before in museum websites' evaluation experiments despite the fact that many experiments have been implemented for evaluating or comparing museum Websites. So taking into account the suitability of AHP for evaluating websites and the lack of such experiments for museums' websites, we have used AHP for the implementation of the evaluation experiment.

AHP provides a formal way of quantifying the qualitative criteria of the museum websites and, therefore, is considered ideal for being combined with an inspection method of evaluation. Furthermore, the method's ability in making decisions by making a pair-wise comparison of qualitative and quantitative criteria and also its ability to model expert opinion are other reasons of its selection against other alternatives for evaluating museum websites. Indeed, AHP not only gets the most important museum website but also ranks the websites that are evaluated by conducting pair-wise comparisons for all estimated alternatives. Therefore, AHP seems very effective for the evaluation of several websites of thematic museums and not just one.

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# The Impact of Social Media on the Lodging Performance of Five Star Hotels in Malta

Simon Caruana and Gabriella Farrugia

**Abstract** The intention of this study was to find out how five star hotels operating in Malta and Gozo are actually utilising social media and the main focus of usage. Another question posed was whether they are in a position to measure the degree of success in its use to attract more visitors to their establishment. The analysis confirmed some of the trends that are commonly mentioned in literature. However, there were also some conflicting results. While the importance of social media is clearly defined and its importance as a communication medium with the consumers was seen as fundamental, it appears that social media is not being used to its full potential. Moreover, while it does have an impact on the booking behaviour of consumers, hotels are finding difficult to establish a direct link with the occupancy rate. These outcomes suggest that further investment in training in social media use and analysis of the data generated by social media is required. Various analysis tools are available but up till the time of this study, very few were used to their full potential. That said, it is also clear that further research needs to be done given that the uptake of social media by the hospitality sector is constantly on the increase and some establishments are investing in human resources in order to have the right people with the right skill set in relation to analysis of social media related data.

**Keywords** Social media · Five-star hotels · Lodging performance

**JEL Classification** O3 · Z32

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## 1 Introduction

This social media evolution has strongly impacted the hospitality industry. Social media is becoming increasingly crucial, (Pan & Crotts, 2012) due to the nature of tourism products which is mostly composed of intangible elements and based on experiences. In addition, technology today is gradually becoming more reachable particularly to the average traveler, thus enabling them to contribute information online.

This development which happened over a short period of time and ongoing, is why social media is referred to as a phenomenon which gave rise to countless amounts of studies, including this one. This study focuses on the use of social media in five star hotel in Malta, moreover it studies the link between hotel social media presence to lodging performance i.e. the occupancy in a hotel.

### 1.1 *The Aim and Objectives of the Research*

The aim of the following research is to discover how five star hotels are using social media, and whether such use is affective in contributing to real returns. To reach this aim the following objectives were identified:

1. To discover the importance being given to social media in five star hotels in Malta.
2. To investigate whether the use of social media in five star hotels in Malta at par with other countries.
3. To identify the main social media platforms being used by five star hotels in Malta, and comparing these to those being used by customers.
4. To find out whether social media goals being set by five star hotels in Malta are actually being reached.
5. To find out whether there is a link between social media presence and the lodging performance of a five star hotels in Malta.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 *Hotels and Social Media*

Halpern Lanz, Wiener Fischhof and Lee (2010) argue that those who ignore social media stand to become irrelevant. But should hotels or any other business just dive into the world of social media just because a lot of organisations are doing so?

The Hotel Managers Group (2013) acknowledge social media as a tool for hotel success but put emphasis on the importance of commitment and effort which is

needed to succeed. Thus referring to one of the most important rules of social media marketing: not to become involved with it unless you frequently have something new and interesting to say. This is essential if the organisation would like to keep and increase followers.

Halpern Lanz et al. (2010) also conducted a study of the use of social media by international hotel brands. They highlight innovative ways how international hotel brands are using social media, some examples are the following; InterContinental Hotels had partnered with Communispace and created private online communities for their IHG loyalty program. This way through social marketing InterContinental managed to put loyal customers at the center of everything. Another example given is that of Hilton Hotels, where fans of any Hilton Caribbean hotel can download a \$50 resort credit redeemable at check-in. The journal gives further examples highlighting that besides these innovative ideas these hotels use social networks such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. These are both examples on how hotels find ways to increase and retain their followers in the hope that it will consequently increase their hotel visitors.

Thus it is clear that social media for a hotel can have many roles and not only in marketing. Social media unlike other media gives you the chance to communicate with your existing and potential customers on a very direct level. Two way communication is not possible with traditional media such as adverts in newspapers, on television etc. It is essential that the social media department has to be in line with the hotel's vision, strategy and company values. Therefore a strategy must be created which aims to reach the hotel's vision, strategy and value as social media showcases the hotel, not only the building but also the atmosphere and character.

## ***2.2 Social Media Strategies***

Many businesses today employ social media as a marketing tool, therefore in some cases social media is implemented into the marketing strategy. Nowadays, due to its growing complexity, a lot of organisations are opting to create a separate strategy i.e. a social media strategy. Using social media without having a direction might be destructive. Boyd and Ellison (2007) argue that the first step in creating a social media strategy is to have relatively clear objectives of what you want to accomplish by using social media.

One example of a social media strategy is by Baer (2012) designed for Convince and Convert Digital Marketing Advisors. This particular guide encourages organisations to be more authentic and less digital, Baer (2012) in particular recommends that companies should focus more on how to BE social, and less on how to DO social media. For example a blog posting on the Hootsuite website (aimed at facilitating social media uptake by organisations) provides a process of creating a social media strategy made up of five steps (Lepage, 2013):

1. Clarify your business' social media goals
2. Audit your current social media status
3. Develop your content strategy
4. Use analytics to track progress
5. Adjust your strategy as needed.

Lepage (2014), stresses on the importance of having a plan; you can't just "wing it" anymore. When so much of the business is now influenced, even dependent, on social media success, having a plan is essential. Rampton (2014) took a slightly different angle by listing six reasons that contribute to the failure of social media strategies. These were:

1. Values Don't Match
2. Not Consistent
3. Misunderstanding How Social Media Really Works
4. Not Providing Anything Different
5. Shouting not Listening
6. Lack of Monitoring and Measuring.

While it is possible to find different strategies arising from different fields and professions, it is observed that may have similar ideas. However, one can make a distinction between those that are rather technical (probably originating from and ICT-based field) and others that not technical at all (non ICT origin).

### ***2.3 Social Media in Five Star Hotels***

Five star hotels are associated with luxury and besides providing accommodation to guests they thrive to create a memorable experience. Soler and Mackenzie (2011), claim that more than any other type of hotels, the role for social media is for marketing luxury. The reason behind his claim is that with a social media campaign one would make the dream a little more real to the potential guest. Through various charts, five star hotels always classified on top of having the best campaigns in various charts such as Top Hotels for Social Media Lovers (Greenhalgh, 2014) and Social Hotel Awards by HOTELS magazine (Greenhalgh, 2013). Few of the most successful five star international hotels mentioned are; Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts and The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company. Mayle (2013), conducted a study about luxury travelers focusing on America and one important finding was that TripAdvisor holds a greater share of reviews for luxury hotels (53.1%) than for non-luxury hotels (39.2%).

Another aspect which links social media and five star hotels was the movement from mass tourism to a more tailored stay; this is due to people in this day and age seeking individualisation. Individualisation is when you discriminate an individual from a generic group, in our case tourists. A level of individualisation is being reached in five star hotels with social media, not through advertisement but through

direct, individual replies on various networks such as; TripAdvisor, Twitter and Facebook. Greenhalgh (2014), refers to a Loews spokesperson who view social media as a great tool personalize their guests' experience and make them feel special during their stay. He goes on to argue that international five star luxury hotels are striving to achieve customer personalization and individualisation, with for example the use of a 24/7 monitoring system and ensuring that any queries or complaints dealt with within 4 h. Do five star hotels in Malta and Gozo have the same standards?

Vining (2012) argues that five stars hotels have a slight advantage on four star hotels and less when it comes to social media, because the luxury brand hotels would make a bigger impression and create more social media buzz when the guest shares. Since the amenities found in such hotels won't be found in 4 star or less hotels, thus they'll be worth sharing with a social network, with the hope that the user's followers will recognize and respect their ability to consume such unique experiences.

## ***2.4 Existing Social Media Studies About Malta***

Social media is a relatively new phenomenon around the world and in Malta it is no exception. In Malta one can observe an imbalance in the use of social media, and even though apps such as Instagram, Whatsapp and Pinterest are gaining popularity, Facebook still remains noticeably at the top, being used by both businesses and individuals. This is very evident when compared to the micro blogging site Twitter, which is widely used in other countries. A study by Ballve (2013) suggests that Twitter has more users than LinkedIn, Instagram or Pinterest.

In 2013 Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union, published another study on ICT usage in enterprises in 2013 including all 28 member countries. The general outcome on a European Union scale was that 30% of enterprises were using social media in 2013. According to Eurostat in (2013) Malta has the largest percentage of social media usage among the twenty eight members, at 55%. Though this does not mean that all the Maltese enterprises are using social media in the best way, in fact according to Eurostat Malta has a share of only 14% when it comes to enterprises having a formal policy for using social media for their business. Other results from this study show that Malta holds a top ranking when it comes to social networking sites (52%), while as commented above it has a low score (12%) when it comes to blogs or micro blogs like Twitter.

One of the main private research entities in Malta, Misco, carried out a study with a fair number of participating businesses, including businesses from the hospitality industry (Misco, 2013). The study concluded that 84% of the eighty nine participants use social media. As discussed earlier, this study proves that Facebook is still the most widely used social media networking website in Malta by businesses followed by LinkedIn and YouTube. This study carried out by Misco also goes into details such as the impact of social media on retaining current customers

and acquiring new customers, and also measuring the return on investment, where 38% consider it rather difficult to determine. This study will be of great interest in order to compare the data gathered from five star hotels in Malta and Gozo.

These studies appear to suggest that the prevalent application used by Maltese businesses was Facebook. Other social platforms are less used even if they are very popular abroad. This suggests that hotels should choose the social media they will be using according to the audience they are targeting and not according to the trends within the location country.

The Malta Tourism Authority published a report regarding Future Employment Opportunities (EMCS, 2011) based upon a study by the EMCS Consortium. It makes reference to social media and new technologies not only as a national employment opportunity for all industries, but even on more specific terms in the hotel/catering industry where one of the skills needed was found to be; using new technology to communicate with customers. Another discovery by this report was how ICT in general, which also includes social media, has facilitated considerably communication. More importantly the report determined that most accommodation entities in Malta understand the magnitude of the influence of ICT and online marketing on their business, indicating the importance of online presence and the constant increase in online sales bookings.

This report also indicates very clearly growing importance of new media in Maltese businesses and therefore the need of professionals capably of exploiting the potential of social media.

## ***2.5 Concluding Remarks***

Social media is constantly evolving, with the creation of new social networking sites, new apps and new innovative ways of socializing and communicating online. However, it still is not clear how certain businesses integrate within their business strategy their social media and the resulting interaction with followers. Some seem to be blindly jumping into this social media trend, which to some or to several is still very much unknown.

Many hotels all over the world are engaging with media, inventing new ways on how to interact with their followers, hoping to entice them to choose their hotel. Malta is no exception though lack of studies and interest on the matter has provided the sector with mixed results. There are best practices such as “Twitter by the Pool” at the Corinthia St George’s Bay where guests instead of leaving their deck chairs to order a cool cocktail they can just tweet their order which will be then delivered by a hotel employee. This was also featured in Greenhalgh’s book *HOTELS: Best Social Media Practices Guide* (Greenhalgh, 2014). However it is evident that more research is required.

### 3 Methodology

The methodology involved obtain data from both the 5 star hotel category in Malta but also from past or potential guests of these hotels. Different approaches were adopted for each group.

A qualitative approach was chosen for the 5 star hotel sector. According to the Malta Tourism Authority (2015) 2014 Statistics there were fifteen hotels which are listed as five star hotels. From fifteen hotels, nine hotels were successfully interviewed using two different methods; one to one session and due to limitations such as busy schedules; interviews were also sent via email. One to one sessions was the best method as it provided the researcher with much more detail.

In order to ensure that all important points were covered during the in-depth interviews a number of questions were designed in order to cover comprehensively the following areas:

1. The importance of social media in five star hotels
2. Social media strategy in five star hotels
3. The return of investment from social media
4. The impact of social media on hotel overall revenue
5. The impact of social media on the lodging performance of five star hotels in Malta.

On the other hand, quantitative methods was used with the client group. Data was collected through an online short survey made accessible to non-Maltese and Maltese people who had stayed in a Maltese hotel.

The population which is significant for this long essay is that of the total number of beds in five star hotels in Malta and Gozo this being: 7210 beds. This was established using the Malta Tourism Authority Edition 2014 Statistics (MTA, 2015). This implied that with a sample of at least 147 respondents there would be a maximum confidence margin of error of 8% assuming a 95% confidence level.

This sample was collected through two social media channels, Twitter and Facebook. Facebook; to ensure that respondents had visited Malta specific groups were targeted, that is:

1. Malta Holiday Experiences—<https://www.facebook.com/groups/MaltaHolidays/>
2. MALTESE PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD—<https://www.facebook.com/groups/maltesepeoplearoundtheworld/?ref=browser>
3. Paradise Diving Malta—<https://www.facebook.com/groups/115712895120659/?ref=browser>
4. MALTA LOVE—<https://www.facebook.com/groups/563218783744527/?ref=browser>
5. Golden Bay Malta—<https://www.facebook.com/groups/347037795370448/?ref=browser>

6. Restaurants in Malta—The Good, The Bad, The Rip-Offs—<https://www.facebook.com/groups/restaurantsinmalta/>
7. Españoles en Paceville (MALTA)—<https://www.facebook.com/groups/172988329483064/?ref=browser>.

On the other hand a more direct approach was taken when using Twitter by using hash tags such as; #holiday #Malta and #hotel, this lead to the identification of individuals which have tweeted about their stay in one of the five star hotels in Malta or Gozo.

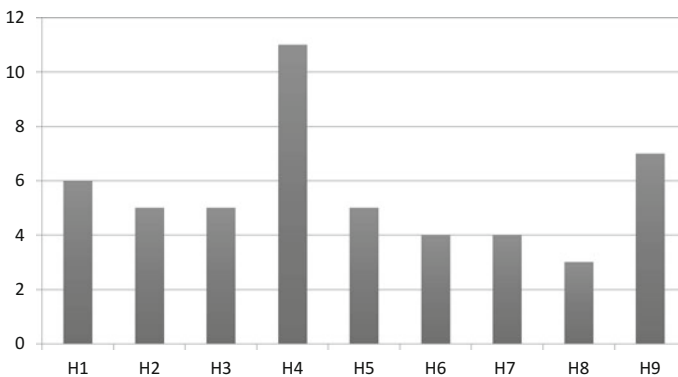
## 4 Analysis and Results

### 4.1 *The Importance of Social Media in Five Star Hotels*

Figure 1 illustrates how long the interviewed five star hotels have been using social media. Results range from 11 to 3 years, though one cannot compare one hotel to another since the hotels where all opened on different years. However it is observed that Hotel 4 has been using social media for the last 11 years, which can almost be taken as a benchmark as to the ‘beginning’ of the use of for social media not only in hotels but also in businesses in general in Malta.

To get a better understanding the hotels were asked which social media platforms they use and the results are illustrated in the following page. It is also interesting to note that all hotels have claimed that the first platform they started with was Facebook. Other platforms were mentioned by hotel these are; Flickr, Wordpress Blog and LinkedIn, these fall under the Other caption.

All participants’ classified social media as being very important for their hotel, most respondents justified their classifications by arguing that social media enables two way communication unlike any other media. This ties well with the literature



**Fig. 1** How long has the hotel been using social media?



where it was clear that through social media one can create individualisation, where the hotel can discriminate an individual from a generic group. In other words a tourist is separated from the rest of the tourists, in order to interact on a business-to-peer level. This is above all applicable to five star hotels as five star hotels are moving away from mass tourism and try to give tourist a more tailored stay, and this can be also achieved through social media. This is re-affirmed by a senior manager within a major global hotel chain (The Ritz-Carlton, 2014) (Table 1);

Each engagement with a guest is its own unique interaction. Each social media touch point is an opportunity to grow a relationship and foster a deeper connection with The Ritz-Carlton.

The word cloud in the next page was created by inputting all answers obtained from the following question. “What are the main reasons why the management team decided to start using social media?” The word cloud includes the most common words used by hotel managers. Such illustration analysis itself where one can note that social media is seen by five star hotels as an important marketing and advertising tool to promote their company i.e. hotel to their clients. Four out of nine hotels commented on the fact that social media enables direct contact with customers, with a great description by Hotel 4;

In order to create a more personalized engagement with our customer, hence more effective promotion both through direct promotional information and engagement information.

It seems as five star hotels in Malta do recognise the benefits from using social media, but are they making effective use of the medias full potential?

The final question was about the number of employees which have administrator rights for the hotels’ social media accounts. The answers are illustrated in Table 2 (Fig. 2).

Conflicting arguments were raised during the interviews where several respondents agreed that one employee should have full control in order to maintain both standards and consistency. In contrast, Hotel 8 expressed that they would like to implement employee participation, especially in hours when the one person with

**Table 1** Social media platforms used by five star hotels in Malta

	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	Pinterest	YouTube	Google+	Other
H1	X	X	X		X	X	X
H2	X				X		X
H3	X	X					
H4	X	X	X	X	X		
H5	X	X	X	X			
H6	X	X	X				
H7	X	X	X				
H8	X	X	X	X		X	X
H9	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

**Table 2** Number of employees with administrator rights for the hotels’ social media accounts

Hotel	No. of employees
Hotel 1	2
Hotel 2	2
Hotel 3	1
Hotel 4	2
Hotel 5	6
Hotel 6	2
Hotel 7	2
Hotel 8	1
Hotel 9	4



**Fig. 2** Word Cloud about the main reasons why hotels started using social media (created using: <http://tagcrowd.com/>)

administrator rights is not in the office. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) argue, that a possible approach is to appoint groups of employees whose primary objective would be that of managing the company’s social media, while all other employees are treated as occasional participants. Employee participation is possible and many international companies are adopting such strategy unlike five star hotels in Malta. An example of employee participation is @HiltonSuggests (2015) on Twitter, where Hilton employees tweet suggestions to travellers around the world, described as the second type of concierge (Matthews, 2013).

The limited amount of employees which are able to access and manage the social media platforms in the five star hotels interviewed lead to various issues, for example in Hotel 8 the interviewee claimed that in order to keep up he has to access the platforms even during the weekend when he’s not in the office. In fact when the respondents were asked how often the social media accounts are accessed; 4 out of 9 respondents said that they access all accounts daily, while 4 hotels including Hotel 8 stressed that they access social media a lot! Whereas, Hotel 5 although having the largest amount of employees who can access social media (Table 2) admit that although Facebook is accessed every day the other social media which include Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram (Fig. 1) are only accessed about once or twice a week.

## ***4.2 Social Media Strategy in Five Star Hotels***

The hotels were asked about two main areas. One with regards to the hotel's social media strategy and another one about the hotel's contents plan. Some hotels showed a level of confusion when answering these questions as the distinction between the two seemed unclear. In other words, for some hotels a social media strategy and a content plan are interchangeable. A social media strategy is a more holistic concept and according to Lardi and Fuchs (2013) it includes having a clear target audience and having business objectives for social media use. On the other hand, a content plan is just a content plan, which is a part of the social media strategy but not the social media strategy. According to Lepage (2014) the company's social media strategy should include a content plan, containing of strategies for content creation, content curation and an editorial calendar.

The persons in hotel 5 seemed to understand this distinction and argued that, they discuss what needs to be advertised the most with the heads of departments and plan according to the target audience. When asked about the contents plan hotel 5 answered in the following manner:

We first see the festive days for the year and plan content around them, then fill in our content which depends with what is trending and if anything special is happening at the hotels.

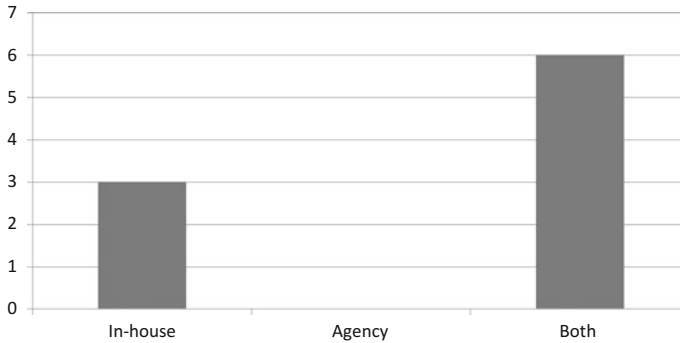
Conversely, hotel 7 argue that they have a monthly strategy for Facebook and Twitter, in addition they have an annual plan for any competitions and creating relations between different channels. Though, when asked about the hotel's content plans he argued that this is the same as described previously when answering a question regarding the hotel's social media strategy. Important remarks emerged while discussing social media strategy, such as the separation of the international and the local marketing, where hotel 9 takes a different approach when targeting the local market where it focuses more on food & beverage and fitness.

Figure 3 explains that three out of nine hotels interviewed stated that they carry out all their social media strategy and content plan in-house, while six out of nine hotels do seek assistances when needed. Though none of the hotels rely exclusively on the services of a marketing agency.

## ***4.3 The Return of Investment from Social Media***

According to Gilfoil and Jobs (2012) the rate of investment (ROI) of social media (SM) has been broadly discussed in various publications. Through a study of these publications Gilfoil and Jobs (2012) pp. 639 summarized the findings in the following range of views:

1. SM ROI cannot be measured; attempts to do so are folly or near impossible



**Fig. 3** In-house or using the services of a marketing agency

2. SM ROI can be measured—but should be defined or specified in a certain way
3. SM ROI can be measured—but only in financial terms
4. SM ROI can be measured—but should be part of a larger, contextual framework or system
5. SM ROI can readily be measured without much difficulty.

Therefore, where do five star hotels in Malta stand? All nine hotels interviewed agreed that social media does give a level of measurable return on investment. With eight out of nine hotels agreeing that this is mostly possible through Facebook. Hotel 8 measured their return of investment through the amount of interactions i.e. through likes and comments et cetera, though this can be classified under another title which is return on engagement (ROE), according to Wetzel (2008), engagement is the new awareness and ROE is the new ROI. Though she moves on to say that ROI should not disappear, but as long as the economy puts down, doubtful faces on every consumer, it's more important than ever to look at those faces, and engage with each and every one of them.

#### ***4.4 The Impact of Social Media on the Lodging Performance of Five Star Hotels in Malta***

According to Buhalis and Law (2008), the impact of new technologies has been acknowledged not only on marketing but also on selling levels. When the hotels were asked whether they think that social media has a direct impact on the hotels' overall revenue Hotel 8 argued that this is mostly possible through TripAdvisor and Booking.com, but eventually if people like what they see they move on to the other platforms. The same argument was raised by Hotel 6 and Hotel 7, hence implying that to a certain extent social media does have an impact on consumer booking

behavior which would hopefully lead to the consumer choosing the particular hotel and hence contributing to the hotels revenue.

Unfortunately, as Xiang and Gretzel (2010) argue that although social media are becoming increasingly important in the online tourism field, there still seems to be a lack of practical data describing and explaining the role of social media in the context of online travel information search. Therefore this explains the uncertainty of five star hotels when answering this particular question where 3 out of 9 answered with a simple yes but were not able to explain their answer, while one hotel choose not to answer this particular question.

From the responses obtained, none of the five star hotel representatives interviewed were able to correlate the hotel's occupancy rate to the hotel's presence on social media. On an international level according to Anderson (2012) there is an absence of a comprehensive attempt to quantify the impact of social media upon the lodging performance as measured by bookings, occupancy and revenue. Anderson moves on to try and quantify such impact through TripAdvisor.

TripAdvisor describes itself as a travel site which provides reviews of travel related content. Although, lately it has applied various changes such as; a function which ties it to Facebook and in addition now it has its own forum, as discussed by Erwin (2012). In fact many studies do categorize TripAdvisor as a social media with Miguens, Baggio and Costa (2008), referring to TripAdvisor as a travel networking website. Such indecisiveness on the matter is reflected in the responses given by five star hotels. Hotel 5 stated that they managed to estimate an approximate correlation between the occupancy rate and their presence on social media, through the use of guest feedback forms. However, Hotel 4 claimed that the hotel occupancy rate derives from different business segments and that it does effect but not to that extent.

## ***4.5 Survey Questionnaires***

As stated in the methodology this research was conducted using a mixed method, therefore apart from the interviews which were already discussed the researcher also conducted survey questionnaires. The survey questionnaires will be analysed in the following section.

## ***4.6 Demographics***

In terms of demographics two questions were asked these are the respondents' age and nationality. These are both important factors, the age is an important factor to analyse since social media has been for a long time associated with a younger generation. On the other hand, nationality is important to analyse in order to

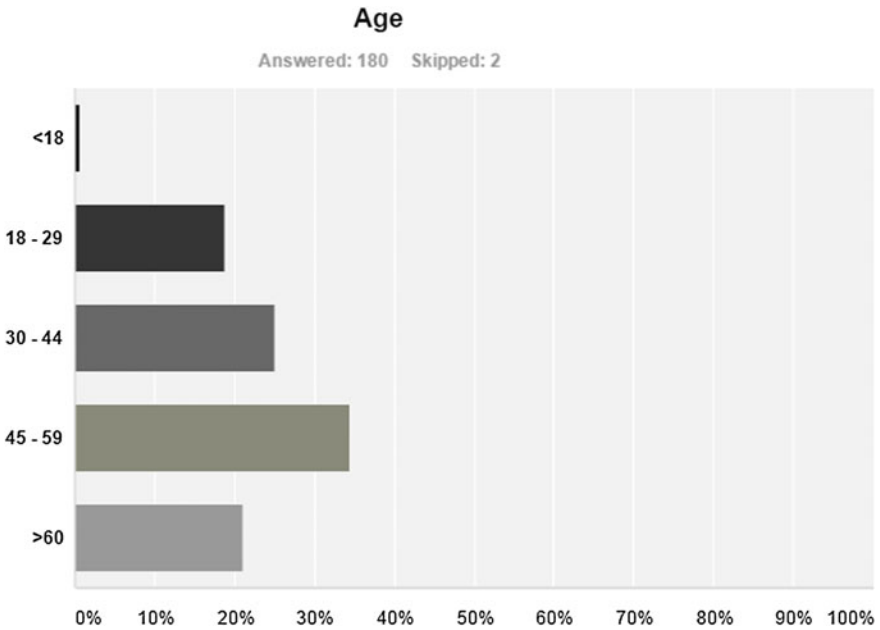


Fig. 4 Age of respondents

observe whether different nationalities favour a particular platform over another (Fig. 4).

As stated earlier the surveys were carried using an online survey creator and eventually collected through the social media platform Facebook. Therefore this is an automatic indication that all respondents use social media, hence this proves that social media today is used by different generations and not only the young.

Figure 5 provides an overview of the nationalities covered by the survey. From the results, it is very evident that the largest amount of respondents are Maltese and British. According to MTA (2015), the total number of inbound tourists which came to Malta from the United Kingdom in 2014 amounted to 454,649, making the UK the top source market in 2014. Therefore this explains the large representation of the UK within this research, which has shown to be the most cooperative.

It must also be noted that the Maltese market is a very important market for five star hotels in Malta as claimed by various hotels interviews, most importantly in the shoulder months where hotels are able to retain a certain level of income through food and beverage outlets open for locals. In addition, locals also do like to enjoy a weekend in a hotel every once in a while.

Facebook is the most commonly used platform by users that frequent Maltese Hotels (Fig. 6) and this seems to mirror the data demonstrated by Fig. 7 that refers to the favourite platforms but on a global scale. The questionnaire also had an Other option where other social media platforms were mentioned such as; SnapChat, Pinterest, WordPress, Skype, YouTube and Flickr.

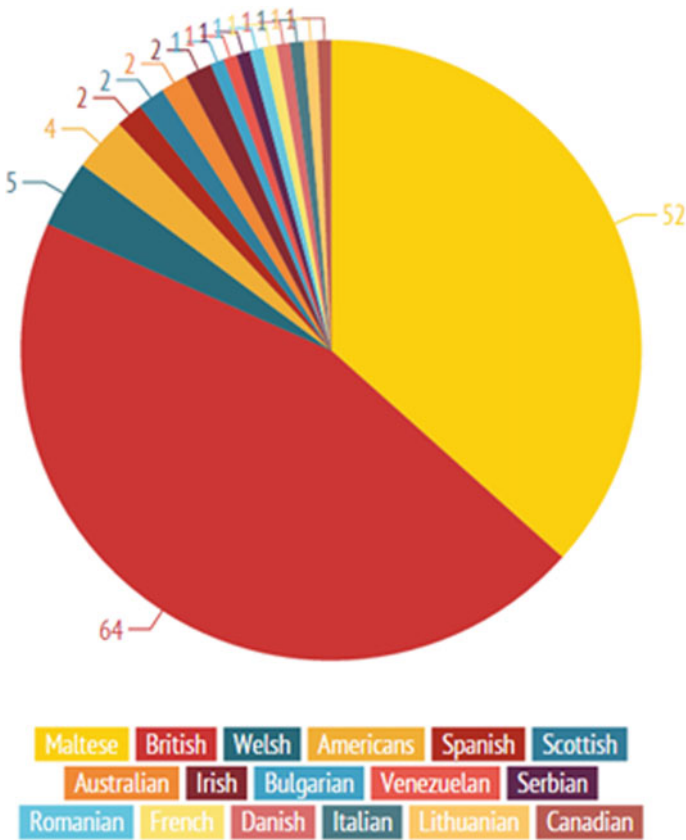
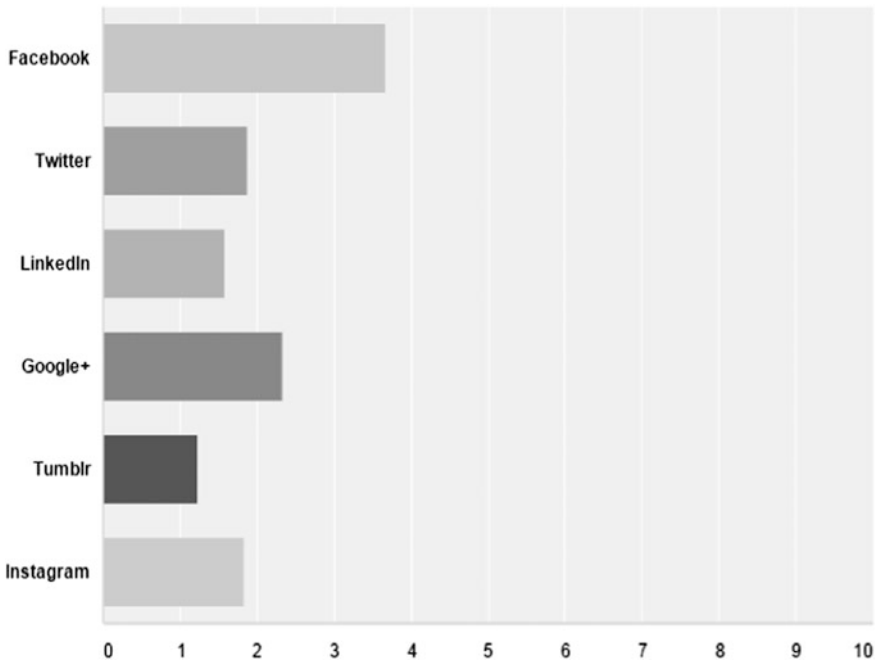


Fig. 5 Nationalities

From the above figure it is very important to note the level of distribution of the data. In the Literature Review chapter it was discussed that those who ignore social media stand to become irrelevant, Halpern Lanz et al. (2010) though Fig. 8 contradicts such statement as 33 respondents argued that it is not at all important that a hotel has a social media presence.

When it came to discussing whether users communicate with the hotel, 83 out of 147 questionnaire respondents have communicated with a hotel using social media, although this accounts to an approximate 57% the number of respondents who never communicated to a hotel using social media is still very high amounting to 62 respondents.

Finally respondents were asked how they feel when a hotel uses social media to keep in contact with them after their stay. Most comments were positive but a number of respondents expressed that they prefer if this is done through an email stating that it is more private, such method has now been practised by hotel for a long time. Though, the use of social media in this aspect can still be kept private



**Fig. 6** Which social media do you use?

through the use of private a message which is featured on most social media platforms. Comments which stood out are the following:

- Respondent #31: Many 5 Star Hotels will send you a Guest Satisfaction Survey via mail days after your departure. I find this to be a bit careless. GSS should be collected from the guest room 2 days prior departure therefore it gives you time to clarify any pending negative issues/comments/experience that the guest might have encountered during the stay. In 5 Star it happened that I also got to receive a post 'Thank You' for staying with us a kind of thing and that's very positive. All in all I think that Social media may be a very effective marketing tool.
- Respondent #51: I think it would help to have direct contact with the hotel especially if you have booked it through a travel agent.
- Respondent #63: Good customer relations. I wasn't just a number, my opinion counts!
- Respondent #118: No problem I get a Christmas Card message every year from a hotel we stayed at few years ago.
- Respondent #125: Not really into hotels spamming me... So I'm not really into them contacting me after my stay. Especially since they're easily contactable if I ever need anything.
- Respondent #131: If the contact is not "invasive" it is fine.



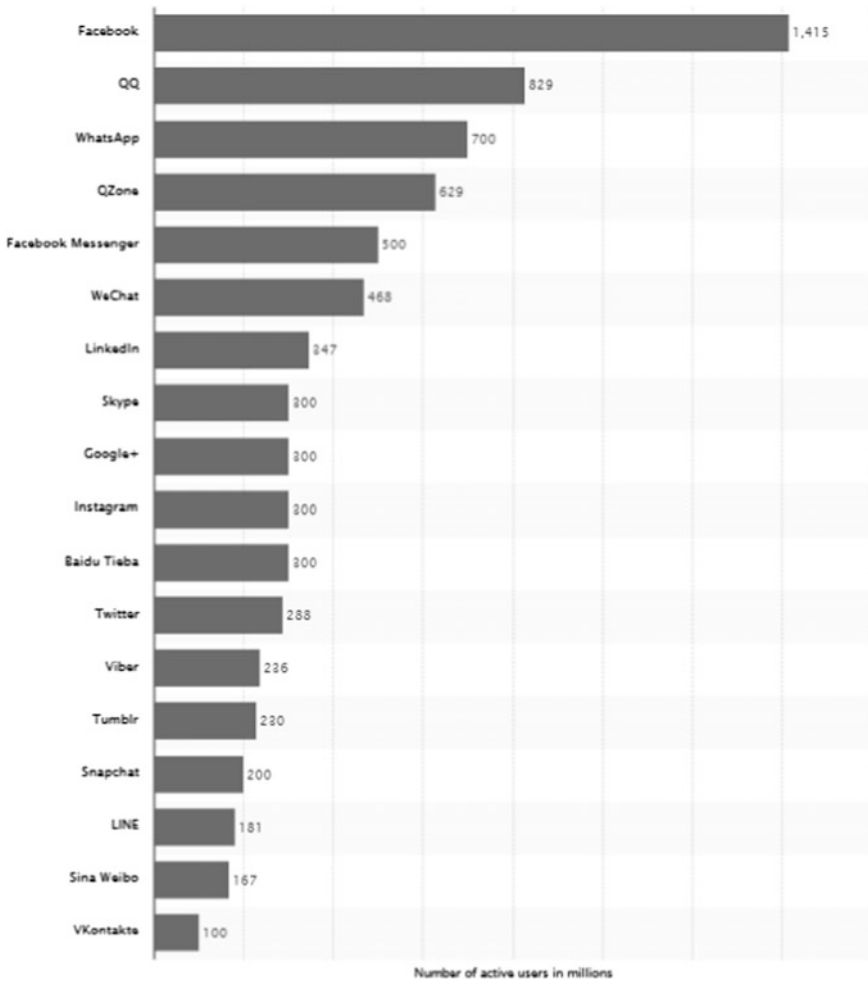


Fig. 7 Leading social networks worldwide as of March 2015 (Statista, 2015)

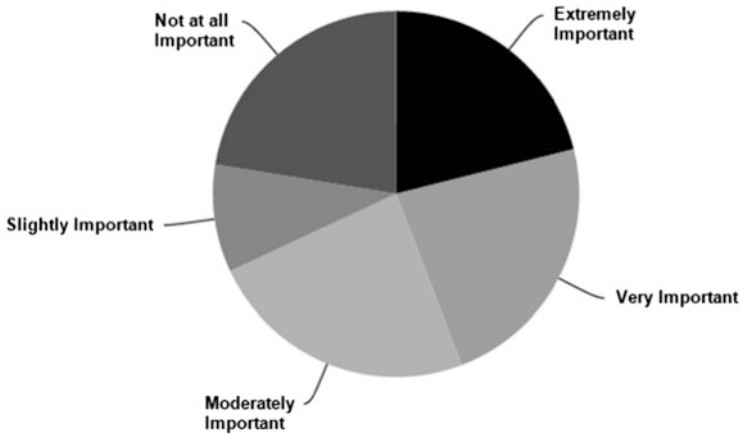
### 4.7 Comparison of Survey Questionnaires with Interviews

Although various interesting views emerged from the survey questionnaires they were fundamentally carried out in order to be able to see the contradictions and agreements between the hoteliers and customers on the subject matter.

As discussed on Fig. 6 interviewed hotels are aware of the importance of Facebook as proven from the questionnaires and nine out of nine hotels. An interesting finding from Fig. 6 was the popularity of Google+ which ranked 2nd right after Facebook, it is very important to note that at the time of this study, only three five star hotels make use of this platform. A more in-depth analysis shows that

### When choosing a hotel how important is it for you that it uses social media?

Answered: 147 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Extremely Important	21.09%	31
Very Important	23.13%	34
Moderately Important	23.81%	35
Slightly Important	9.52%	14
Not at all Important	22.45%	33
Total		147

**Fig. 8** When choosing a hotel how important is it for that it uses social media?

Google+ is very popular in the United Kingdom which is a main source market for Malta this is also proven by Supermonitoring.com which ranks the UK 4th after the USA, India and Brazil (SuperMonitoring, 2012).

The respondents were finally asked whether they ever communicated to a hotel through social media, with results giving a 57% affirmative answer whereas 43% of respondents never communicated to a hotel through their social media profiles. However, none of the hotels expressed any type of concern regarding lack of engagement from customers during interviews.

Figure 8 illustrates a distributed level of data with 31 respondents arguing that a hotel having a social media presence is extremely important for them when choosing a hotel and 34 respondents argue it is very important. On the other hand, 35 respondents argued it is moderately important, 14 respondents said it is slightly important, while 33 respondents claimed that it is not at all important. When

comparing this data to the management's responses regarding the impact of social media on the lodging performance of five star hotels in Malta, one can note a level of uncertainty of whether social media has a direct impact on the occupancy rate through the distribution of data. Yet, the 65 respondents which value a hotel's social media presence when choosing a hotel sustain the answers that the interviewed hotels gave where it was argued that social media does pose an impact on customer booking behavior.

## 5 Conclusion

While it seems that in Malta such an increase in social media usage is mostly noted at a general level i.e. overall studies of the use of social media in businesses, the outcomes of this research seems to suggest that the use of social media use in the hospitality industry is still lagging behind. The results of this study seem to confirm this. A situational analysis of the use of social media in five star hotels determined the following:

1. Social media is very important for five star hotels
2. Social media is mainly seen as a tool which enables two way communication between five star hotels and their existing and potential customers
3. Five star hotels are not as yet using social media to its full potential
4. An unclear distinction between a social media strategy and a social media content plan was noted
5. Five star hotels in Malta are able to measure the social media return of investment
6. Five star hotels in Malta are not yet able to correlate the hotel's occupancy rate to the hotel's social media presence.

Facebook is still the most popular social media platform but Google+ is seen to be gaining popularity surpassing Twitter. This is not only perceived through international studies but also through the sample collected by the researcher. However, only three five star hotels in Malta have Google+ accounts.

It was determined that although it is very hard to establish whether or not social media has an impact on the occupancy rate, social media does have an impact on customer booking behavior which eventually can lead to an affect on a hotel's occupancy rate, though this is not yet proven. It is therefore clear that more research is required in this regard.

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# Augmenting Urban Places' Identities with Novels

Dimitrios Makris and Maria Moira

**Abstract** Location-based Augmented Reality could improve the engagement with real places by experiencing the visiting place in different ways through the perspective of novels' imaginary worlds. We present a framework based on AR approaches, interwoven with a spatio—narrative analysis of novels' content. Two cases are presented; one city as unveiled from different authors' novels and three cities under the gaze of a single writer. We emphasize the increasing potential of novels-based AR medium for a creative and fruitful engagement with places' identities when visiting urban places.

**Keywords** Novels · Narration · Location-based-augmented reality  
Urban place · Identity

## 1 Introduction

Urban sites are multi-layered manifold of socio-cultural heritage where numerous values and content can be experienced. Novels could unveil hidden relationships and varied perspectives based on historical, social, cultural, identities of urban places. Augmented reality (AR) encompasses and includes the real environments of everyday life, moreover it overlays digital content over the reality. AR could engage tourists with pulsating connections between the past and present urban sites' identities. Our aim is to argue that location-based AR integrated with novels provides persuasive ways of understanding urban sites' identities during a tourist voyage. The proposed framework defines new relationships between the real urban

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environment and digital content that is based on novels. Two cases are presented: Heraklion, Crete, and the trilogy of Jerusalem, Cairo and Alexandria.

## 2 Cities and the Novel

Novels offer diverse and varied perspectives based on urban places' historical, social, and cultural identities. Literary critics used maps as analytical tool for text interpretation, while a great number of geo-cartographers enrich mapping representations with literature's content, (Rossetto, 2014). However, the cartographic mapping of narratives has certain limitations in the mixing of real and narrated places, the spatiotemporal translation of plot's events and its' intertextual associations, the different tasks of narrated spaces. Visiting urban sites is enhanced by locative and context aware AR approaches, where stories can have strong influence on tourists' relationship with their physical environments. However, such applications have limitations to capture how urban places' identities shape visitors spatiotemporal perceptions. Our approach addresses the difficulties that tourists confront to be familiarized with visiting urban places.

## 3 Framework Levels

The proposed amalgamation of AR with novels contains, first a narrative analysis of novel's space. Second a spatial typology based on narration, and third novels' urban spatial elements. Four strategies define the structure of the proposed AR medium targeting to express the multivalent character of urban sites; reinforcing and remembering (Azuma, 2015), and our contribution: recontextualization and re-embodiment.

Narrative analysis comprises a spatial reading of literature texts based on two axes (Friedman, 1996). The horizontal storyline comprises the plot's chains of events and its constituents (characters, setting). The vertical axis comprises intertextual (historical and psychological), aspects from other texts.

We define a model of spatial sites upon which the novel is interwoven. The reformed after (De Jong, 2012) spatial categories are the following. The story-space depicts the novel's actual locations and it comprises first, the setting, where events unfold and can imply many locations across the novel's plot. Second, the frame, which is sites that occur in memories, dreams, and thoughts. The spatial settings could be introduced by the viewpoint of narrator and/or a character. The concept of scale contains the panoramic standpoint, the scenic perspective, and the close-up standpoint. Spaces functions' category comprises the symbolic function, the characterizing function and the psychological function. Sites express a universe of character's emotions. Based on (Lynch, 1960) we define different novel's urban

elements; castles, edifices, squares, avenues and alleys, regions, coastline, tramway networks.

With reinforcing novels reveal the inherent dynamics of urban places. Tourists can follow a designated path over the city representing the characters and events. Overlapped digital setting appeared in visitors' reality during the referenced temporal context. In recontextualization the urban reality is based on the intertextual narration that provides unseen signifiers. The novel's timeline aligns the narrative sequences over the real and the digitally recreated urban environments. However the visiting experience might be partially independent form the novel plot. In this way, tourists have the overall character of the city in its historical, social and cultural parameters. *Remembering AR* is highly interactive and it enables users to unveil different content over the same designated path(s) via further integrating their personal experiences. The novel's reading can communicate different feelings based on visitor's personality. *Re-embodiment* Tourists can reveal the visiting sites' layers, and they gain renewed embodied involvement. Their involvement can lead to an amplified attentiveness to difference and strangeness of the other place. Tourists are re-attached with local communities and further re-familiarize with local collective and cultural identities.

#### 4 Augmented Cities

Heraklion, Crete, is a multifaceted city. Eight novels establish eight different approaches of its character, (Moira & Makris, 2015). They associate the transformative events over the city with a number of landmarks. The novels reveal different chronotopes within the same cityscape. The Venetian wall acts as a symbol of memory. Quarters express class, cultural and social differentiation. The squares are sites of historical remembrance. The trilogy (Tsirkas, 1995) narrates the geopolitical clash between the years 1942–44 through the cultural mixtures of different cities within a city. In Jerusalem the old city's quarters introduce a mosaic of ethnic and religious blurring differentiation. In Cairo landmarks and districts reveal their eternal rhythms of the urbanscape. In Alexandria the splendid coastline of Corniche acts as a frontier and an escape line. Tramway network exposes a variety of the sociocultural canvas of local districts.

#### 5 Conclusion

A symbiosis of novels and AR can aid the exploration of diverse urban transformations and mutations in various ways that are increasingly participatory and defined by tourists. Novels-based augmented reality can unveil important new and alternate ways of imagining the urban environment. It provides great capacities to stimulate tourists' imagination through original narrative representations of urban sites.



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# The Importance of Customer Relationship Management and Social Media in the Greek Wine Tourism Industry

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**Abstract** During the last decades the wine industry in Greece has moved on to significant modernization. Thus, the wine produces have focused into the wine-tourism which seems to be a lucrative sector for wine producers. However, there is a necessity to construct a strong back-end which will be ready to serve the customers. For this reason the paper will examine the value of CRM and of social media on the wine tourism in Greece. The paper is a genuine one, since there has not been any similar research on this field. In addition to this, it is paper which will provide a sound knowledge on PR actioners over how to utilize them. The outcome of this literature review, indicates that CRM surely would benefit those firms, however it seems that the way that the operate—relying on traditional marketing methods, hence the use of social media may not be the ideal though word of mouth is important on this sector. Surely, this leaves a space for future research. This can be qualitative research where the wine makers will express their views and perceptions over the use of CRM and social media on their industry.

**Keywords** Wine tourism · CRM · Social media · Tourism · Greece

**JEL Classification** Z10 · Z32 · L83 · M10 · R11 · R58

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## 1 Introduction

Wine has been a basic element of the Greek nutrition and culture for over 4 millennia. Greece was the country of Europe where wine first appeared and Greeks were responsible for the first vineyards in Southern Italy and Marseille (Charters, 2006). Archeological discoveries throughout the entire Greek countryside indicated that the wine was an indispensable part of the Greek tradition and everyday life. Moreover, Greece has been responsible for making the use of wine widespread among people of all walks of life in contrast to early societies where consumption of wine was restricted to the “elite” (Phillips, 2000).

During the last decades the wine industry in Greece has moved on to significant modernization. The bigger companies of the industry have realized huge investments which helped them to build a serious export character. New generation of wine makers have been educated around the world and learned from France, Italy and Spain which are the countries with the biggest tradition in the production of wine. This education in combination with the perfect climate conditions in Greece, helping more than 300 indigenous varieties of grapes grown there and also the long tradition in wine making resulted in many awards for Greek wines in international competitions and in the creation of an “image of quality and recognition” for Greek wines. Greece was the 13th major wine producer in the world in 2012 despite the fact that production declined by 11% from 2000 (OIV, 2013). The importance of the sector in the local economy is also verified by the fact that around 600 firms are active in the sector, most of which are small wineries. A rather small number of big wine companies and some strong Unions of Agricultural Co-operatives are dominating the market of wine and realize to export their products all over the world (Alebaiki & Iakovidou, 2010, 2011).

On many cases the wine produces have focused into the wine-tourism which seems to be a lucrative sector for wine producers. However, there is a necessity to construct a strong back-end which will be ready to serve the customers. For this reason the paper will examine the value of CRM and of social media on the wine tourism in Greece. The paper is a genuine one, since there has not been any similar research on this field. In addition to this, it is paper which will provide a sound knowledge on practioners over how to utilize them.

The methodology used is the literature review. The authors would like to make the necessary reference over CRM and social media so to make suggestions over how a future research may head to. It is important to mention that this is just the first step of process to create the necessary background for future papers on this field. For this reason the authors have collected a variety of references, mostly recent references, so to prepare their paper.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 *Customer Relationship Management and the Case of the Wine Tourist Industry*

Nowadays, with a rapidly increasing number of CRM consultants, articles praising the virtues of CRM are part of the daily diet of managers. In this situation, a manager might rush into an ill-considered CRM program. The advent of e-Business and virtual supply chains has further complicated the situation and created a competitive situation characterized by a greater number of products and service alternatives that are becoming less differentiable. As a result, customers are becoming less loyal and expect more in terms of customer service (Ragins & Greco, 2005).

According to Parthenios and Amalia (2001) what keeps a good customer coming back is good service and today's economic climate demands more than ever that customer acquisition, profitability, and retention remain central to an organization's business. But that cannot be done if customers are running out the door before organizations even discover who they were or, more important, what they potentially were. To keep them in the store, organizations need to offer a better customer experience and they are turning to CRM applications and processes to do just that.

Another objective of CRM initiative is to transform the organization into becoming customer centric with a greater focus on customer profitability as compared to line profitability. The insights gained from CRM enable organizations to calculate or estimate the profitability of individual accounts. Organizations are then able to differentiate their customers correctly with respect to their profitability. From such insight, organizations can build predictive churn models to retain their best customers by identifying telltale symptoms of dissatisfaction and churning, keeping the customers who generate profit (Ragins & Greco, 2005).

Intimate customer relationships offer organizations several advantages. To begin with, the relationship can create a committed customer. More than simply a repeat purchaser, the committed customer has an emotional attachment to the seller. These emotions can include trust, liking, and believing in the organization's ability to respond effectively and promptly to a customer problem. Committed customers can be viewed as organizational assets who are likely to be a source of favorable word-of-mouth referrals and are more resistant to competitor's offers (Cook, 2008).

Furthermore, CRM provides a point of leverage to realize economies of scale. Committed customers are often more receptive to line extensions. Leveraging the customer base can facilitate cross-selling complementary products as well as selling up to higher quality substitutes (Ragins & Greco, 2005). Cross-selling is all the rage nowadays, because selling more services or products to an existing customer increases revenue from that customer and costs less than acquiring a new one.

Moreover, in recent years, CRM's potential to contain and reduce cost has been explored. CRM, in concert with other processes, can help reduce churn or turnover

in an organization's customer base. Better customer management can result in lower sales and service costs, higher buyer retention, and lower customer replacement expenditures (Romano, 2005).

The traditional but to some degree incorrect view is that CRM is a technological system for information handling and analysis (Croteau & Li, 2003). Others view CRM as a sales or marketing function only (Ragins & Greco, 2005). However, according to Fayerman (2002) the critical interface is somewhere between CRM technology and marketing and an understanding of the perspective from both of these areas is a requirement for cross-functional integration. It must be remembered that effective CRM is more than a software solution; it is about how customer information is used to create an ongoing relationship with the customer. To achieve that outcome, different relationship approaches, and perhaps even different CRM technologies, might be needed for the different types of customer relationships found in B2B or B2C markets (Ragins & Greco, 2005).

This is further supported by Bose and Sugumaran (2003) which state that it is important to view CRM holistically, as a part of all of the organization's processes, from marketing to data collections. The tendency may be to view CRM narrowly as a tactical series of transactions, but effective and successful strategic implementation of CRM requires information from all relevant departments for the purpose of using customer information intelligently to create relationships or partnerships with customers.

As organizations attempt to re-orient themselves around customers, individual employees will have to come to terms with changing cultural norms, organizational structures, and the way that their performance is measured and rewarded. According to Croteau and Li (2003) is the CEO as well as the senior managements involvement singled out as a key success factor when it comes to CRM strategy. Investing in CRM technology without a customer-oriented cultural mindset—inherited hierarchically throughout the organization from the CEO—is like throwing money in the sea.

Lately, emerging technologies offer organizations the potential to improve their ability to attract and retain customers, capture more information through the online channel than through any other customer point, and to practice CRM. Organizations have to integrate the Internet with the traditional front-office functions of sales, service, and marketing to be able to provide a good customer experience in the e-Business world.

The World Wide Web has evolved into a medium with various generic relationship-building attributes. The higher the quality of the information an organization can collect about its customers, and the more complete the information is, the better the organization will be able to use decision analysis to predict customer behavior (Butler, 2004). More targeted and customized relationships strategies can result in better predictions of customer needs. Online CRM can enhance the value of the relationship for both customers and the e-Business. Customers can receive more products and communications that are better suited to their needs and lifestyles, and the e-Business can benefit from a group of high-value repeat customers.

It is difficult to evaluate tangible returns on the resources expanded to plan, develop, implement, and operate CRM (Dyche, 2001). Therefore, the intangible nature of benefits such as customer loyalty, service quality, value enhancement, innovation of operation, effectiveness of processes, service improvement, competitiveness, trust, and efficiency have to be measured (Kim, Suh, & Hwang, 2003).

CRM can be used on almost all service based operation. One of those operations is the wine industry. Indeed, it must be claimed that there is not such research on this field. Indeed, Carmichael (2005) argues that wine tourism is a service-based experience. This means that the provider of the service must be flexible in terms of how the company interacts with the customer. In addition to this, Carlsen (2011) writes that many wine-tourist companies have not a previous experience on dealing with customers. Most of them are small businesses owned from individuals who have a very good knowledge on wine producing and on agricultural issues but not on customer service. Hence they need the necessary support, which according to Carlsen (2011), can be either on training or on having a CRM which will improve their ability to cope with customer's relationship. Alebaki and Iakovidou (2011) have referred on the fact that Greek wine-tourist businesses often have a lack of marketing knowledge and of the sufficient infrastructure.

Marzo-Navvaro and Pedraja-Iglesias (2009) refer on the fact that the wine tourist industry is on its early stages. However, when time will come to mature, then it will be necessary to become more effective and thus to capitalize all of the modern marketing tools, including CRM. Overall, there is some evidence that CRM can improve their quality of the service experience provided to the end-customer. However there is a lack of such researches.

## ***2.2 Social Media and Greek Wine-Tourism***

A universal definition and classification for social media is still an ongoing debate as evolution and transformation are main characteristics of the medium. Since the technological foundation of Web 2.0 that allowed the creation and sharing of user generated content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010), which was followed by the Mobile Web 2.0 and the explosion of mobile devices, social media has taken several different forms and many academic researchers and managers have presented different definitions.

According to Buettner (2016) "social media are computer-mediated tools that allow people to create, share, or exchange information, career interests ideas, and pictures/videos in virtual communities and networks". An alternative definition proposed by Murthy (2013), refers to social media as "the many relatively inexpensive and widely accessible electronic tools that enable anyone to publish and access information, collaborate on a common effort, or build relationships". Solis (2008) has created a social media chart, known as the conversation prism, to

organize social media into types and based on their everyday usage. This is an ongoing project that is being updated yearly and what is especially interesting is that its size has doubled in the last 5 years.

A recent research by Dann and Dann (2011), has formed a social media framework based on 3 elements, which interconnect social interaction, content and communication media as illustrated in the Fig. 2.

Figures 1 and 2 define the social media borders and, specifically, conversation prism mentions all the available different platforms (either web-based or applications) that exist worldwide.

Figure 3, aims at grouping them with the help of Kaplan's and Haenlein's classification (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) have presented three theories that lead to a basic classification of social media: the social presence theory, the media richness theory and the social process theory. According to the social presence theory (Short, Williams, & Christie, 1976), social media can be classified according to the immediacy and intimacy of each platform. The higher the social presence, the larger the engagement of the users to the social media can be. At the same page of social presence theory, media richness theory Daft and Lengel (1986) support the idea that social media differ from each other to the amount of information, which can be shared.

At the same time, the theory of self-presentation (Goffman, 1959), concerning users' decision on how much personal information to share, classifies social media into ones that require less personal information and others that require much. Using



Fig. 1 A social media chart. Source Solis (2014)

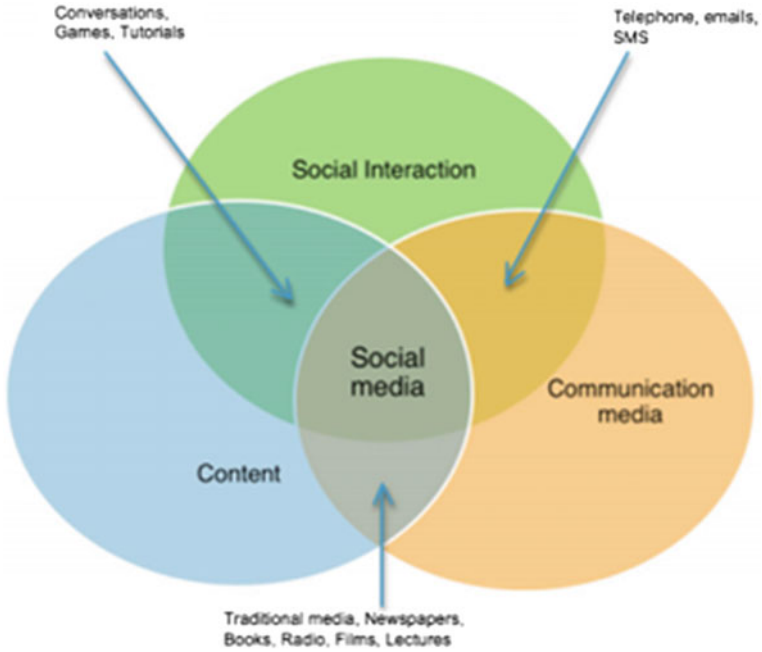


Fig. 2 Social media components. *Source* Dann and Dann (2011)

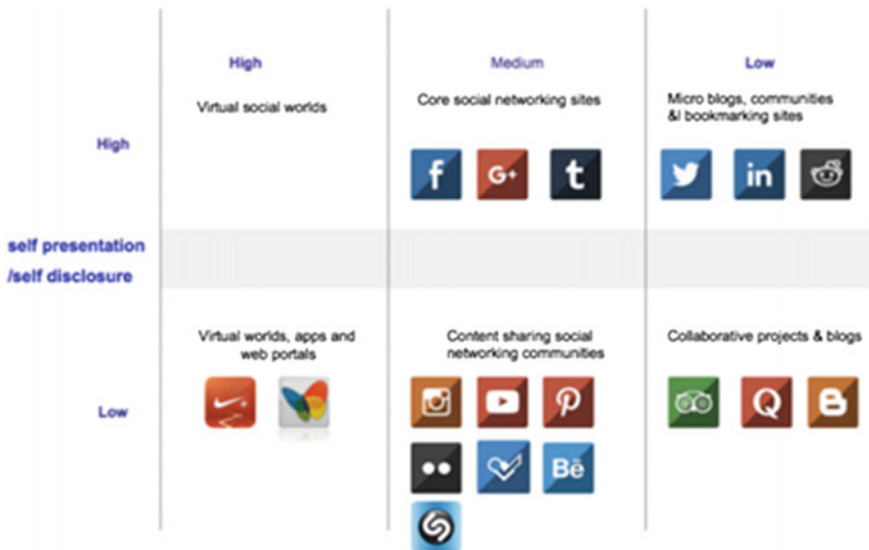


Fig. 3 Social media classification and focus



the above theory this study tried to group Social Media available platforms in order to specify its focus. At this study, core social networking sites, micro blogs and communities and content sharing social networking communities will be the main focus of the analysis. Below at Fig. 3, platforms are represented and grouped.

Kotler on 2014 refers to many brand examples, which have tremendously benefited by the use of today's new social networking tools, such as Nike. With the help of Facebook (more than 43.4 million followers), Twitter (more than 5.6 million followers), Instagram (more than 30.2 million followers), and Pinterest (132 k followers), Nike has recently ranked, by digital consultancy, L2 as the top innovating sportswear company, among 42 companies for developing brand "norms" and highly engaged users and loyal followers (Kotler, 2001; Armstrong & Kotler, 2015).

Social media can be used on all sectors. The aim is to engage and inform the end-customer. On the case of the wine-tourist sector, Mitchell (2006) argues that the word of mouth has a significant impact on wine tourism. This means that the Internet can be a critical tool for creating a positive word of mouth. In our case, social media can be the case of creating a positive word of mouth for a wine business. Pikkemaat, Peters, Boksberger, and Secco (2009) claim that the internet and social media cannot have the impact that they have on other products. The consumer in the wine industry is very delicate and he or she does not trust social media; he or she rather trusts an expert or someone who would be close to this person and that would have a very good knowledge on wine.

Pitoska (2012) has identified a limited used of social media among Greek wine makers who rule on personal communication but also on the work of third parties, such as tour operators, so to bring tourists. Finally, Alebaki and Iakovidou (2010) refer on the fact that the wine makers of Greece rely on traditional marketing methods. While the tourist industry has turned its focus on social media and new technologies, it seems that the Greek wine making firms, including the wine-tourist industry, have focused on traditional approaches so to interact with the customers.

### 3 Methodology

The methodology used in the present paper is the critical review of the literature. The authors would like to make the necessary reference over CRM and social media so to make suggestions over how a future research may head to. It is important to mention that this is just the first step of process to create the necessary background for future papers on this field. For this reason the authors have collected a variety of references, mostly recent references, so to prepare their paper.

The sources of relevant literature investigation derived from popular online bibliographic databases, such as Science Direct, Emerald, EBSCO host and scientific search engines such as Google Scholar and Scirus. General search engines such as Google have also been examined.

The types of bibliographic sources included in the research are articles published on scientific journals, books, conference proceedings, company papers and studies, white papers, online sites and online journals. The selection criteria of these literature sources were based on the relevance to the topic of the paper and this research is not exhaustive.

## 4 Conclusion

One of the emerging tourist niches is the wine tourist market. Overall, the Greek wine market consists of a few big winemaking firms with strong export orientation, some significant Unions of Agricultural Co-operatives and mostly from small family wineries. These small and inexperienced firms encounter problems to their export performance due to insufficient marketing organization, distribution limitations and ineffective national export policy while this is actually a new industry. Regarding the case of CRM and social media, it seems that CRM surely would benefit those firms; however it seems that the way that the operation relying on traditional marketing methods, hence the use of social media may not be the ideal though word of mouth is important on this sector. Surely, this leaves a space for future research. This can be qualitative research where the wine makers will express their views and perceptions over the use of CRM and social media on their industry.

At this point, on the case of policy suggestions, despite of the fact that the use of CRM and social media lies upon the firms on how to use it, the state and local authorities can provide the necessary tools so that the greek wine making firms to use them, such as educational programs and to provide funds for SMEs who would like to purchase the necessary tools. In addition to this, the use of CRM and social media will contribute on local development in terms of that the wine making firms will improve the quality of their services and their competitiveness and hence they will improve the competitiveness of local economy.

Finally, it is important to make remarks on future research. This can be with interviews on entrepreneurs who have adopted instruments. It will help us to better understand how they are using them and what is the contribution of CRM and social media on this.

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# How Does the Spanish Hospitality Industry Envision Its Eco-Innovation Orientation?

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**Abstract** This study analyses the key factors in the environmental orientation of innovation processes at hotel companies. Using the model of structural equations and data retrieved from the Technological Innovation Spanish panel, we shed light on how the environmental orientation of companies is proactively affected by the typology of innovations and the existing relationship between the market drivers (customers, competitors, clients and suppliers) and companies' environmental orientation. Based on the results, a validated partial least squares (PLS) graphical model is presented, which clarifies and quantifies established relationships among the different variables. Research gaps and future lines are also highlighted.

**Keywords** Sustainable innovation · Hospitality industry · PITEC database

**JEL Classification** Z32 tourism and development · O310 innovation and invention: processes and incentives · L8 industry studies: services · M140 corporate culture · Diversity · Social responsibility

## 1 Introduction

When looking at strategic aspects and objectives, innovation emerges as a key element in a firm's competitiveness. Similarly, sustainable orientation has become a strategic issue that is valued by the firm's stakeholders as a means of achieving competitive advantage (Esty & Winston, 2009). These two concepts are cross-linked within the concept called eco-innovation.

Kemp and Pearson (2007) defined eco-innovation as the production, assimilation or exploitation of a product, production process, service or management or business method that is novel to the organization and which results in a reduction in environmental impact. Eco-innovation has received considerable attention lately. Since

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Fussler and James (1996), who linked the concepts, studies have focused on identifying the aspects that affect firms' environmental orientation (Gázquez-Abad, 2011). Among these factors are industry characteristics (Peiró-Signes & Segarra-Oña, 2011), external pressure (Kalantari & Asadi, 2010), corporate and marketing strategies (Esty & Winston, 2009; Mitchell & Wooliscroft, 2010), environmental policies (Chappin, Vermeulen, & Meeus, 2009) and implementation of environmental management systems (Johnstone & Labonne, 2009).

Eco-innovative firms find different benefits in this approach, such as cost advantages from the reduction in materials or energy consumption (Kesidou & Demirel, 2012), improved image and reputation (Hart & Milstein, 2003; Pujari, 2006) or an increase in business performance (Cheng, Yang, & Sheu, 2014). However important these aspects are to innovation adoption in organizations, the benefits will depend on the actual capabilities of the firms and the industry in which they operate.

Eco-innovation drivers have been studied widely (Cai & Zhou, 2014; Kesidou & Demirel, 2012; Segarra-Oña & Peiro-Signes, 2013; Triguero & Moreno-Mondéjar, 2014). Most of the studies have focused on manufacturing industries, but the economies in developed countries are based mainly on service and knowledge-based industries (European Commission, 2013).

Gallouj, Weber, Stare, and Rubalcaba (2015) pointed to the environmental challenge as a key driver of change for future development and for innovation in the service industry. Segarra-Oña et al. (2013) found that service companies oriented to innovation, both to product and process innovation, are more likely to be environmentally oriented. Moreover, service firms that rely more on information from the market are more likely to orient their innovation towards environmental aspects.

In service firms, previous studies have shown that a process and product orientation when innovating is positively correlated with greater environmental concern. Peiro-Signes and Segarra-Ona (2014) show that product orientation is much lower in service firms than in manufacturing companies, while the process orientation of service firms doubles the impact on eco-orientation when innovating.

Among services, characteristics such as the technological level, export orientation and knowledge-intensity of the industry can be very different. Therefore, it is of interest to study differences that might appear in certain industries. Nowadays, hospitality is emerging as an important industry based on its contribution to gross domestic product (GDP), especially in Mediterranean countries. The hospitality industry is an operations-based service, with large fixed costs, very dependent on tourism and leisure travel and with different management options. However, this traditional operations structure coexists with the quick adoption of innovations in information technology. Customers have much more information at the time of the purchase of the service due to web-based applications, for example regarding the environmental concern of the hotel.

Taking the diversity of industry characteristics among services, the different sources of information that service firms use in their innovation processes and the different approaches to product and process innovation into account, the relative impact of the drivers on the environmental orientation in a specific service might

justify a different action plan to promote eco-innovation. This study is the first approach in evaluating whether the drivers of the environmental orientation detected in previous studies exist and follow the same patterns in the hospitality industry.

## 2 Hypothesis Development

In a previous study, we showed that being process oriented when innovating in service companies is correlated to higher environmental awareness and eco-innovative activities (Segarra-Oña & Peiro-Signes, 2013). Process-oriented companies will focus on materials, energy and water savings as this will reduce product or service costs. Moreover, they will be focused on increasing the efficiency of their processes, which is also a cost-related aspect. Moreover, perceived factors, including benefits and cost savings, are important for innovation adoption in organizations (Sharma & Thomas, 2008). On the other hand and according to the American green hotel association<sup>1</sup>, “green” hotels are environmentally friendly properties the managers of which are eager to institute programmes that save water, save energy and reduce solid waste—while saving money. Therefore, we can expect that process-oriented companies, understood as those companies that are oriented to cost reduction and to increases in capacity and flexibility (Reichstein & Salter, 2006), are simultaneously looking to reduce impact and to improve their environmental performance. We state the first hypothesis as follows:

H1 Process orientation has a positive effect on the environmental orientation of hospitality firms when innovating.

Foster and Sampson (2000) results showed that the hospitality industry is under pressure to be green, especially due to their customers’ increasing demand. But far from being a threat, environmental awareness should be considered an opportunity based on studies that recount improved competitiveness and differentiation (Vastag, Kerekes, & Rondinelli, 1996). Hospitality firms have to consider the variables that affect the decisions taken by their clients as they need to create value-added services in order to acquire and retain loyal clients. On the other hand, product-oriented companies are those companies that focus on increasing the quality or the number of services, to penetrate new markets or to increase market share. Thus, the green niche represents a large and increasing market gap to be tapped into and is one that cannot be ignored. We can expect that hospitality companies that are focusing on their products (services) are more likely to be environmentally oriented as they will try to reach green customers. Thus:

H2 Product orientation has a positive effect on the environmental orientation of hospitality firms when innovating.

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<sup>1</sup><http://greenhotels.com>.

Worldwide, hotel managers are considering how to improve their sustainable operations from the operational-managerial perspective, but also from the client perspective. Nevertheless, it remains unclear which real actions influence the clients' decisions related to the firm's environmental orientation (Delmas & Toffel, 2004). Many authors have studied issues regarding consumer perceptions of green practices in hospitality (Kassinis & Soteriou, 2003). The lesson of these studies is that environmental practices are positively related to better performance through the mediating effect of higher customer satisfaction and loyalty (Kassinis & Soteriou, 2003) and that eco-labels and environmental certifications lead to enhanced customer awareness of restaurants' and hotels' environmental efforts and act as differentiating assets over those that do not engage in eco-certification schemes (Schubert, Kandampully, & Solnet, 2010; Zhang, Joglekar, & Verma, 2012). Furthermore, competitors' attitudes to environmental aspects might condition firms' environmental behaviour.

Thus, we can expect that those hospitality firms that rely on market information sources, that is, information from customers, suppliers and competitors, are more likely to be environmentally oriented. We can expect there to be a mediating effect of both process and product orientation in this relationship. Hospitality firms which consider market information important will be more sensitive to market demands to reduce water, energy and waste consumption and to increase operational efficiency (process orientation). Moreover, they will be more sensitive to the "green" demands of their customer or to the "green" actions of their suppliers or competitors. Consequently, we hypothesize that:

H3 The importance of market information sources in the innovation process positively affects the product and process orientation of hospitality companies.

In another vein, the higher cooperation and more intense relationships that eco-innovative firms establish with suppliers, sharing resources and knowledge and creating value in terms of absorptive capacity, are characteristics that should be considered in achieving greater competitiveness. Knowledge sharing and transfer between research and technological centres, universities and private organizations and companies is increasing, having a positive effect on their innovation activity (Revilla, Dodd, & Hoover, 2001). Indeed, information sources affect the way companies innovate (Amara & Landry, 2005). Thus, we can expect that companies that rely more on these information sources will be more receptive in applying new knowledge and thus improve their product and their processes, that is they will be product and process oriented when they are innovating. We also expect these companies to be more sensitive to market information sources as they are a primary source of information. Thus, we hypothesize:

H4 The importance of knowledge-based information sources in the innovation process positively affects the product and process orientation of hospitality companies.



- H5 The importance of knowledge-based information sources positively affects the importance of market information sources in the innovation process of hospitality companies.

### **3 Methodology**

#### ***3.1 Data Collection***

For this study we used the Technological Innovation Panel (PITEC), a statistical survey that follows Spanish firms' innovation activities over time. It is performed by the National Statistics Institute (INE) with advice from experts and university researchers.

In the PITEC database, a set of variables was subjected to anonymization to avoid the disclosure problem. Anonymization in this study only affected the segmentation done to obtain our sample. Original 4-digit NACE codes were replaced with a 44-industry breakdown. We used the variable ACTIN to select data from the hospitality industry.

We used the latest data available (2010) to analyse a total of 41 firms from the hospitality industry included in the database. We disregarded those cases with a lack of data for the variables that we used in the study (see Table 1).

As we were dealing with latent constructs, covariance structure analysis needed to be undertaken through structural equation modelling, in which a priori theoretical knowledge is incorporated in the empirical analysis (Tenenhaus, Vinzi, & Chatelin, 2005).

#### ***3.2 Measurement and Assessment of the Model***

We used a partial least squares path modelling (PLS-PM) approach implemented in SmartPLS 3.0. (Ringle, Wende, & Will, 2005) to analyse the data. We consider this approach appropriate for the following reasons. First, this study is more exploratory than confirmatory, which is a strength of PLS (Leimeister, Leimeister, & Knebel, 2009). Second, it requires no presupposition of normality in the variables and is geared to research models that predict the effects of some variables on others. Third, an initial data set can be resampled and enlarged and therefore we can test smaller sample sizes. Furthermore, SmartPLS is able to evaluate the reliability and validity of the measurement instrument simultaneously. Finally, Anderson and Gerbing (1988), Bagozzi and Yi (1988), Barclay, Higgins, and Thompson (1995) and Chin et al. (2003) recommend it over other techniques when theory is not firmly established.

**Table 1** Selected variables from the PITEC database

PITEC variables	Explanation
FUENTE <sub>i</sub> (i = 1, ...,10)	Importance of information sources when innovating (internal sources, suppliers, clients, competitors, consultants, universities, government or public research institutions, conferences, scientific journals and professional or industrial associations)
OBJET <sub>i</sub> (I = 1, ...,10, 12)	Importance of some objectives (increasing the range of products or services, replacing outdated products or processes, entering new markets, increasing market share, improving quality, increasing flexibility, increasing capacity, reducing labour costs, reducing the material costs per unit, reducing the energy costs per unit, reducing environmental impacts, improving health or safety, meeting environmental and H&S regulations) to develop innovations

*Categorical variables* 1 high; 2 medium; 3 low; 4 not considered or not important

The first issue we faced was the sample size. Wold (1989) and Chin and Newsted (1999) studied PLS with small samples and demonstrated the appropriateness of PLS indicators with sample sizes as low as 20. Thus, we consider our sample size large enough to run the model.

We used item reliability, internal consistency and discriminant validity (Chin, 1998) to test the reliability and validity of the measurement instrument. First, we used individual item loadings to evaluate individual item reliability. According to Chin (1998), individual items with loadings greater than 0.7 are acceptable because they explain about 50% of the variance in a specific measure. This also ensures that the items are measuring the same construct. However, weak loadings (0.5 or less) are acceptable when using newly developed scales (Hulland, 1999). All the items exceeded the suggested threshold for item reliability, indicating that the survey instrument was adequate for measuring each construct individually.

Second, we used Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability to evaluate the internal consistency of each endogenous variable (construct). The minimum acceptable alpha or composite reliability value is 0.7 for each construct (Bernstein & Nunnally, 1994). All constructs showed values greater than the suggested threshold of 0.7 (see Table 2).

Finally, we tested discriminant validity using the average variance extracted (AVE), which measures the variance captured by the indicators relative to the measurement error. Discriminant validity confirms the lack of a relationship between constructs. It requires an AVE greater than 0.5 (Chin, 1998; Fornell & Larcker, 1981) and that the squared intercorrelations among the latent variables do not exceed the AVE. The results in Table 2 demonstrate discriminant validity and indicate that the structural model can be assessed with confidence.

**Table 2** Reliability measurements and matrix of correlation between latent variables

	Eco-orientation	Market information sources	Process orientation	Product orientation	Other information sources
AVE	0.906	0.634	0.610	0.591	0.564
Composite reliability	0.967	0.836	0.885	0.876	0.885
Cronbach's alpha	0.948	0.711	0.837	0.820	0.861
Eco-orientation	<b>0.952</b>				
Market information sources	0.397	<b>0.796</b>			
Process orientation	0.677	0.473	<b>0.781</b>		
Product orientation	0.632	0.715	0.644	<b>0.768</b>	
Other information sources	0.556	0.582	0.412	0.606	<b>0.751</b>

Note Square root of AVE on diagonals in bold

### 3.3 Structural Model Assessment

The structural model proposed to test our six basic assumptions was estimated by the PLS method, using the SmartPLS application. The results are set out in Fig. 1, which shows (observable) questionnaire items from the PITEC database in rectangles and unobservable latent factors with circles. The arrows indicate regression relationships, showing the relationships of items with latent factors (measurement model) and between latent factors (structural model). Corresponding partial regression coefficients are indicated next to the arrows and within the circles corresponding to endogenous variables, the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) for the corresponding regression is presented.

The results indicate how well the structural model predicted the hypothesized relationships.

First, the path coefficients (standardized betas) denote the strength of the causal relationships between two constructs (Wixom & Watson, 2001). Figure 1 supports the existence of positive relationships for the hypotheses proposed.

Table 3 shows the regression coefficients between latent factors, their t-statistics and p-values, estimated by bootstrapping with 5000 samples. We confirmed that the proposed relations have significant values, confirming our basic hypotheses.

Process orientation and product orientation are shown to have a positive effect on eco-orientation. The path coefficient between process orientation and eco-orientation is 0.461, which is significant at  $p < 0.001$ . In addition, product orientation is significantly related to eco-orientation ( $\beta = 0.335, p < 0.01$ ). Thus, H1 and H2 are supported.

With regard to the market information sources construct, the results show that this variable contributes to a significant positive effect on both product orientation and process orientation. In other words, the importance of the information from suppliers, competitors and clients in the innovation process has a significantly

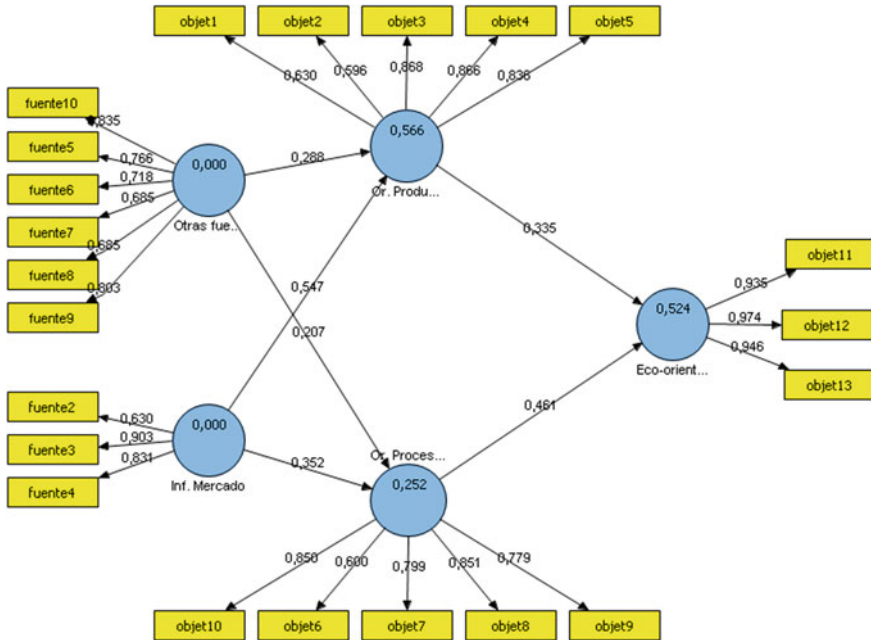


Fig. 1 Estimated structural equation model

positive effect on the product orientation ( $\beta = 0.547, p < 0.001$ ) and on the process orientation ( $\beta = 0.352, p < 0.001$ ) of the hospitality firms when innovating. Therefore, H3 and H4 are supported. As a result, we confirm the positive effect of market information sources when innovating on eco-orientation ( $\beta = 0.346, p < 0.001$ ).

The variable representing other information sources is found to be significantly related to process and product orientation. The path coefficients are significant ( $\beta = 0.207, p < 0.05$ ;  $\beta = 0.207, p < 0.05$ , respectively). Thus, H5 and H6 are supported.

Second, the squared multiple correlation ( $R^2$ ) for each endogenous variable measures the percentage of variance explained by each construct in the model. The  $R^2$  coefficients associated with the latent variable regressions are significant, with values greater than 0.1 (see Fig. 1) in all cases (Falk & Miller, 1992).

The independent construct representing the importance of market information sources and other information sources in firm’s innovation explains 56.6% of the variance in product orientation and 25.2% in process orientation. On the other hand, product and process orientation explain 52.5% of the variance in the eco-orientation of the hospitality firms in the sample. Figure 1 shows the standardized path coefficients and variance explained.

Finally, Barclay et al. (1995), Tenenhaus et al. (2005) and Henseler et al. (2009) proposed strengthening the analysis using the cross-validated redundancy index

**Table 3** Direct effects, explained variance and Q2 test for the endogenous variables

Effects on endogenous variables	Mean	Standard error	t-statistics	Explained variance
Effects on eco-orientation				$R^2 = 0.524/Q^2 = 0.474$
Process orientation → eco-orientation	0.461	0.114	4.058***	0.312
Product orientation → eco-orientation	0.335	0.115	2.908**	0.212
Effects on process orientation				$R^2 = 0.252/Q^2 = 0.137$
Market information sources → process orientation	0.352	0.096	3.657***	0.166
Other information sources → process orientation	0.207	0.092	2.26*	0.065
Effects on product orientation				$R^2 = 0.566/Q^2 = 0.137$
Market information sources → product orientation	0.547	0.063	8.701***	0.391
Other information sources → product orientation	0.288	0.065	4.441***	0.174

\*\*\*Significant at  $p < 0.001$ , \*\*significant at  $p < 0.01$

( $Q^2$ ) or Stone–Geisser test (Geisser, 1974; Stone, 1974). The  $Q^2$ , which is a measure utilizing a blindfolding procedure (Tenenhaus et al., 2005), gives us a measure of goodness with which the values observed are reconstructed by the model and its parameters (Chin, 1998).  $Q^2$  values greater than zero indicate that the model has predictive relevance (Henseler & Ringle, 2009). Table 3 shows the Stone–Geisser test ( $Q^2$ ) using the blindfolding procedure. The results show that the model has predictive relevance as the  $Q^2$  results for each construct are greater than zero.

## 4 Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to identify some determinants behind the environmental orientation of hospitality firms when innovating. Specifically, this research proposed product and process orientation and the importance of market and other information sources as the key factors determining eco-orientation. We confirmed the reliability and validity of the measurement model and we demonstrated that all the relations were statistically significant and directionally supported.

The results provide support for the greater likelihood that companies will be environmentally oriented when innovating if they are process oriented when

innovating. That is, looking for more flexibility, an increase in services and reductions in the costs (labour, materials and energy) per service when innovating positively affects the environmental orientation of hospitality firms. Second, hospitality organizations tend to be environmentally oriented if in the innovation process they are oriented to increasing the quality or the number of services with a view to penetrating new markets or increasing market share. Therefore, the more inclined to product oriented they are when innovating the more eco-orientated they are.

Hypotheses 3 and 4 assessed the relationship between the importance of market information sources and product and process orientation. Both hypotheses were supported, suggesting that hospitality organizations that rely on information from suppliers, competitors and clients in the innovation process are more likely to orient their innovation to products or the processes. Consequently, this relation will also affect the environmental orientation of the innovation process.

Finally, dependence on other information sources, for example institutional (universities, technology centres and public institutions) or technical (expositions, conferences, scientific and technical journals), also promotes product and process orientation and therefore environmental orientation.

In this study, we highlighted the relation between eco-orientation and firms' innovative characteristics in the hospitality industry. Our model provides a frame for understanding why some organizations may or may not be environmentally oriented when innovating. Rather than focusing on firms' characteristics, like size, export orientation or technological level, which have been shown to influence the eco-orientation of firms, our model assesses innovative characteristics, such as product and process orientation and the importance of market and other information sources in the innovation process.

Furthermore, this study contributes to the understanding of some of the key constructs predicting the eco-orientation of the firm. This approach was our attempt to explain the determinants of environmental orientation in hospitality companies.

Finally, we have shown that firms with a clear product and process orientation in the innovation process have a better understanding of the benefits of an environmental approach. Moreover, these organizations rely heavily on the market, institutional or technical information sources when they are innovating. In other words, hospitality companies need to seize opportunities for innovation activities and orient the innovation process properly in an attempt to become more environmentally oriented and gain competitive advantage over their competitors.

## **5 Limitations and Future Research**

This study has some limitations that we should account for. We used data at one point in time, which could limit the strength of our findings. To mitigate this limitation, we ran the model for the same 41 companies with data for 2009 and the model led to similar results. Moreover, the use of a single database to collect data

may not be representative of an entire industry. However, the use of the PITEC database, which is the reference statistical instrument for studying Spanish firms' innovation activities, overcomes this liability to a large degree. We can expand this study to other countries or to specific hospitality sectors in order to generalize the conclusions or account for sector-specific relationships. We adopted the available measures in PITEC, limiting this study to a few factors influencing eco-orientation. Hence, other potential factors may affect or moderate the eco-orientation of the firms when innovating, offering opportunities for future research.

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# The Interest of Sport Tourism Enterprises in Green Practices

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and Panagiota Balaska

**Abstract** The focus of this research is mainly on the definition of sustainable tourism actions that Greek enterprises follow and how tourism and sport tourism can be developed in a sustainable way. Sustainability has three strands: economic, social and environmental. From economic aspect there is an interest from all enterprises to implement the following actions: replacing energy-intensive lamps with new technology ones, recycling waste, landscape restoration, use of “green” cleaners, use of organic products, provide and promote traditional foods and drinks, use of photovoltaic, building insulation etc., because there is a reduction of their costs and also simultaneously benefit thereby the environment and furthermore have a social profile “environmental friendly” which is an incentive for some tourists for their choice. This research investigated the attitudes and the behavior of small, medium and large sport tourism enterprises as regards to sustainable development. As a global industry dependent on high quality natural environments for its attractiveness, tourism cannot hide from its responsibility to promote more sustainable business practices. The fundamental idea of the selective marketing approach is to attract a certain kind of tourists to the destination, those who behave in an environmentally friendly manner. The model for sustainable tourism development in Greece relates to ecological change brought by tourist activity, infrastructure development and through sport.

**Keywords** Sustainable · Tourism · Green tourism · Environment  
Sport tourism · Recreation

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**JEL Classification** Q56 · Environment and development · Environment and trade Sustainability · Environmental accounts and accounting · Environmental equity Population growth

## 1 Introduction

While sustainable development remains ambiguously defined and controversial, it has emerged as an influential concept for entrepreneurship policy, practice, and theory. However, while entrepreneurship has been cited as a significant conduit for a more sustainable society, there remains considerable uncertainty regarding the nature of this role and how it will unfold. The majority of studies exploring the relationship between sustainable development and entrepreneurship have been published outside of the mainstream entrepreneurship journals. Journals from other disciplines such as law, finance, and political science, have also been actively publishing papers on corporate sustainability, making it a truly multidisciplinary (although not necessarily interdisciplinary) research issue. To date, the majority of the corporate-sustainability literature has been focused on how established firms can reduce their environmental impacts and how sustainable development affects competitive advantage—how much “green” (i.e., profits, ROI) there is in “going green” (i.e., adding to ecologically sound resource use) (Hall, Daneke, & Lenox, 2010).

By philosophically embracing the sustainability paradigm, many of the tourism industry’s operators have taken a tentative first step in addressing this challenge. Despite ambiguities in terms and concepts, there is a significant and growing knowledge concerning how to move tourism towards greater sustainability. However, progress in transitioning from concepts and principles to pan-industry practice is limited. This may be due to a lack of collective leadership amongst tourism’s stakeholders. Tourism businesses appear to avoid significant ‘greening’ of their production processes in the face of seemingly ambivalent consumer demand. Consumers, while showing signs of adopting ‘greener’ values, have yet to be presented with many attractive mainstream sustainable tourism product options. Simultaneously, government agencies resist taking radical actions to ‘green up’ the industry for fear of economic reprisals, especially without the support of a largely apathetic public. Despite this apparent stalemate, some promising practices are emerging (Williams & Ponsford, 2009). Similarly, as firms become more fully aware of the potential production cost savings and marketplace advantages of various forms of green tourism, they will develop marketing strategies to capture greater market share. Recognizing these trends, government agencies and institutions may facilitate the shift to more sustainable forms of tourism through the enactment of ‘greener’ policies and offer incentives to maintain momentum. Bramwell (1990) defined “green tourism” as tourism which enhances local cultural elements, operating under the control of local communities by providing employment while retaining the economic benefits within local communities. From its side,

the tourist industry uses the term “green tourism” as a message to tourists on saving energy, preventing coastal pollution and more. However, there are not a few occasions, where the same tourism businesses are accused of using the term or labelling “green” for purely marketing reasons. Of course it is not disputed that the tourism industry is starting to respond to the changing values of tourists on environmental issues (Long, 1991).

## 2 Literature Review

Food and dining is another tourist business segment. The research of Sims (2009) has shown that food is important to sustainable tourism on a number of levels. Firstly, it is argued that increasing tourist consumption of local foods can generate a multiplier effect that will benefit the local economy (Enteleca Research and Consultancy, 2001). Secondly, concerns about the environmental consequences of transporting food across the globe have led researchers to argue that “buying local” is vital if the tourism industry is to reduce its carbon footprint (Boniface, 2003; Mitchell & Hall, 2003). Thirdly, there is a growing recognition that tourism destinations throughout the world are competing with each other in a bid to attract visitors. Successful tourist destinations must, therefore, exhibit what Urry (1995) terms “tourism reflexivity” whereby every destination must develop a range of goods and services that will distinguish it from other destinations and attract a steady stream of visitors. Promoting high-quality cuisine or distinctive local food products is one way of achieving this. Indeed, local foods may be particularly popular with tourists because they are considered “iconic” products that capture the “typical” nature of a particular place.

Restaurants at hotels play a catalytic role to its image. The research of Jeong, Jang, Day and Ha (2014) identify the impact of green restaurant practices from the perspective of customers. The results indicated that customers’ perceptions of green practices positively influence a restaurant’s green image, which also positively influences customers’ attitudes toward the restaurants. However, customers’ perceptions of green practices did not have a direct influence on customers’ attitudes toward the restaurant. By implementing green attributes, restaurants can inspire customers to structure a mental image of a particular restaurant’s greenness. Furthermore, this constructed green image can assist customers in developing a positive attitude toward the restaurant, which would ultimately affect customers’ dining decisions. However, while customers’ perceptions of green practices were not identified as a major driver when choosing a restaurant, as customers become more environmentally conscious the value of being green might also increase. As previously discussed, given the unrecognizable direct benefits of a restaurant’s green attributes, green practices may not currently be as substantive a factor as other major restaurant service factors (e.g., food quality, service quality, and atmosphere) in influencing customers’ dining decisions. Interviews with seven local hospitality and tourism enterprises in West England provided valuable insight into the benefits

of the scheme (Jarvis, Weeden, & Simcock, 2010). These were related to environmental impacts, financial considerations, marketing opportunities, brand recognition, company image and other issues such as public relations, personal and moral responsibility, and political considerations (Jarvis et al., 2010).

Relaxation, recreation and resting are the main motivators of international travel (52%) (UNWTO, 2014). The Mediterranean, dominated by the sun-and-sea tourism product, is the leading tourism micro region with around 200 million tourist arrivals in 2013 (UNWTO, 2014). Although the sun-and-sea product is the dominant tourism product in all Mediterranean countries, including Croatia, survival on the highly demanding market dictates the need for innovation and development of new products. Influenced by extremely high competition and significant, layered social change, a new concept of sun-and-sea travelling is being developed, based on premises such as 'social experience', 'localization', 'sustainability', 'healthy life', 'individualization and personalization' (Ivandić, Telišman-Košuta, Čorak, & Krešić, 2006; Živoder & Čorak, 2015).

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in some cases seems to move from a public affairs' concern to a core strategic activity. In which situations and under which conditions, considering issue-, stakeholder-, country-, industry- and firm-specific factors, are critical questions in this regard. The international dimension of these questions is extremely relevant, but has not yet been systematically addressed in international business research. CSR and sustainable development provide fertile areas in which existing international business theories can be tested, and from which new insights into the dynamics of the interaction between MNEs and their national and international contexts can be induced. Sustainable development and CSR have only slowly been taken up as relevant concepts of study in mainstream management journals in general (Kolk & Van Tulder, 2010).

The federation EUROPARC (1995) presented the application of sustainability indicators at a local scale, the Sustainable Performance Index. A tool for addressing the definition of action lines for local development and evaluating the short and long term effects of strategies developed through the participatory processes of the European Charter method. The Sustainable Performance Index (SPI) is an integrated index composed of 20 indicators concerned with demographic dynamics; economic and social conditions of local communities; environmental factors; tourism characteristics of the region under investigation. According to Garrod and Fyall (1998) there are ten principles for Sustainable Tourism: (a) Using resources sustainably, (b) Reducing over-consumption and waste, (c) Maintaining diversity, (d) Integrating tourism into planning, (e) Supporting local economies, (f) Involving local communities, (g) Consulting stakeholders and the public, (h) Training staff, (i) Marketing tourism responsibly, (j) Undertaking research.

"One of the identification trade mark of a tourism business as environmentally responsible is the "Green Key". "Green Key" is an international prize, an international ecological mark of quality that concerns tourism facilities and encourages hotel businesses, as environmental responsible, to make such choices at tourist facilities management to contribute to the environment protection, conservation of natural resources and promotion of sustainability. The "Green Key" program is

coordinated by the Foundation for the Environmental Education (FEE) and it is followed by countries all over the world. National coordinator for this program in Greece is the Hellenic Association of Nature Protection (<http://eepf.gr/el/drasi/Green%20key>).

To improve social and environmental performance across the entire tourism sector, both innovation and adoption are critical. Tourism enterprises often lead new approaches, but mainstreaming needs government legislation: self-regulation and ecocertification are ineffective. Improved sustainability in urban hotels, for example, has been driven by regulations for planning, impact assessment, pollution control, biodiversity and heritage conservation, building construction, energy and water efficiency, recycling, and so on. Voluntary private initiatives contribute principally by leading regulatory change (Buckley, 2012).

The study of Prayag, Dookhony-Ramphul, and Maryeven (2010) aimed to identify tourism stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism development and the impacts of hotel development. The findings indicate that hoteliers acknowledge and hotel development can have negative environmental impacts, but it is also believed that government and private sector should share the role of managing such impacts. To promote environmental sustainability in the hotel industry may therefore require more public-private sector partnerships, initiatives and sharing of best practices among hotel companies. The government's emphasis on Environmental Impact Assessment for proposed Hotel Development Services "HDS" may have contributed to increase the concern for the environment because it is recommended to hoteliers to adhere strictly to Pollution Prevention Guidelines "PPG". The findings show high levels of agreement with statements such as 'Government and hoteliers should encourage a more integrative approach to environmental quality management' and 'Government and hoteliers should further strengthen efforts for environmental conservation'. Hence, self-regulation alone is not always sufficient for adequate environmental protection. A shared role between members of the private sector, with some form of government intervention and direct control, tends to be the most appropriate solution for environmental protection (Briguglio & Briguglio, 1996).

Along with tourism policy, self-regulation by hoteliers should be further encouraged and rewarded, as a means of reducing the environmental impacts of tourism. Some hotels, for example, have already adopted energy and water conservation measures, such as laundering linen only at visitors' request. Others, such as Le Touessrok and Le Prince Maurice, have been awarded ISO9000 and Green Globe certification, which may explain why high levels of agreement were obtained from hoteliers about the positive environmental impacts of hotel development (Prayag et al., 2010).

One good private initiative is the company "Green Evolution", which was created in the midst of the climate change era to promote and strengthen the sustainable development. Through innovative technical & financial services, Green Evolution's vision is to help in the creation of a sustainable and secure future based

on a carbon-neutral model where individuals and firms make their own contribution and believe in a sustainable future (<http://www.green-evolution.eu/default.asp?pid=1&la=1>).

Green Evolution (2016) provides specialized education services for company executives on matters of the carbon market. Within these services Green Evolution has created two seminars that can be taken either together or independently of each other. The first seminar (Seminar CM1) contains an introduction to the basic concepts of the carbon market, while the second seminar (Seminar CM2) contains a detailed report on the carbon market targeted at brokerage and composite products. The seminars are implemented inside the interesting company (B2B) and refer to a maximum of 15 people each time.

Furthermore, Global Sustainable Tourism Council “GSTC” presents Sustainable Tourism Training Program (STTP) that offers practical insights and effective steps to help improving sustainability practices. With the aim of strengthening awareness of sustainable tourism in destinations around the world, the training program covers global trends in sustainable tourism and sustainability best practices for businesses and destinations. Designed as an intensive and interactive training experience led by expert GSTC Trainer(s), STTP training classes offer a unique opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of the GSTC Criteria, the global baseline standards for sustainability in travel and tourism, and the roles of accreditation and certification in advancing the sustainability agenda in the tourism industry. The goal of this research is to identify if there is an interest of sport tourism enterprises in green practices.

### **3 Methodology**

#### **3.1 Sample**

The sample consists of 62 companies that provide sport tourism in Greece. The sample is 62 enterprises and is selected among a population of companies that offer sport tourism in Greece. The total number of these enterprises is small (under 350) due to the economic crisis in Greece and the continuously closing of businesses. So the number of the sample is according to the population.

#### **3.2 Questionnaire**

The questionnaire is based on the scale of sustainable tourism of Kilipiris (2006) and it has 63 questions. It is consisted of five parts: the first part includes questions related to the profile of the enterprise, the second part is about changes that they have made and are towards to sustainability, the third part is about the promotion of

sports, the fourth part includes questions related to environmental issues and how they might impact their activity and the fifth part is about the profile of the person who is answering the questionnaire.

### 3.3 Procedure

The questionnaire was designed in Google forms and was sent to enterprises through mail, Facebook or their webpage.

## 4 Results

The questionnaire was proven reliable for the measures of attitudes and behaviors of enterprises in relation to sustainable development and Cronbach  $\alpha$  was used to test it  $\alpha = 0.84$ . Demographic and frequencies analysis were used to reveal by whom these enterprises in Greece are led, so below their profile is presented. The 62 managers of the sample are consisted of 64.5% men and 27.4% women (m.v. 8.1%). The age is presented by the following percentages (m.v. 6.5%): 25–34 = 21%, 35–45 = 40.3%, 45–54 = 29% and over 55 = 3.2%.

Their educational level was composed of six categories (m.v. 9.7%): Some High school = 1.6%, High school = 11.3%, College = 22.6%, University = 29%, Master's degree = 22.6%, Ph.D. degree = 3.2%. They expressed interest in future tourist training 82.3% and half of them had already taken some education on tourism issues.

Furthermore, half of them (51.7%) implement informal strategic planning adapted to circumstances, 37.9% have typical strategic planning and 10.3% without planning—just adapted to the circumstances. Also, the results have shown that the companies in Greece do not differ because of size and have a positive position towards sustainability, would like to be informed and already take action about these issues. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) has revealed that there is only one difference between small ( $M = 2.59$ ) and medium ( $M = 3.50$ ) enterprises about their belief on environmental risks by the increased numbers of visitors by the virtue of the attractiveness of a tourist destination  $F(2,50) = 3.752$ ,  $p = 0.31 < 0.05$ .

From the 62 managers, the 19.4% is hotel and apartments directors, the 54.8% is outdoor sports companies' owners, the 8.1% camps coordinators and the rest 12.9% is tour operators. Most of them are also the owners of the enterprises 85.5%, meanwhile others 6.5% are members of franchise and 1.6% members of business groups. Also they are developed through own funds 56.1% and a quarter of them joined the Corporate Pact for Development Framework "2007–2013" (ESPA 2007–2013).



Internationally the breadth of a company is based on the number of staff that is employed (small 1–10, medium 11–100, large 100+). Due to the economic crisis in Greece, there is a different size separation in the categories in relation to international standards (Table 1).

Some others do not follow at all green practices mainly due to the cost of this change (Table 2).

The majority of enterprises do not have a green certification (80.6%), while only 12.9% answered that they had (m.v. 6.5%). According to the answers given by the companies, the lack of a strong incentive is the main reason why they did not receive green certification (33.9%), followed by the lack of knowledge about certification and its procedure (17.7%), the acquisition cost with a percentage of 12.9%, the lack of time for dealing with certification issues for the 3.2%, while 3.2% did not mention a specific reason (missing values 16.1%). As mentioned

**Table 1** The percentage of each information source in accordance with the company's size

Information sources	Company size	Yes (%)	No (%)
Television	Small	<b>37.3</b>	29.4
	Medium	<b>19.6</b>	3.9
	Large	<b>7.8</b>	2.0
Newspapers/magazines	Small	21.6	<b>45.1</b>
	Medium	7.8	<b>15.7</b>
	Large	3.9	<b>5.9</b>
Specialized magazines	Small	21.6	<b>45.1</b>
	Medium	2.0	<b>21.6</b>
	Large	2.0	<b>7.8</b>
Seminars/workshops	Small	<b>37.3</b>	29.4
	Medium	9.8	<b>13.7</b>
	Large	<b>5.9</b>	3.9
Internet	Small	<b>43.1</b>	23.5
	Medium	<b>17.6</b>	5.9
	Large	<b>7.8</b>	2.0
Local chambers	Small	17.6	<b>49.0</b>
	Medium	3.9	<b>19.6</b>
	Large	0.0	<b>9.8</b>
Local authorities	Small	<b>37.3</b>	29.4
	Medium	<b>11.8</b>	<b>11.8</b>
	Large	0.0	9.8
Forestry authorities	Small	17.6	<b>49.0</b>
	Medium	7.8	<b>15.7</b>
	Large	0.0	<b>9.8</b>
Other	Small	3.9	<b>62.7</b>
	Medium	2.0	<b>21.6</b>
	Large	2.0	<b>7.8</b>

**Table 2** Reasons for not using environmentally friendly products

Reasons	Yes (%)	No (%)
Price/cost	<b>63.6</b>	36.4
Lack of knowledge	25.0	<b>75.0</b>
Lack of options	36.4	<b>63.6</b>
Lack of quality	13.6	<b>86.4</b>
Difficulty in finding them	40.9	<b>59.1</b>

above only 12.9% have been certified and promoted it through selective marketing to attract environmentally sensitive tourists. In particular, the certificates in general that were mentioned by the managers are the Green Start 1.6%, ISO 9000 3.2%, CERTOUR 1.6%, Green key 1.6%, Hellenic Organization for Standardization (ELOT sa) 1.6% and Trip advisor 1.6%.

Also one-way analysis ANOVA have shown that there isn't a difference because of the size of the company and the level of awareness in general sustainability. The analysis results for each one of the above green practices are:

- Replacing energy-intensive lamps with new technology ones  $F_{(2,50)} = 1.047, p = 0.359 > 0.05$ .
- Recycling waste  $F_{(2,49)} = 0.451, p = 0.639 > 0.05$ .
- Landscape restoration  $F_{(2,48)} = 0.184, p = 0.824 > 0.05$ .
- Use of ecologic cleaners  $F_{(2,49)} = 2.029, p = 0.143 > 0.05$ .
- Use of organic products  $F_{(2,48)} = 2.800, p = 0.071 > 0.05$ .
- Prefer of local market products  $F_{(2,49)} = 1.400, p = 0.257 > 0.05$ .
- Service and promotion of authentic traditional food and beverages  $F_{(2,48)} = 1.261, p = 0.293 > 0.05$ .
- Building insulation  $F_{(2,48)} = 0.645, p = 0.529 > 0.05$ .
- Using products from recycled materials  $F_{(2,48)} = 1.542, p = 0.225 > 0.05$ .
- Water resources management/recycling water (through tanks)  $F_{(2,49)} = 0.421, p = 0.659 > 0.05$ .
- Towel and linen policy for the room  $F_{(2,38)} = 1.212, p = 0.310 > 0.05$ .
- Using biofuels at enterprise's vehicles  $F_{(2,46)} = 1.142, p = 0.328 > 0.05$ .
- Use of photovoltaic  $F_{(2,49)} = 0.271, p = 0.764 > 0.05$ .

## 5 Conclusion

The focus of this research is mainly on the definition of sustainable tourism actions that Greek enterprises follow and how tourism and sport tourism can be developed in a sustainable way. Sustainability has three strands: economic, social and environmental. This research investigated the attitudes and the behavior of small, medium and large sport tourism enterprises as regards to sustainable development. As a global industry dependent on high quality natural environments for its attractiveness, tourism cannot hide from its responsibility to promote more

sustainable business practices. The fundamental idea of the selective marketing approach is to attract a certain kind of tourists to the destination, those who behave in an environmentally friendly manner. The model for sustainable tourism development in Greece relates to ecological change brought by tourist activity, infrastructure development and through sport.

Television and internet are for everyone the main sources of information. Furthermore, information obtained by seminars and workshops is widespread in small and large companies and not particularly in medium-sized companies. Local Authorities contribute to inform small companies, but they do not play a catalytic role in large companies, while medium-sized companies are divided because of the belief of this source importance. It is important to note that other sources of information such as newspapers/magazines, specialized magazines, local chambers and forestry authorities are not so widespread and they are not preferred. The development of common and easily recognized standards for green products will help in this process. Non-commercial sources of information on the benefits of green products such as universities and TV, radio and newspaper news reports will also build consumer confidence. Green marketing is a natural outgrowth of growing societal concern over the environment in Europe and the US. Green marketing is still in its infancy and is likely to be a growth area because of the persistent nature of our world's environmental problems. Commitment by business in Europe and the US to improve the environment, and consumer support of these efforts through the purchase of green products, are keys to the future of green marketing. (Lampe & Gazda, 1995).

To improve social and environmental performance across the entire tourism sector, both innovation and adoption are critical. Tourism enterprises often lead new approaches, but mainstreaming needs government legislation: self-regulation and ecocertification are ineffective. Improved sustainability in urban hotels, for example, has been driven by regulations for planning, impact assessment, pollution control, biodiversity, heritage conservation, building construction, energy and water efficiency, recycling, and so on. Voluntary private initiatives contribute principally by leading regulatory change (Buckley, 2012). One good private initiative is the company "Green Evolution", which was created in the midst of the climate change era to promote and strengthen the sustainable development. Green Evolution (2016) provides specialized education services for company executives on matters of the carbon market. Within these services Green Evolution has created two seminars.

The policy recommendations that are critical to an integrated sustainable tourism development plan must aim to achieve the following goals (Hassan, 2016): to promote an awareness and understanding among key stakeholders (e.g., citizens, developers) of the critical link between any tourism development effort and sustaining the environment; to promote equity in the development opportunities among local and international developers of quality tourism projects; to maximize tourist satisfaction through the delivery of total quality experience; to broaden the support from the host community through citizen/NGO involvement programs; to develop and sustain the quality of life for the local communities; to provide balance among economic, social, and environmental needs in all tourism planning and development

programs; to define the limitations to tourism development in terms of both physical and social carrying capacity of each destination; to develop high-quality environmental impact assessments for both existing and proposed tourism developments; to maintain the local culture and promote the image of its values, heritage, traditional way of life, indigenous behavior, and local sociopolitical fabric; and to enhance the development of the human resource base in tourism through management education and training.

As Read (2013), mentioned tourists should change their travel behavior by choosing a shorter-haul or flight-free holiday, choosing a hotel where there is less leakage from the local economy, choosing a hotel with significantly less non-recycled waste per guest-night, choosing significantly fewer, but longer, holidays and by increasing daily discretionary spend. Furthermore, larger hotels should attempt to draw synergies from holistic innovation because if only three innovation types are used, there will not be a significant increase in performance. Management innovation type, for instance, could consist in having high service quality certification by a third organization while also paying attention to the environmental attributes of the service. Giving a guest the option to save on the cleaning of towels would be environmentally friendly, and cleaning costs would decrease. This improvement in service (at least for the 'green' guest) can then be combined with other back-office operation innovations such as drying machines to release employees to spend more time with customers. Finally, to complete the holistic innovation example, this 'green towel service' with decreased costs needs to be communicated to the market through the External communication innovation type. This could be achieved by using a user-friendly Internet service. In this way, all four innovation types for improved hotel performance can be integrated (Mattsson & Orfila-Sintes, 2014).

Sustainability has three strands: economic, social and environmental and every destination depends on all of them. It is important to anticipate and manage: the negative social, cultural, environmental and economic problems arising from tourism. Sustainable development requires cooperation of all economic activities to enhance the quality of life of the local communities and the natural environment (Yfantidou & Matarazzo, 2016). From economic aspect there is an interest from all enterprises to implement the following actions: replacing energy-intensive lamps with new technology ones, recycling waste, landscape restoration, use of "green" cleaners, use of organic products, provide and promote traditional foods and drinks, building insulation etc., because there is a reduction of their costs and also simultaneously benefit thereby the environment and furthermore have a social profile "environmental friendly" which is an incentive for some tourists for their choice.

Consequently, government should be empowered not only politically and legally, but also financially. As a global industry dependent on high quality natural environments for its attractiveness, tourism cannot hide from its responsibility to promote more sustainable business practices. The fundamental idea of the selective marketing approach is to attract a certain kind of tourists to the destination, those who behave in an environmentally friendly manner. Tour operators are uniquely positioned to play catalytic roles in making such progress. The model for

sustainable tourism development in Greece relates to ecological change brought by tourist activity, infrastructure development and through sport. Less tourism may not lead to improved global sustainability, but if demand from tourists is not less, then it must be different. The entire tourism sector must be developed and must be managed with it thus does not destroy the natural and socio-cultural environment, it is an obligation and responsibility of the tourism economy of anywhere in the world.

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# Sustainability in Sport Tourism Education—Theoretical Impact and the Tourism Sector Reality

**Ourania Vrontou, Panagiotis Dimitropoulos, Yiannis Douvis  
and Vasiliki Avgerinou**

**Abstract** The rise of new tourism forms has dominated the last two decades matching a dramatically segmented market, thus answering to the minor of niches met in the new tourism era. Sport tourism has concentrated great theoretical attention since it manages to synthesise two major social leisure expressions that of sport and tourism. This tourism development suggested a vivid sustainable character emphasised in the vast majority of theoretical approaches. Still, sport tourism education failed to effectively incorporate sustainability as a core course module, focusing rather on traditional operational outlines, thus limiting the building of green conscious and applicable industry skills in the tourism management scene. The present analysis through a systematic review provides a range of approaches to assist in the difficult task of mapping a sustainable sports tourism outline, not only in terms of the course structure, but also in terms of the relationship between the course and its evolving tourism environment. The examination of existing theoretical paradigms aims to produce generalizable fields of academic education leading to well skilled sustainability-minded sport tourism professionals.

**Keywords** Sport tourism · Tourism education · Sustainable tourism  
Tourism curriculum

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## 1 Sustainability in Tourism

It was in 2005 when The World Tourism Organization produced a definition for sustainable development highlighting the mind shift of the tourism environment towards a “development that meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support systems” (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005). This declaration has arrived rather late after a comprehensive literature has produced a wide range of green theoretical approaches that would affect the tourism product development inevitably (Sharpley, 2000). Theories of ecological economics and overall the green ‘issue’ of the ‘90s would become driving paradigms to affect thinking towards a ‘positive’ exploitation of natural resources (Hardy, Beeton & Pearson, 2002). Natural environment is highlighted as the very core of the tourism product endangered by the mass tourism operation concentrated in certain areas.

The insensible exploitation of resources led to social, economic and cultural degradation for localities (Liu, 2003). Tourism industry faced a stagnating product in need for upgrading, unwilling however, to sacrifice *modus operandi* to safeguard future returns. Researchers enthusiastically continued to produce large volumes of nature-sensitive tourism theory throughout ‘90s, evidently leading to the build of a new greener conscious regarding tourism resource management. The rise of ‘alternative’ tourism forms (Vrontou, 1999) would be devotedly supported by the majority of tourism literature as the only viable scenario for future development. These new tourism forms would be directly connected with the sensitive management of natural environment as well as an educated clientele (De Knop, 1990; Krippendorf, 1987). This new tourism participant, rather naively perceived by the literature, would present an ecological profile, a sensitive behavior and an alternative travel pattern. Research to prove the previous assumption has not been sufficient, and surely has not provided generalizable conclusions. In contrary, radical ecologists argue that there is no such thing as green development when travel flow increases in a certain locality even though they possess an ‘alternative’ character.

Despite the evident lack of big scale research to prove the sensitive character of the new tourism forms rising in the ‘90s the huge volume of literature produced in this decade has undoubtedly formed a wider green tourism developmental conscious that affected the formulation of the new tourism products as well as national and local policy schemes (Boo & Park, 2013). The Mediterranean area realizing the critical need for product differentiation intensely adopted the ‘green’ paradigm that dominated the new era as the sole alternative to a saturated environment (Vrontou, 1999). ‘Sustainability’ seems to be dominating ever since as a holistic approach towards securing returns without endangering the basic resources needed to produce and provide the tourism product. 90s theorists on radical and soft ecological thinking produced an enormous volume of literature suggesting all aspects of sustainability,



mainly ecological sustainability (Common, 1995) as the basis of development through the protection of natural resources, but also economic sustainability (Bramwell et al., 1996) as the ability of the system to produce positive numbers without jeopardizing future returns. Social sustainability (Bramwell, 1996) suggests the preservation of social stability and equality despite new developments forced on localities. These three basic axes of sustainability continue to receive academic attention promising an alternative mode of operating in order to sustain the tourism experience.

The present analysis attempts through a critical review to identify the basic dimensions that could support the build of a sustainable sport tourism curriculum encompassing sustainability practices that will secure the future of this promising leisure form in the long run. Analysis of all available theoretical approaches will hopefully set the basis for the structuring of an effective outline also satisfying industry's demand for sustainability-oriented sport tourism professionals.

## 2 Sport Tourism Literature: A Green Wishful Thinker

Amongst the new forms developed suggesting a viable alternative to the saturated tourism offer, sports tourism was early distinguished as having an infinite developmental potential. The different forms of sports participation as part of or the main motive to travel (Gammon & Robinson, 2003) constituted a complex and varied tourism expression. The dramatic increase of sports participation inevitably affected travelling habits, motives and behavior during holidays. Sports tourism still enjoys a wide spectrum of literature emphasizing the great potential for local developers as well as the tourism industry. Sport tourism has been applied in different localities to achieve a new rejuvenated offer or map a certain image for new localities wishing to invest in tourism. In parallel, sport tourism since its early theoretical examination has been perceived to be one of the greenest tourism proposals for tourism development. Limited environmental impact and a nature-sensitive tourist profile synthesized the new tourism form of the '90s as having the ability to develop tourism according to the principles of sustainability and the everlasting natural resources and preserved environment.

Relevant literature consistently emphasized the positive impact of sports tourism with great passion suggesting the power of the basic ingredient of sport as having the ability to create strong travelling motives amongst the international audience. Despite the early attempts of sport tourism categorization according to participant profile, different settings, behavior and core sports tourism product, theoretical work failed to differentiate between sports tourism forms and the levels of sustainability they propose. Standeven and De Knop's (1999) 'forms of tourism' early categorization sets the conceptual setting by differentiating between 'active' and 'passive' sport participation during holidays. This theoretical platform would detrimentally affect the categorization of sports tourism for almost two decades including all possible expressions found in the sports tourism, from casual observers of sport

events to sport participation during holidays. Similarly, the 'sports tourism demand curriculum' built by Jackson and Reeves (1996) aimed to map the density, regularity and basic characteristics of those participating on sports tourism experiences, such as travelling modes, spending behavior and overall sport lifestyle. Similar categorization attempts of the decade focus largely in understanding the characteristics of the participants and exclude natural environment as part of the basic setting for the sports tourism experience. It was Hall (1992) early to include the natural setting only to facilitate the 'adventure travel' dimension of the 'less active to more active' axis and the competitive character of participation described in his model. Haywood (1994) classified sport as environmental as well as inter-personal challenge while Burton (1995) discriminated between tourism natural and manmade environment. The previous models do not seem to appreciate the role of the natural environment as a basis for sports tourism analysis which is a paradox considering the vivid literature arguments towards the green character of sports tourism. It was Weed and Bull (2003) in their 'policy wheel for sport and tourism' to propose 'rural, environment and water issues' as a basic dimension towards the design of an effective policy scheme for local development. Still, literature remains supportive of the green character of sport tourism providing however, little research output towards measuring the environmental impact, sport tourist 'green' characteristics and overall eco-friendly behavior.

Assumptions on the alternative tourist profile are based mainly on the natural setting needed to produce alternative sport related tourism products and the type of sensitive clientele this would attract. But what is the reality regarding the second major dimension of sports tourism that of 'passive' participation to observe sporting events? Authors early emphasized the importance of hosting mega events to build positive images for a city leading to positive economic impact and tourism increase in the long run. These theoretical approaches would not differentiate the two sport tourism expressions mainly focusing on the attractiveness of the sport element and the variety of sport-related tourist opportunities presented. Literature impressed by the coalition of probably the two largest leisure human expressions producing a new tourism dynamic excluded hidden environmental dangers mainly related to the passive sport tourism forms, namely the participation to watch sporting events. The complexity of these events, the resources-demanding operation, the construction magnitude and the population accumulation leave little optimism regarding environmental sustainability. Social sustainability, similarly becomes questionable when event partners belong to the international business focusing on an elite sports profile, thus allowing little room for social stability and equity (Smith, 2009). Additionally, to measure sustainability practices in mega events and their impact in the long run remains problematic despite attempts to quantify impact through evaluation schemes (Bramwell, 1997). At the other end of the 'active' participation spectrum, literature of the last two decades fails to support the sustainable operation of the 'organised holiday sport activities' (Stadeven & De Knop, 1999) especially when this operation is using the same tourism industry structure to satisfy the rising new segment of sport tourism enthusiasts.

### 3 Education Misbehaving...

Tourism education failed to appear proactive by incorporating sustainable principles in the curriculum despite the volume of available literature produced in the '90s (Dale & Robinson, 2001). Amongst others Barron and Prideaux (1998) identified the responsibility for maintaining the balance between conservation of the nation's natural assets and profit 'falling on the educators of future hospitality and tourism managers'. However, it took almost 20 years for the rise of programs such as the "Tourism Education Futures Initiative" (2007), which suggests a strong focus on sustainability by identifying stewardship as an important value (Sheldon et al. 2011). Similarly, the "Principles of Responsible Management Education" (2011), a United Nations-supported program aimed at encouraging management and business education activities to incorporate principles from the United Nations Global Compact. In addition, Tribe's paper 'Education for Ethical Tourism Action' (2002) proposes an action-oriented ethical tourism curriculum based on Aristotle's notion of 'phronesis', aimed at developing a 'good' action. Then, Jamal (2004) drawing upon Aristotle's wisdom attempts to map a 'praxis-oriented' curriculum incorporating sustainable tourism principles and leading to good tourism practices.

In the early '00s authors like Flohr (2001) admitted that yet little research has been conducted to investigate whether the sustainability 'debate' has affected postgraduate studies focusing on the supply structure of postgraduate tourism education in the UK. Deale, Nichols and Jacques (2009) in a survey of educators-members of the International Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education results indicated that while sustainability is taught, it does not appear to be central to the courses and does not carry great emphasis in hospitality education. Soon, the need to include sustainability principles in the tourism curriculums has been agreed by both theorists (Deale et al., 2009; Farrell & Twining-Ward, 2005) as well as other tourism stakeholders (Barber et al., 2011). However, academia developed an increasing interest when realized the growing importance that the hospitality and tourism sector places on sustainability practices (Boley, 2011). An enriched curriculum with sustainable theory and practices widens student's professional capacity and earns industry's appreciation.

In 2012, Deale and Barber (2012) were still astonished by sustainability's limited awareness of its importance evidenced in the United States universities' hospitality curriculum. The results of their study revealed significant differences between students, educators, and industry leaders in the United States in relation to environmental and sustainability conscious and the significance of environmental concerns in a hospitality curriculum. This proves the distance between all involved parts placing different significance on the need to expand knowledge towards an environmental dimension for tourism education.

However, after 2010 the literature presented the willingness to fight for the inclusion of sustainability into the tourism curriculums. Canziani, Sönmez, Hsieh, and Byrd (2012) introduce the use of the learning systems in an effort to improve sustainability education planning in tourism. It was Wilson and der Heidt (2013)

qualitative study with academics regarding barriers that obstruct the inclusion of sustainability that highlighted the educational reality. Crowded curriculums that face the multifaceted phenomenon of tourism leave limited room for the examination of all sustainability aspects. Surprisingly, staff and student demonstrated resistance to sustainability which complicates the inclusion of extended modules. Finally, complex educational structures fail to move proactively to new developments and therefore to attempt the modernization of curriculums. This study is backed up by the work of Boyle, Wilson, and Dimmock (2015). Adopting a conceptual framework of “weak to strong sustainability”, they attempted to analyse the ideological perspectives of sustainable tourism lecturers and the findings presented large ideological differences in how lecturers positioned and taught sustainable tourism, from a “weaker” economic emphasis to a “stronger” sociocultural/environmental focus. Tourism lecturers with a strong sustainability background held a more political agency, critical reflection, and activism stance in tourism higher education. Again, a study by Camargo and Gretzel, in 2017 showed that despite a widely spread recognition of the value of sustainability students hold limited knowledge of the principles as well as the practical methods related to sustainable tourism.

#### **4 Sport Tourism Education: A Challenging Task**

Sustainability in the sport tourism theoretical platform remains highly appreciated encompassing all those positive principles from tourist behavior to industry’s green operation that would safeguard the proposed development for the future ahead. Deriving mainly by sport-related theorists the sport tourism literature remains a romantic enthusiast basing the dynamic of this form of tourism on their advanced wisdom on the sport influence over the wide audience and less on their knowledge of effective sustainable developmental systems needed to secure its viability. In the same lines, educational parameters on sport tourism where delayed presenting slow academic reaction let alone sustainability principles. The academic environment that produced the enormous theoretical sport tourism volume did not presented an equivalent reaction in the production of related courses and more surprisingly, failed to encompass sustainability principles within the tourism education environment. A rather slow sport education reaction to sustainability is recorded since these programs are accommodated inside traditional sport academic structures demonstrating the protagonist role of sport amongst all leisure forms. This rather egoistic stance towards any new course developments is reinforced by the fact that sport departments worldwide are the initiators of the sport tourism conceptualization and significant literature output. However, this initiation is not followed by practical sustainability tools causing mistrust to students constrained to theoretical knowledge with no applicable value to the tourism industry.

The need to invite other relevant departments in order to cover all aspects of the phenomenon inevitably causes academic power imbalances. The tourism

departments defend their crucial role in tourism education facing the challenge to coexist with sport academics in order to produce a sport tourism curriculum. This intra-departmental egocentrism (Vrondou & Katsoni, 2017) is elevated when both sections present extended outlines to cover all aspects of sport and tourism respectively. This mutual egoism creates an overcrowded curriculum leaving little room for sustainability to be satisfactorily included. In addition, sport tourism as a teaching field holds a wide theoretical spectrum from passive to active sport tourism forms, from alternative tourist behavior to mega events staging constituting the build of an effective curriculum a puzzled task.

To complicate this task further, the inclusion of sustainability in the curriculum as suggested by the literature and theorists demands the enrollment of a wide range of academic staff to produce effective programs. The main issue with sustainability in these departments remains the vague relation and experience of the teaching staff with the concept of sustainability. The inexperience of the sports staff with the concept of sustainable tourism as well as the restricted theoretical relation of the tourism staff with the same concept create a confusing environment for participating students struggling to see any practical value for their professional life.

## **5 Tourism Industry's Relation to Education: A Problematic Reality**

Mapping the skills and abilities required in the tourism and hospitality sector has always been a challenging exercise and a considerable academic and political debate (Baum, 2002). Despite the professionalism met on the tourism industry its distance from the tourism education has always been a problematic reality (Cooper, 2002; Cooper & Shepherd, 1997). The fact that the industry has a direct interest for educated tourism professionals dictates a shift towards bridging the two worlds of tourism operation. The challenge to bridge conceptual spheres with practical industry skills will determine the future of tourism educational schemes. To compose the wide spectrum of the sport function along with the tourism operation under a sustainability umbrella could probably be one of the most difficult challenges the academic community could face. It becomes more evident that the tourism industry would support sustainability mechanisms to secure future operation. The translation of sustainability thus, could vary amongst different industry's stakeholders but nevertheless, it has become a new indisputable standard of operating (Miller & Park, 2013). All dimensions of sustainability should be delivered through the curriculum to satisfy all tourism sectors and facilitate students with applicable tools.

Sport tourism appears attractive to the tourism industry with a plethora of relevant sport tourism-friendly studies strongly emphasizing sport's 'integral part' in the new tourism supply era (Jackson & Weed, 2003). The commercial tourism sector evidently benefits from attracting parts of the existing but also new sport-related market segments that the sport tourism development brings. From

‘occasional’ tourists where sport is limited significant to ‘driven’ where sport is the essential reason to travel this demand spectrum summarizes the numerous opportunities for the tourism business to answer through a tailor-made offer. The industry has already recognized the need to shift its activity to viable mechanisms to safeguard operation. Sport tourism has been perceived as one of the most sustainable developments making the industry seeking to satisfy this character through sustainable management practices. Module ingredients that would be realistically incorporated to satisfy this goal could be energy-saving operating mechanisms in the hospitality sector and overall adjusted technological advancements (Legrand, Sloan and Chen, 2016; Chow, 2013; Makki and Makki, 2012; Türel, 2011) through a supportive and flexible educational system (Lee, 2010).

Henry and Jackson’s work (1996) on ‘Sustainable Tourism Management Practice’ marks the way forward. They criticize the relevant literature that focuses largely on the environmental and the cultural aspect of sustainability in tourism operation ignoring the necessity to encompass sustainability principles on the ‘service delivery system itself’. Through a holistic approach of applied sustainability, Henry and Jackson (1996) early proposed that sustainable management practices should be incorporated throughout all parts of the industry operation to secure viable developments. They emphasised the wider need to establish how an educational curriculum may reflect the philosophy of sustainable development. Their work examine ways of correlating the tourism product management, the policy process and the delivery system through an environmental, cultural, social, and economical ‘responsible’ approach to tourism development. They also, include factors such as the industrial structure, the employees, the management practices and the impact deriving from these axes.

## 6 Reaching a Viable Sustainable Sport Tourism Education

The lack of relevant literature on sustainable sport tourism curriculum becomes evident in the present study. An effort to propose the main axes of a relevant curriculum is a daring act but sets the basis for debate leading hopefully to the build of an effective educational structure for sport tourism. Three main parts could serve as the main frame for sustainable curriculum while trying to balance all basic components of the subject:

Sustainability—Setting the theoretical basis

- ecological, environmental and nature-related theoretical paradigms
- ecology—economy theories
- radical and soft sustainable options
- innovative green public policy design
- effective promotional mechanisms to produce an influential sport tourism strategy for a certain destination

- understanding of economic, social and cultural sustainability.

#### Sustainable management practices

- forming policy through local community involvement to maximize social sustainability
- form central regulatory mechanisms to control industry's operations in a sustainable manner
- sustainable management action at all levels from planning the tourism experience to daily operation.

#### The sport function

- sport function analysis at all levels both soft and mega expressions
- alternative small scale sport: motives, behavior, impact
- mass sport participation to professional sport structures: restrictions to environmental impact
- sustainable policies and procedures within the competition environment
- sustainability mechanisms in operating mega sports events
- international bodies environmental practices
- sport venues adaptation to greener operation.

The inclusion of the sustainability paradigm within a sport tourism curriculum remains a challenging academic duty. Bridging literature's invaluable input with the tourism sector reality is the responsibility of academics that will affect not only the graduates competence and carrier but also detrimentally impact on the production and delivery of the sport tourism experience.

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# Sustainable Tourism in Costa Rica: Supporting Rural Communities Through Study Abroad

Linda Heyne, José Rogelio Vargas and Susana Matamoros Mendoza

**Abstract** This paper presents a case study of sustainable tourism practices in Costa Rica, including national initiatives that promote sustainability and examples of rural tourism as experienced through study abroad. Costa Rica is known as a world leader in sustainable tourism practices. After widespread rainforest deforestation, and exploitation by foreign developers, Costa Ricans have grown increasingly aware of the importance of protecting their natural resources. Subsequently, national legislation and policies have been developed to support sustainable practices. The *Ley de Biodiversidad* conserves biodiversity in natural areas (see <http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/details.jsp?id=896>). The *Certificación para la Sostenibilidad Turística* encourages businesses to use sustainable practices by awarding *leaves* instead of *stars* for meeting environmental standards (see <http://www.turismo-sostenible.co.cr/>). The *Programa Bandera Azul Ecológica* protects the water quality of beaches, coastal areas, and tourist accommodations (see <http://banderaazulecologica.org/>). A crucial dimension of sustainable tourism in Costa Rica is consideration for the social, economic, and cultural wellbeing of community members. This paper shares the work of José Rogelio Vargas and Susana Matamoros Mendoza who train local community members living near protected areas to become sustainable tourism entrepreneurs. Businesses include lodges, restaurants, tours, and outdoor pursuits. With a focus on empowerment, their efforts aim to improve the quality of life and economic viability of rural communities while conserving surrounding natural resources. This paper also features a course in sustainable tourism at Ithaca College, which includes study abroad in Costa Rica that supports the entrepreneurs. Students learn about sustainable tourism by talking directly with tour operators. They stay in locally run ecolodges, eat locally grown food, and engage in recreational activities led by local guides (e.g., hiking,

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kayaking, chocolate tour). Students also study the sustainable methods entrepreneurs use (e.g., alternative energy, recycling, community partnerships). While students learn about sustainable tourism, they support the communities that are actually engaged in the enterprise.

**Keywords** Sustainable tourism • Ecolodges

# Intelligent Management of Outdoor Cultural Events Promoting Exploitation in Smart City Environments

Zois Koukopoulos and Dimitrios Koukopoulos

**Abstract** Applying Internet of Things solutions to cultural heritage domain is a recent trend following the enormous success of social media and multimedia content distribution technology. In this work we investigate the feasibility of applying such solutions in outdoor cultural events aiming in the enhancement of leisure experience for tourists and the promotion of real-life cultural festivities exploitation for the benefit of local communities. The intervention of mobile-based platforms with tourism and leisure is a challenging field, as it can raise awareness to the broad public and provide digital solutions to public authorities and local businesses on the field. Attempting to provide an answer to those challenges we designed and implemented modern tools that permit tangible and intangible cultural data collection from public authorities and spectators, enhanced dissemination of data to the broader public adapting augmented reality techniques in a friendly manner and local businesses products and services efficient dissemination and exploitation. Our study suggests that such an interaction can be beneficial for local authorities and tourism supporting a sustainable city environment.

**Keywords** Mobile applications · Smart cities · Outdoor cultural events  
Social media · Competitiveness · Event marketing and exploitation

**JEL Classification** Z other special topics

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## 1 Introduction

Rapid technological evolution in the fields of mobile computing and Internet of Things (IoT) provides a new weapon in the hands of public authorities to disseminate outdoor cultural events, which take place within their cities, in order to reach and attract a larger audience of potential tourists and visitors. Along with the successful attraction of large numbers of tourists, many opportunities for commercial exploitation of such events become available for local markets leading to local economy growth (Gursoy, Kimb, & Uysal, 2004; Richards & Wilson, 2004). Since every organization has access to technologies like mobile computing and IoT, the competition is anticipated to rise even among cities of the same country. Event organizers need to find an effective way to stand out from that competition.

Outdoor cultural events happen periodically in many locations around the world. Usually those events are organized by public authorities or dedicated commercial organizations. A successful outdoor cultural event will attract massive numbers of visitors that will also try to combine the main event with other touristic activities like a tour around city's important locations. In order to intrigue tourists and urge them spend their income in local products and services, a city should be ready to provide all the necessary information that will facilitate individuals to reach the desired destinations (Luxford & Dickinson, 2015). A modern challenge appears instantly. Collecting, organizing and presenting tourism information is not as easy as it was in the past (Lu & Stepchenkova, 2015). Not so long ago, an official website with practical information and some multimedia content would be considered modern, innovative and adequate. But not anymore. Individuals nowadays are used to have access in tons of information not only through their personal computers and laptops, but also in real-time and on-demand via their mobile devices, smartphones and tablets, while they walk on the street. Moreover, when those individuals visit another place for leisure or work they need such rich information fast and easy (Oliveira & Panyik, 2014). If an application is not ready to satisfy that need, it will become outdated, redundant and failed (Yuan & Ho, 2015). To make matters more complicated, occasionally people wish to record their memories when visiting a new place or participate in an event and even share them instantly with their friends all over the world. This reality raises important questions. Is it feasible to implement a trustworthy system that provides such diverse services and feed it with the appropriate amounts of information? Can a public authority assign such a work on a team of professionals and get the anticipated results? We believe that such data-hungry systems and applications cannot be supported by a limited number of professionals. A combination of city employees, event organizers, local company representatives, citizens and visitors should participate in feeding such a system with the appropriate information in a trustworthy manner.

In this work we propose a prototype system that tries to combine mobile technology, content crowdsourcing, social media interaction, augmented reality applications and commercial exploitation services to offer visitors and tourists an

immersive experience and a smart way for local businesses to increase their income by exploiting their products and offered services in an efficient personalized and cost-effective manner. The system supports the active participation of users in the process of collecting content through user-friendly modules in a trustworthy manner aiming at raising awareness among the users concerning system success. Users, who care for a system, tend to provide valuable feedback by discovering technical problems and highlighting the need for updated and modern services. In order to indicate the proposed system's strength as a modern software application for the dissemination and exploitation of outdoor cultural events we compared it with other systems that have been implemented to attract large crowds of individuals to well-known outdoor cultural events. Evaluation results show that the proposed system offers various dissemination, exploitation and user awareness services that are considered required in modern e-tourism applications.

## 2 Literature Review

The application of Information Technology (IT) in the tourism industry has been a field of study for more than 20 years (Sheldon, 1997). Many excellent e-Tourism applications have been introduced to the scientific community and the tourism market. Sebastia, Garcia, Onaindia, and Guzman (2009) present e-Tourism a tourist recommendation and planning application to assist users on the organization of a leisure and tourist agenda. Garcia-Crespo et al. (2009) propose SPETA that is a social pervasive e-Tourism advisor which uses information of the user's current location, preferences and former locations in order to provide recommender services to tourists. Fodor and Werthner (2014) present the project Harmonise which aims to create a platform independent e-Tourism marketplace that will allow tourism organizations with different data standards to exchange information seamlessly without having to change their proprietary data schemas.

Many IT applications have been introduced the last years for cultural tourism (Garzotto, Salmon, & Pigozzi, 2003; Negruşa, Toader, Sofică, Tutunea, & Rus, 2015; Ruotsalo et al., 2013; Varfolomeyev, Korzun, Ivanovs, Soms, & Petrina, 2015). Garzotto et al. (2003) proposed a multi-channel web framework for cultural tourism applications intended to be used in museums and archaeological sites in Italy. Ruotsalo et al. (2013) present SMARTMUSEUM, a mobile ubiquitous recommender system addressing tourist information needs in context-aware on-site access to cultural heritage. Negruşa et al. (2015) study the role of gamification as an interface between tourists, organizations and community and identify gamification techniques and applications used by organizations in the hospitality and tourism industry to improve their sustainable activities. Varfolomeyev et al. (2015) study personalized recommendation services for historical e-Tourism by adopting a multi-agent architecture to develop services using the smart spaces approach. Rijeka Carnival (2017) is an online web portal that provides information to the visitors of the Rijeka carnival which is an annual outdoor cultural event, while interconnecting

with the official tourist website of the city of Rijeka, Croatia. The system also provides dedicated mobile applications related to tourist activities. Carnival of Venice (2017) is an online web portal that provides event-related and tourist information to visitors of the famous Venetian carnival.

Important features usually integrated in modern tourism applications include augmented reality functionality, social media connectivity, personalization and mobile access through web browsers or dedicated mobile applications (Garau, 2014; Han, Jung, & Gibson, 2014; Hays, Page, & Buhalis, 2013; Kounavis, Kasimati, & Zamani, 2012; Leung, Law, van Hoof, & Buhalis, 2013; Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). Kounavis et al. (2012) discuss the use of augmented reality (AR) functionalities in tourism applications to enhance the tourism experience and propose a model for developing AR mobile applications for the field of tourism. Garau (2014) discusses the possibilities and challenges of augmented reality in the field of cultural heritage, presents a simulation of one case study in a neighborhood in Cagliari (Italy), where customized paths with the aim of promoting cultural tourism are proposed and highlights the benefits of using augmented reality in touristic and place-based processes based on the case study. Han et al. (2014) investigate tourists' requirements for the development of a mobile AR tourism application in urban heritage revealing that multi-language functionality, ease of use and personalization are among the main user needs. Personalization as a key feature for tourism applications is discussed in Kabassi (2013). Leung et al. (2013) investigate social media usage in tourism and hospitality arguing that social media play a strategic role for tourism competitiveness. Zeng and Gerritsen (2014) argue that social media play an important role in many aspects of tourism like information search and decision-making behaviors, tourism promotion and in interaction with consumers. Hays et al. (2013) investigate the use of social media by public tourism organizations as a main marketing tool. Lamsfus, Wang, Alzua-Sorzabal, and Xiang (2015) investigate the field of mobile tourism applications defining a context for on-the-go travelers and proposing a conceptual framework to describe the structure and fundamental properties of the context. Hyun, Lee, and Hu (2009) attempt to conceptualize virtual tourism in the mobile context. Rodriguez-Sanchez, Martinez-Romo, Borromeo, and Hernandez-Tamames (2013) present the platform GAT which offers automatic context-aware mobile services for mobile tourism in order to solve problems like the efficient management of huge amounts of tourist information, the guidance for indoor and outdoor environments, and the need of users to have programming knowledge about many mobile phone platforms. Panahi, Woods, and Thwaites (2013) present the design and development of a location-based mobile tourism application by using cloud-based platform. Yu and Chang (2009) propose a system architecture for a mobile tourism application that generates automatically and efficiently personalized recommendations to tourists regarding sightseeing spots, hotels, restaurants, and packaged tour plans based on personalized location-based information like tourists' current location and time, personal preferences and needs.

User participation in the collection of tourism related content is a rather recent trend following the explosion of mobile devices and social media usage (Chiabai,

Paskaleva, & Lombardi, 2011; Lu & Stepchenkova, 2015). Lu and Stepchenkova (2015) study how active user participation in generating information affects tourism and hospitality applications, present certain methods that have been applied to user generated content data to achieve research objectives and explore the software that has been used to collect user generated content and extract information from large user generated content data sets. Chiabai et al. (2011) present an e-participation model for sustainable cultural tourism management adopting a bottom-up approach where tourism stakeholders make decisions without central guidance and argue that stakeholders' engagement can play a vital role in today's cultural destinations.

The integration of commercial exploitation services to e-tourism systems has become a vital part of such systems (Balandina, Balandin, Koucheryavy, Balandin, & Mouromtsev, 2016; Berger et al., 2007; Buhalis & Foerste, 2015; Rabanser & Ricci, 2005). Berger et al. (2007) propose an e-tourism environment that supports business transactions like booking of trips or getting assistance from travel advisors or community members. Buhalis and Foerste (2015) proposes SoCoMo, which is a social context mobile marketing framework that enables tourism marketers to increase value for all tourism stakeholders by revolutionizing their offering and co-creating products and services dynamically with their consumers. Balandina et al. (2016) introduce innovative e-tourism services on top of Geo2Tag LBS platform. In order to achieve a viable business model in e-tourism, Rabanser and Ricci (2005) present e-commerce business models and explain how such models are applied in tourist recommender systems.

### 3 The System

The proposed prototype system aims at helping outdoor cultural events organizers to disseminate efficiently their event to as many people as possible, providing immersive services to the attendants of such events and offering local companies and professionals a means to promote their products and services effectively.

#### 3.1 Architecture

The system follows a modular design in order to implement various services and support different user roles and permitted operations. A modular architecture provides several advantages like scalability, adaptability, concurrency, failure resistance and isolation, security, high performance, low cost and easy integration of third party software. The system consists of three different modules: the web server, the mobile applications module (MAM) and the online web portal module (OWPM). The basic idea behind system design is that the MAM and OWPM exchange information and services with the web server, but they do not communicate directly with each other. MAM and OWPM are accessible by the broad



public while the web server is isolated from unauthorized access and it is mainly used to provide content and services to the other two modules. System architecture is displayed in Fig. 1.

The web server module consists of system database, file system and the communications scheduler (CommS). CommS consists of programs and scripts that allow communication between web server and MAM or web server and OWPM. MAM and OWPM constantly make requests about content stored in database and file system, CommS receives such requests and accepts or rejects them in the case they are untrusted or malicious and allows web server to send the appropriate content to MAM or OWPM. By monitoring communications and filtering malicious requests, CommS has the additional role of practically forbidding the direct access of end-users to the heart of the system, the web server, creating a secure and trustworthy interconnection between the web server and the external environment.

MAM module hosts system’s dedicated mobile application. If a user wants to access system services and information through the mobile application, she/he should download and install the application on her/his mobile device. After successful installation, the user can use the application to request information or contribute event-related information or personal moments to the system or her/his social media accounts. MAM receives user requests and attempts to communicate with the web server through CommS to get/send data.

OWPM is the system’s web interface where users can contribute content or search and view event-related information. Event organizers use OWPM to upload practical or commercial information. Businesses use OWPM to upload promotion material for their products or services and tourists or potential event visitors search

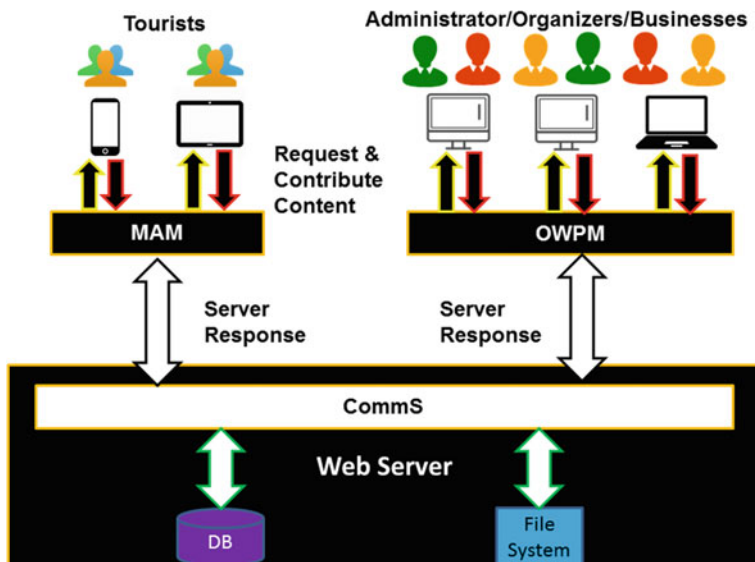


Fig. 1 System architecture

event-related or tourist information. Platform administrator performs all the necessary administration tasks through OWPM.

The system uses several technologies to implement all its modules: Apache Web Server, PHP scripts, MySQL database, Google Maps API and Android operating system (JAVA, JSON, XML). For OWPM and MAM's mobile application implementation we used a Windows 10, intel core i7-2600, 8 GB RAM at 1866 MHz system and Android Studio as the IDE.

### 3.2 Users

The system provides users the capability to create an account and gain access to several services that otherwise could not be used like content contribution or commercial information for local businesses and professionals. Non-registered users can view and search event-related or touristic information but they cannot perform other functions. The system supports five different user roles: administrator, organizer, business, tourist and guest. A brief presentation of each user role follows:

- *Administrator*: This user supervises every technical procedure, checks system integrity, assigns organizer role to users, administers system database and file system, views all content (published and unpublished) and deletes users.
- *Organizer*: Registered users that are members of the event's organization (public officials or private companies). Such users upload practical tourist information or event-related content to the system.
- *Business*: Professional or commercial organizations that use the system to promote their products or services to the event's audience. Such users should become affiliate with the event organization, pay a predetermined affiliation fee, register an account and upload commercial content to the system.
- *Tourist*: Registered user that can search and view event-related or tourist content, but she/he also can contribute primitive event-related information. A tourist can make transactions like ticket bookings.
- *Guest*: Nomadic user that does not have an account on the system, but she/he can search and view event-related or tourist content.

### 3.3 Content

Platform supports different types of content (text, audio, image, video and multimedia). Text content can be event news and announcements, historical information about the event, practical tourist information or information concerning event's time and place and public transportation schedules. It can also be information about accommodation or leisure activities, event-related products or promoted products

and services from local businesses and professionals. Images can be captured personal moments, event pictures, event-related artwork or advertisement banners. Videos can be event-related visual content like promo videos, advertisements in the form of videos and captured personal moments from tourists that participate in the event or visit the event area. Audio content can be vocal guides, interviews or audio promotion material. Multimedia files can be a full demo package with all kinds of data types and augmented reality elements for the dedicated augmented reality service of the event.

### 3.4 Permitted Operations

Each user role can perform a series of permitted operations to search and view or contribute event-related, touristic, commercial or personal information. We will not refer to the allowed operations of the administrator role since this role supervises the whole system and can perform all system operations. A presentation of the permitted operations for organizers, businesses, tourists and guests follows:

*Insert:* Users can perform insert content operations through both OWPM and the mobile application of MAM. Organizers and businesses use solely OWPM to upload information, while tourists can use both OWPM and the mobile application.

- *Organizer:* Inserting levels for organizers are: (i) Event content inserting: event information like the line-up of artists which will appear on the event or the theme of the parade for a carnival event, practical information like time and place of the event and transportation to the event area. (ii) Tourist content inserting: information concerning visitors of the event like locations of information kiosks and public transportation schedules. (iii) Tourist activities inserting: information about additional activities (indoor or outdoor) that a visitor can participate inside the city or in nearby locations. (iv) Cultural events inserting: information about additional events taking place throughout the city during the main event. (v) AR content inserting: information that will be used on the augmented reality service related to the main event. (vi) Official products inserting: information about event products promoted through the official event eshop.
- *Business:* Inserting levels for businesses are: (i) Company details inserting: information related to company's or professional's profile, contact details or business area. (ii) Commercial content inserting: information related to business's products and services.
- *Tourist:* Inserting levels for tourists are: (i) Personal experiences inserting: personal content related to the tourist's presence at the event or her/his activities concerning her/his visit. (ii) Feedback inserting: tourists can send inquiries directly to the event organizers.

*Update/Delete:* Organizers, businesses and tourists can access and update or delete previously uploaded content through their personal account interface.

*View:* All users can perform viewing operations through both OWPM and MAM's mobile application. Organizer and business viewing is related to their personal accounts and the accessing of their own content contributions. The prime goal of the system is to enable tourists and guests view system content and get informed about the event and other accompanying touristic activities. Viewing levels for tourists and guests are: (i) Event-related information viewing: information concerning the event. (ii) Tourist information viewing: information concerning the visit to the event's location. (iii) Tourist activities viewing: information about various activities that tourists can perform during their visit to the event area. (iv) Cultural events viewing: information about other cultural events happening in the main event area at the time of tourist's visit. (v) AR service viewing: information concerning the augmented reality service related to the event. (vi) Official products viewing: information about official products traded through the official event's eshop. (vii) Advertisement viewing: information concerning commercial advertisements. (viii) Business viewing: information concerning local companies and professionals like business profiles, products and services. (ix) Personal Moments viewing: personal information uploaded by tourists in the form of audio-visual content.

*Search:* All users can perform searching operations through both OWPM and MAM's mobile application. Users are able to search for event-related and practical tourist information, information about interesting in-city or nearby indoor and outdoor activities, as well as information about other cultural events taking place in the visiting area along with the main event (Fig. 2). Users are able to search for commercial information like products and services from local businesses and professionals or search for official event products displayed on the event's official eshop.

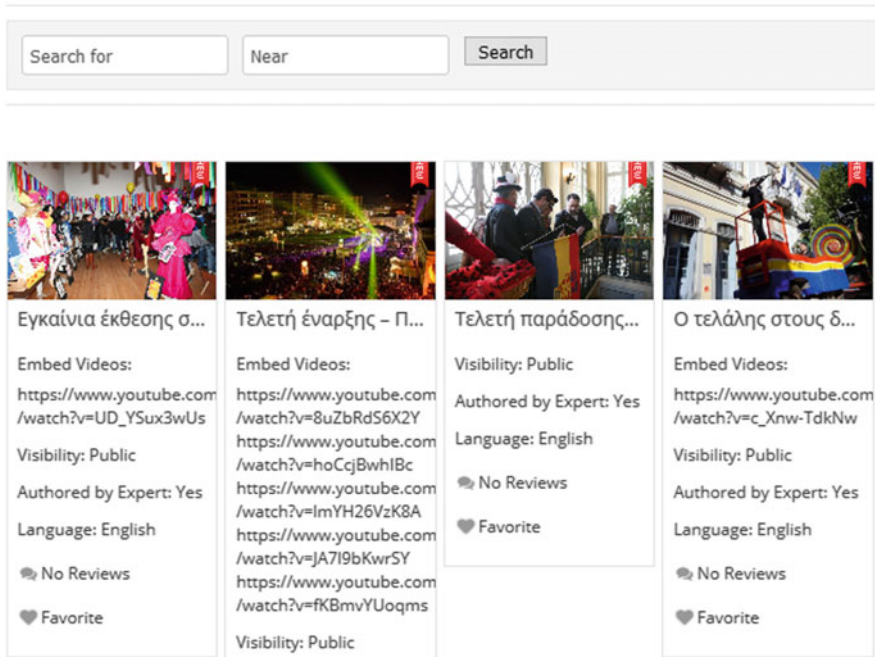
*Purchase:* Registered users can perform transactions in order to buy event products or tickets to the main event, through OWPM or MAM's mobile application.

### 3.5 Stakeholders

The system can be used by various tourism stakeholders from simple visitors of an event location to official tourism authorities and local tour operators. More specifically:

- *Cultural event organizers:* These can be official city authorities or private organizations and professional event organizers that seek to promote their event to the broad public. Event organizers can use the full power of the system to provide all related practical information about the event (time and place, transportation, leisure activities, accommodation), information about the theme

## Cultural Events



**Fig. 2** User searching for additional cultural events in nearby locations

of the event (for example a carnival with costumes and parades or a music festival) or historical background.

- *Public tourism authorities*: Such organizations aim at promoting a country's touristic product. Public authorities' officials can use the system to provide information about the beauties and touristic possibilities of the surrounding area or the country that the event will take place.
- *Tour operators*: Their ultimate goal is the exploitation of the event in order to gain more clients. Local, national or international tour operators can use the system to promote the event in order to book packages to potential tourists.
- *Local professional tour guides*: Professionals who operate on the area that the event takes place. Such professionals can use the system to advertise their services to potential visitors that seek to get more personalized tourist services.
- *Local businesses*: Commercial organizations that operate in the area of the event can use the system to promote their products and services to event's visitors, tourists or local citizens.
- *Tourists*: Individuals that are interested to visit the area where the event will take place and need to find information concerning the event, book a hotel or a ticket to the event or organize a schedule to visit nearby interesting places.

### **3.6 Services**

The system offers a wide variety of services to tourists and guests of cultural events from simple practical information services to pioneer augmented reality experiences. Services are offered through OWPM and MAM's mobile application and they are classified in three basic categories: (i) event-related navigation and visual services, (ii) exploitation services, and (iii) social dissemination services. Event-related navigation and visual services aim at providing useful information to individuals that are interested in participating at an outdoor cultural event or supporting a modern and immersive visual experience. Exploitation services aim at promoting products and services in order to create event-related and touristic income. Such services can be used by both event organizers and local businesses and professionals to increase their revenue. Social dissemination services aim at creating a sense of community among the people that will participate on the event. Such services guide the procedure of public participation and social crowd-sourcing. Moreover, users could generate primitive content by capturing their personal experiences from the event and uploading it to the community.

### **3.7 Event-Related Navigation and Visual Services**

- **Event information service:** Provides information about the main cultural event like time and place, scope and historical background, theme and participating artists or ticket information. Event-related news and announcements appear daily. Information is enriched with attractive multimedia content and related promotion material. The main scope of such a service is to disseminate event-related information to the broad public in an attractive way in order to attract visitors.
- **Practical tourist information service:** Provides information that is useful to event participants who come from foreign destinations. Tourist facilities, location of information kiosks, accommodation and catering details, transportation details, indoor and outdoor leisure activities and locations, are the most needed tourist information.
- **Calendar of events service:** Provides information about additional cultural events that will take place in the area during the main event. Information is displayed in a calendar accompanied with related multimedia content and promotion material.
- **Public transportation schedule service:** Provides information about the schedule of public means of transport like metro, buses or trains and locations of the corresponding stations. Through the system's mobile application, users can get directions in real-time concerning alternative routes to their destinations.

- **Immersive experience service:** Provides visual information of augmented reality to event spectators like artist-related information or information about carnival groups during a carnival parade. The user chooses the immersive experience service, the device camera opens and the user targets the desired object. After a few seconds, a modal window appears (that does not exist in reality) integrated in camera view which displays the corresponding information.

### **3.8 *Exploitation Services***

- **Accommodation searching and booking service:** Provides a trustworthy booking system for users to search and book a room in a local hospitality business. Users can view the available hospitality businesses in filterable lists where they can choose various filters and find the room that match their needs. Service is provided through both the MAM's mobile application and the OWPM. A hospitality business should become affiliate with the event organization and pay a certain fee to event organizers if they want their services to be displayed in the accommodation booking service. Additional fees are imposed in case a tourist chooses to book a room through the system's modules.
- **Commercial map service:** Presents a geographical map that hosts pins representing local businesses and professionals. Each business or professional provides information about its products and services and multimedia promotion content. In order to view this information, a user should click on a pin and a modal window with business title, logo, contact details, location and brief practical information appears. If a user wants to find out more about that business, she/he can click on the pin that redirects her/him to the business's dedicated web page or its official website (based on business's choice). A business or professional can appear on the commercial map, if they have become affiliate with the event organization paying a certain fee to the event organizers.
- **Event products purchasing service:** Operates an eshop where users can buy the official event products online.
- **Tickets booking service:** Provides a trustworthy ticketing system for users to view or book available seats and parking spots. A panoramic view of the available seats is presented and users have the opportunity to choose a number of seats and book a ticket. Moreover, users can book a certain parking spot to avoid any discomfort when approaching the event location.
- **Business advertisements service:** Provides businesses and professionals, local, national or international, the opportunity to advertise their products and services. Service is provided through MAM's mobile application via multimedia advertisement content (banners, gifs, videos) displayed in the bottom of each

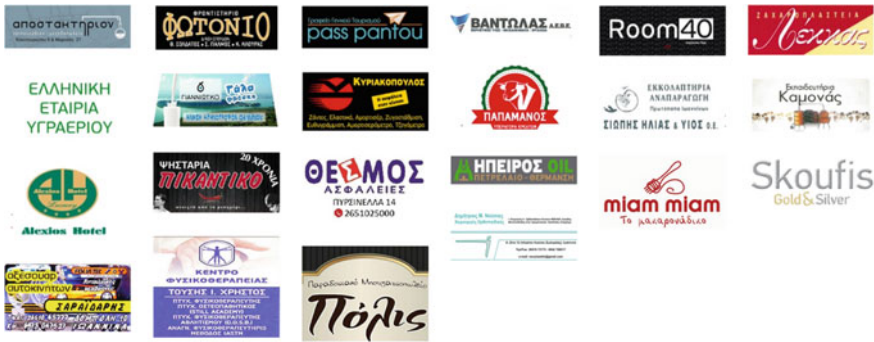


Fig. 3 Sample advertisement ribbon in OWPM homepage

application screen, randomly and through the web pages of OWPM (Fig. 3). A business or professional can use the advertisement service after becoming affiliate with the event organization paying a certain fee to the event organizers.

### 3.9 Social Dissemination Services

- Personal moments service: Users can record personal experiences and moments in the form of audiovisual content, make annotations and contribute their personal content. Users are also able to share directly such personal content with their friends on social media, since the system provides direct connectivity with popular social media like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.
- Feedback service: Users can communicate directly through a simple email with the event organizers giving them valuable information about system technical problems or organization issues that may have been observed during their presence in the event area.

## 4 Evaluation

In order to evaluate system’s potential we attempted to compare it with other modern tourist systems that associate with outdoor cultural events. For this reason we chose Rijeka Carnival and Carnival of Venice, two modern systems that share a common scope with our system, the dissemination and exploitation of outdoor cultural events, in this case carnivals, which attract large crowds of tourists every year. The evaluation process used as comparison criteria important features usually integrated in modern tourism applications like augmented reality functionality,



social media connectivity and mobile access through web browsers or dedicated mobile applications (Garau, 2014; Han et al., 2014; Hays et al., 2013; Kounavis et al., 2012; Leung et al., 2013; Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014) along with content crowd-sourcing capabilities (Chiabai et al., 2011; Lu & Stepchenkova, 2015) and commercial exploitation services like local businesses and professionals promotion, accommodation or ticket booking (Balandina et al., 2016; Berger et al., 2007; Buhalis & Foerste, 2015; Rabanser & Ricci, 2005). We also used as a criterion, the extent of useful information usually found in tourist related systems and applications like event-related information and news, practical tourist information, transportation information and information about interesting nearby tourist locations. The existence or absence of any service, used as a comparison criterion, came from experimenting with the three systems (Table 1).

Evaluation results indicate that the proposed system implements various dissemination, exploitation and user awareness services that are considered required in modern e-tourism applications. The proposed system outmatches the other systems since it is the only one that integrates services which allow users to generate their own event-related content enriching system content and thus becoming a vital part of the event's active community. Furthermore, our system is the only one that provides ticket booking or parking spot booking services facilitating users and thus becoming more attractive to undetermined potential visitors.

All three systems provide rich information concerning the event, relevant news and announcements or additional cultural events that take place in the same time and place with the main event. Moreover, each system is considered tourist friendly because it presents practical tourist information like schedules of public means of transport, transportation information for foreign visitors and tourist content

**Table 1** Comparison results based on the offered system services

Services	System		
	Proposed system	Rijeka Carnival	Carnival of Venice
Extensive useful information	YES	YES	YES
Tourist friendliness	YES	YES	YES
Augmented reality functionality	YES	YES	NO
Social media connectivity	YES	YES	YES
Mobile access	YES	YES	YES
Dedicated mobile applications	YES	YES	NO
User-generated event-related content	YES	NO	NO
User-generated feedback	YES	YES	NO
Local businesses promotion	YES	YES	NO
Advertisements	YES	NO	YES
Accommodation searching & online booking	YES	YES	NO
Ticket booking	YES	NO	NO
Official eshop functionality	YES	YES	NO

information concerning the city and the area that will host the event. Furthermore, the three systems can be accessed from mobile devices and provide direct social media connectivity. The proposed system and Rijeka Carnival integrate augmented reality functionality through their dedicated mobile applications. Carnival of Venice does not support mobile applications to its users while the proposed system offers one and the Rijeka Carnival two. Our system and the Rijeka Carnival allow users to directly send feedback to event organizers.

The proposed system and Rijeka Carnival implement various exploitation services like local business promotion, accommodation searching and online booking and official e-shop functionality. On the other hand, our system and the Carnival of Venice allow commercial organizations to present advertisements.

## 5 Conclusion

In this work we presented a prototype system that aims at promoting outdoor cultural events to the broad public in order to attract large crowds of visitors and create additional revenue sources to the event organizers. The system tries to raise awareness among the participants about its success by urging them to generate and share event-related personal content providing a trustworthy environment. The system attempts to provide an immersive experience to event visitors through high-end augmented reality visual experiences via its dedicated mobile application. Moreover the system enables local businesses and professionals to promote their products and services to a large audience, while operating an advertisement platform for national and international commercial organizations to guarantee their presence to a popular cultural event. For our future steps we will come in contact with the organizers of the well-known annual carnival of Patras, an outdoor cultural event that attracts hundreds of thousands of people every year, in order to install and test our system in real conditions.

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**Part III**  
**Frameworks, Tools and Approaches**  
**for Innovation and Development**  
**of Tourism**

# Moroccan Gastronomy as a Key Factor of Tourism Attractiveness in Morocco

Mohamed El Hafid, Hasnaa El Assri and Aziz Sair

**Abstract** In a context of globalization, tourism destinations sustain a fierce competition, they want to develop and strengthen their offer. Thus, attractiveness is increasingly being considered as a crucial factor to their success. In order to earn the biggest market share, these destinations seek to differentiate their product by leveraging key resources and increasing their attractiveness. With 10.3 million tourists in 2016, Morocco succeeded to find its place in the international market by its unique combination of natural, cultural and human capital. However, this number does not reflect the real capacity of the destination. Morocco is a rich country by its heritage and cultural diversity. In fact, the Moroccan gastronomy could play an important role in supporting the attractiveness of the destination. The current research aims to identify the position of the Moroccan gastronomy in the Moroccan tourism offer. To achieve this objective, as a first we apply the methodology of multivariate analysis which consists to study the attributes related to the Moroccan tourism offer in order to classify them according to the type of travel, and see if the Moroccan gastronomy occupies an important position among the essential attributes that characterize the destination. Second step, we proceed to a comparative study between the results obtained from tourists and those obtained from professionals and researchers in the tourism field. Therefore, this research is guided by the following hypothesis:

- The Moroccan gastronomy is a crucial factor in the attractiveness of the destination.
- The importance of the Moroccan gastronomy differs according to the type of tourism.
- The Moroccan gastronomy is a facultative attribute and does not influence on the attractiveness of the destination.

**Keywords** Tourism attractiveness · Tourism offer · Moroccan gastronomy Attributes · Types of tourism

**JEL Classification** Z32 · M31

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## 1 Introduction

In a very competitive market, tourist destinations, especially the ones with similar products and characteristics, seek to improve their attractiveness by meeting tourist's expectations and satisfying their needs relatively to what the destination can offer as a different experience. To be more efficient, DMOs should have a clear vision about their market segments, which can be grouped into general categories such as nationalities or types of tourism. Each segment has its own characteristics and several crucial attributes of attractiveness. Thus, destinations need to develop and promote their competitive advantages (Dobbins & Pettman, 1998). One of these could be the local gastronomy. It refers to the local dishes, foods and food know-how that rises from ancestral culture and national heritage. This paper aims on one hand, to study the importance of local gastronomy in the attractiveness of tourist destinations in relation to types of tourism. On the other hand, through this study we want to see if the Moroccan gastronomy is a key factor in the attractiveness of the destination.

## 2 Literature Review

### Definition of attractiveness

Attractiveness is a complex concept that depends, not only on the number of attractions offered by a territory or a tourist destination but also on the way these attractions are perceived by tourists (GÂRBEA, 2014). In fact, the development of the tourism activity relies essentially on the identification of the attractiveness features offered by the destination facing the expectations of tourists. In other words, this relationship between attractiveness and the number of tourists is explained by the offer and demand law.

Hu and Ritchie assert in a study, that incorporates a context specific approach into the measurement of destination attractiveness, that the latter is strongly linked to the type of vacation (Hu & Ritchie, 1993). Indeed, for the purpose of comparison, we need to expose destinations with similar tourism product.

This complexity is also due to the interference of tangible and intangible elements. Put another way, attractiveness has many dimensions: economic, social, cultural, environmental and political. Actually, these components are strongly related. From an economic standpoint, attractiveness in a broad sense is based on the study of the characteristics of the market, namely the competitiveness, its intensity and the market accessibility, not forgetting the nature of the offer (Tangible or intangible). In psychology, the attractiveness of a destination is defined as a set of cognitive and emotional elements such as feelings, opinions and beliefs that an individual has about the perceived ability of the destination to satisfy tourists' needs (Hu & Ritchie, 1993). But from a marketing perspective, the

attractiveness of a tourist destination is firmly associated to the specific advantages intended to tourists and to the tourist decision making process, Mayo and Jarvis have defined the attractiveness of a tourist destination as the combination of the importance of individual benefits and the perceived ability of the destination to deliver these benefits (Mayo & Jarvis, 1981). Moreover Lue, Crompton and Stewart identify attractiveness as one or a group of components that influence the choice of a tourist destination (Lue, Crompton, & Stewart, 1996).

## ***2.1 Tourist Product, Tourist Attraction and Touristic Appeal***

In order to assess the attractiveness of a tourist destination, it is important to analyze the elements of its offer. From a marketing standpoint, the tourism product falls under the service sector which is characterized by its perishability, intangibility, inseparability and fluctuating demand (Kotler, Keller, & Lu, 2009). Then, in the tourism offer we find many designations, for instance: tourist product, tourist attraction and touristic appeal. Every designation refers to a certain practice to avoid the confusion between concepts.

Given that any product bought by a tourist is probably considered as a tourist product (Jafari, 2000), this definition is very broad to distinguish between the different concepts. In other publications, *the tourist product is a set of activities, of services and benefits that constitute the tourist experience in its entirety* (GRANDPRE, 2007). The specific feature of the tourist product is that, it is about an experience to live, it lies on the post consumption feeling, because we cannot talk about a tourist product before it has been consumed (Cacomo & Solonandrasana, 2006).

As for the tourist attraction, we have deduced from different publications that this concept is clearer than the tourist product which is more confusing (GRANDPRE, 2007). Apart from the simple analyze of the word attraction, that derives from the verb attract, Lew explains the concept more as a set of elements located elsewhere, that attract travelers outside their residence.<sup>1</sup> Leiper in his article *Tourist attraction systems*, clarifies the relation between the tourist and the tourist attraction system, by identifying three components of the attraction: the object, the promotion and the tourist (Lew, 1987). Which means, that there is an overlapping relationship, because there should be an object to promote in order to attract a tourist (Leiper, 1990).

In order to distinguish between the tourist product and the tourist attraction, Cacomo and Solonandrasana have talked about discovery attractions and escape attractions (Cacomo & Solonandrasana, 2006), based on the relationship between

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<sup>1</sup>Lew (1987); Cité dans François DE GRANDPRÉ, «Attraites, attractions et produits touristiques: trois concepts distincts dans le contexte d'un développement touristique régional», *Téoros*, 26–2] 2007, 12–18.



satisfaction and length of stay. In D-attractions (a museum, for example) the satisfaction of the demand reaches satiation after a time, while for the E-attractions (which could include a beach) the satisfaction is lasting (Caccommo & Solonandrasana, 2006). Concerning the touristic appeal, the concept seems to be more explained in French publications and refers to natural and cultural resources. It can be discussed independently from tourism, but can be considered as the basis of a tourist product (GRANDPRE, 2007).

## 2.2 *Factors of Tourism Attractiveness*

A tourist destination is a set of products and services provided for tourists. But still, as any product made available for consumption, it consists of a certain number of attributes that decide on its ability to attract consumers. For that matter, these attributes include not only historical sites, attraction parks and beautiful landscapes but also services and facilities that will meet the tourists' daily needs (Lew, 1987). These attributes were grouped into six general categories (Gearing, Swart, & Var, 1974):

Natural factors:

- Landscape: (Cracolici & Nijkamp, 2009; Deng, King, & Bauer, 2002; Enright & Newton, 2004; Galarneau, 2015; Gallarza, Saura, & García, 2002; Leiper, 1990; Lew, 1987)
- Natural sites: (Cracolici & Nijkamp, 2009; Deng et al., 2002; Enright & Newton, 2004; Escadafal, 2007; Galarneau, 2015; Gallarza et al., 2002; GRANDPRE, 2007; Lew, 1987; Ritchie & Zins, 1978; Viceriat, Cluzeau, Levy, Doublet, & GROS, 2007; Wang & Hsu, 2010)
- Climate: (Enright & Newton, 2004; Escadafal, 2007; Galarneau, 2015; Gallarza et al., 2002; Hong-bumm, 1998; Jin, Weber, & Bauer, 2012; Kušen, 2010; Lew, 1987; Ritchie & Zins, 1978).

Social economic factors:

- Price: (Galarneau, 2015; Gallarza et al., 2002; Jin et al., 2012; Ritchie & Zins, 1978).
- Architectural characteristics: (Enright & Newton, 2004; Galarneau, 2015; Gearing et al., 1974; Viceriat et al., 2007)
- Festivals: (Gearing et al., 1974)
- Cultural and historical sites: (Cracolici & Nijkamp, 2009; Enright & Newton, 2004; Escadafal, 2007; Galarneau, 2015; Gallarza et al., 2002; Hong-bumm, 1998; Kušen, 2010; Lew, 1987; Nolan & Nolan, 1992; Ritchie & Zins, 1978; Van der Ark & Richards, 2006; Viceriat et al., 2007)
- Local products: (Gearing et al., 1974)
- Local cuisine: (Enright & Newton, 2004; Galarneau, 2015; Gallarza et al., 2002)
- Local celebration with cultural or commercial aims: (Gearing et al., 1974)

- Hospitality: (Cracolici & Nijkamp, 2009; Deng et al., 2002; Enright & Newton, 2004; Escadafal, 2007; Galarneau, 2015; Gallarza et al., 2002; GRANDPRE, 2007; Hong-bumm, 1998; Jin et al., 2012; Kušen, 2010; Lew, 1987; Nolan & Nolan, 1992; Ritchie & Zins, 1978; Smith, 1980; Van der Ark & Richards, 2006; Wang & Hsu, 2010).

Historical factors:

- Religious sites: (Galarneau, 2015; Gearing et al., 1974; Kušen, 2010; Nolan & Nolan, 1992)
- Famous sites because of certain events or legendary sites: (Gearing et al., 1974).

Recreation and shopping opportunities:

- Malls: (Cracolici & Nijkamp, 2009; Enright & Newton, 2004; Galarneau, 2015; Gallarza et al., 2002; Lew, 1987; Smith, 1987; Viceriat et al., 2007; Wang & Hsu, 2010)
- Wellness areas: (Gearing et al., 1974)
- Zoos, casinos, Night clubs, theatres, cinemas, drugstores, markets, gardens, museums, Sport facilities: (Deng et al., 2002; Enright & Newton, 2004; Escadafal, 2007; Gagnon, 2007; Galarneau, 2015; Gallarza et al., 2002; Gearing et al., 1974; Hong-bumm, 1998; Jin et al., 2012; Lew, 1987; Ritchie & Zins, 1978; Smith, 1987; Viceriat et al., 2007; Wang & Hsu, 2010).

Food and lodging facilities: (Hotels, restaurants, et other touristic services) (Cracolici & Nijkamp, 2009; Deng et al., 2002; Enright & Newton, 2004; Escadafal, 2007; Gagnon, 2007; Galarneau, 2015; Gallarza et al., 2002; Hong-bumm, 1998; Jin et al., 2012; Kušen, 2010; Lew, 1987; Ritchie & Zins, 1978; Smith, 1987, 1980; Viceriat et al., 2007; Wang & Hsu, 2010).

Basic infrastructure: (Water, electricity, highway, security, Health services, public transportation): (Deng et al., 2002; Gallarza et al., 2002; Jin et al., 2012; Khadaroo & Seetana, 2008; Kušen, 2010; Van der Ark & Richards, 2006; Viceriat et al., 2007; Hong-bumm, 1998; Lew, 1987; Gearing et al., 1974; Ritchie & Zins, 1978).

In the aim identify the touristic attributes, there are two models. The first one suggests that some attributes have universal importance concerning the assessment of the tourist attractiveness of any destination. For instance, Mayo evokes the climate and the price. This model gives more relevance to the price and to natural potentialities, in accordance with the obtained results.

Unlike the first model, the second one increases the number of the key attributes and suggests other criteria to measure the attractiveness of a destination. Sudhir H. Kale and Kathrine M. Weir have conducted a study in India to identify the factors that influence the choice of a destination. The sociocultural factor is the most important in conformity with the results. Even though, India is well known by its typical spicy food, the study has shown that the local gastronomy is not a crucial component (Kale & Weir, 1986).

### ***2.3 The Importance of the Concept of Familiarity in Attractiveness***

Proximity, previous visits, frequent contact with the people of a destination and its image are influential elements in the choice of a travel destination. Goodrich explains that it is very common in marketing studies, psychological and sociological ones that the degree of knowledge and familiarity vis-à-vis a product or a service plays a central role in the purchasing process (Goodrich, 1978). Herzog (1967) specifies that clients who have previously consumed the product are more likely to judge positively the brand image than the ones who have never tried the product. To apply this idea, Hunt reports that individuals who had the opportunity to visit the United States have a more favorable opinion than the ones who have never been there (Hunt, 1975).

Yangzhou Hu and J.R. Brent Ritchie approve that generally tourists who have visited a destination tend to have better impressions. In other words, the familiarity with the destination influences its perceived attractiveness (Hu & Ritchie, 1993).

### ***2.4 Contextual Factors and Their Impact on the Consumer Behavior***

Apart from the classical variables used in the consumer behavior studies such as demographic and attitudinal factors, Yangzhou Hu and J.R. Brent Ritchie consider that contextual factors are a considerable source of knowledge to understand the consumer behavior (Hu & Ritchie, 1993). From the same perspective, Srivastava suggests a hypothesis saying that the time and the place where the decision has been made can reorientate the consumer choice, which is in accordance with the principals of the merchandising concept: Place the right product for the right consumer in the right place at the right moment (Srivastava, 1981).

Referring to consumer behavior studies done for tourism, Yangzhou Hu and J. R. Brent Ritchie have analyzed how the consumer choice can vary according to the context where the decision has been made and also according to two types of tourists: the respondents who have previously been to each of the five destinations (visitors), and the respondents who have never been to each of the five destinations (non visitors) (Hu & Ritchie, 1993). They have worked on different contexts corresponding to two types of vacation experiences: Recreational, where tourists are interested by relaxation and wellness. And educational, where tourists are motivated to learn and discover the local culture and lifestyle of the population. The research studied five tourist destinations, namely: France, Greece, China, Hawaii and Australia. The results have shown that China is an attractive destination for tourists looking for educational experiences, while Hawaii is more attractive for recreational

vacations. Australia, is considered as an attractive destination for both types of experience. Further, the study revealed that the visitors are more likely to have a positive impression.

In another study related to the attractiveness of travel destinations, Snepenger and Milner have recognized that the purpose of travel, the purchase settings and the previous experiences are decisive factors in the consumer choice behavior (Snepenger & Milner, 1990).

### **3 Methodology**

#### ***3.1 Objectives and Hypothesis***

The general objective of the study is to reveal the role that the Moroccan gastronomy could play in developing the attractiveness of the destination. To achieve this, the following specific objectives were identified:

- To position the gastronomy between the attributes that attract tourists to a destination.
- To determine the attractiveness attributes that should be considered in each type of tourism.
- To assess the interest and the familiarity of tourists with the Moroccan gastronomy.

By the satisfaction of these objectives we will be able to answer the following hypothesis:

- (H1): The local gastronomy is a crucial factor in the attractiveness of the destination for all types of tourism.
- (H2): The importance of the local gastronomy differs according to the type of tourism.
- (H3): The local gastronomy is a facultative attribute and does not influence the attractiveness of the destination.

#### ***3.2 The Data Collection Instrument***

Two instruments were used: Surveys and individual interviews. Two surveys were designed. The first one (A) targeted potential tourists and the second one (B), actual tourists staying in Morocco. Surveys had a similar structure, with a slight difference in the second one where two questions were added to assess the level of satisfaction of actual tourists. Three parts can be distinguished: personal information and travel preferences, assessment of the attributes of attractiveness and familiarity with Moroccan gastronomy. Individual interviews were conducted with Moroccan and

foreign professionals in the tourism industry where respondents were asked to judge the importance of the selected attributes of attractiveness by classifying them into three categories (C1, C2 and C3) and giving an assessment (Likert scale) according to each type of tourism (recreational, cultural, business, religious and medical). Some were done by telephone.

### ***3.3 The Sample***

Following the exploratory sequential design. As a first step, for the quantitative analysis, a representative sample was identified according to the number of tourists that visited Morocco between January and August 2016: French 37%, Spanish 22%, English 6%, German 6%, Belgian 6%, Dutch 6%, Italian 4%, American 2% and other nationalities 17% (A total of 409 respondents). Survey (A) was addressed to potential tourists, and was administered out of Morocco via personal interviews that took place in airports (Madrid Barajas and Barcelona El Prat), Palma downtown and UIB University. Also by email and post from different countries. Survey (B) was conducted in the main touristic cities of Morocco (Marrakech, Agadir and Casablanca) by personal interviews. As a second step, for the qualitative analysis, stratified random sampling was adopted (Dépoteau, 2010) for individual interviews where different Moroccan and foreign agents of the tourism cluster were targeted (A total of 37 respondents), such as tour operators, travel agencies, public administrations, hotels department managers, scholars ...

### ***3.4 Selection of Attractiveness Attributes***

Fifteen attributes were selected according to a review of previous studies done in destination attractiveness: Yangzhouhu and J.R. Brent Ritchie and Charles E. Gearing, William W. Swart, and Turgut Var. The attributes are used as the basis by which to examine how respondents evaluate the touristic attractiveness of a travel destination and to measure the notion of destination attractiveness (Yangzhou Hu and J.R. Brent Ritchie). In this study, we have combined both previous ones by classifying attractiveness attributes (Yangzhou Hu and J.R. Brent Ritchie) into five general categories (Charles E. Gearing, William W. Swart, and TurgutVar).

### ***3.5 Data Analysis***

SPSS software was used to analyze the Data collected from surveys A and B. Also, to classify the attributes (Judgments offered by tourists) into three categories (C1,

C2 and C3), we employed the ABC analysis with some modifications, for the purpose of making comparison with the classification done by the professionals.

Information collected from the individual interviews, was grouped into one table and we have decided upon the affiliation of attributes into the three categories using frequencies.

## 4 Results

After conducting the surveys among tourists, we mention in Table 1 the deviations (positive or negative) from the expected sample. In fact, these deviations could be explained by the seasonality of tourism.

- First results (Table 2) show that respondents travel averagely 3 times per year and the average length of stay is one week. Also, hotels remain the most common type of accommodation followed by caravans and guests houses.
- Frequencies of each type of tourism in percentage, show that recreational tourism rank in the first position, with 54%. Indeed, respondents from England

**Table 1** Sample by nationalities

Nationalities	% in the sample	% of respondents	Deviation
French	37	35.5	+0.5
Spanish	22	17.1	-4.9
English	6	7.8	+1.8
German	6	6.6	+0.6
Belgian	6	6.8	+0.8
Dutch	6	2.9	-3.1
Italian	4	2.9	-1.1
American	2	3.7	+1.7
Other nationalities	17	16.6	-0.4

**Table 2** Type of accommodation

Type of accommodation	Effective	Percentage (%)	Cumulative percentage
Hotels	294	71.9	71.9
Rural hostel	11	2.7	74.6
Guest house	32	7.8	82.4
Caravan	46	11.2	93.6
Hostel	4	1	94.6
With relatives	7	1.7	96.3
Alternative accommodation	11	2.7	99
Total	409	100	100

are the most interested by this type of tourism (71.9%) followed by France (61.4%), Germany (59.3%), USA (53.3%) and finally Holland (33.3%).

- Concerning cultural tourism, German respondents come in the first place with 37%, followed by Dutch (33.3%). As for other types of tourism (in minority in our sample), Spanish respondents rank in the first position in health tourism and second in business and religious tourism.
- After ranking the attributes in terms of frequencies and in relation to each type of tourism for both tourists and professionals (Table 3), we notice that the local gastronomy ranked in different positions. For both cultural and recreational tourism, local gastronomy comes in the ninth position within the second category of attributes (C2) from the point of view of tourists. While, it occupies the fourth position for professionals, within the first category (C1). Then, in business tourism, it ranks in the eighth position for tourists and in the sixth one for professionals but under the same category (C1). Concerning health and religious tourism, local gastronomy occupies higher positions (Respectively first and second) and figures in the first category, from the point of view of tourists. In contrast, professionals rank it eleventh within the third category and seventh within the second category.
- As shown in Graph 1, the majority of respondents prefer to eat local food during their travel (60.4%). Moreover, 73.1% of our sample approved the importance of the local gastronomy in the choice of a tourist destination.
- 87.2% of respondents who have tasted Moroccan gastronomy were satisfied to very satisfied, and only 12.8% were neutral.
- As shown in Graph 2, 73% of respondents who have been in Morocco have a positive image about the Moroccan gastronomy and only 1.3% have a negative image. Indeed, 50.5% of respondents who have never visited Morocco mentioned having a positive image.
- 52.4% of respondents claim to have good or perfect knowledge about the Moroccan gastronomy. With family and friends being the most common source of information (53.5%) followed by Internet, TV, exhibition and tour operators with respectively 24.2, 13, 3.4 and 3.2% (Graph 3).
- We see in Graph 4 that, 93.6% of our sample have recognized at least two Moroccan meals out of four.
- Also, Results show (Table 4) that 68.9% are interested in a gastronomic holiday in Morocco with 40.6% preferring a length of stay of 3 to 4 days, 28.4% one week and only 17.8% choosing a weekend (Table 5).
- Concerning the Moroccan gastronomy being a motivation to visit Morocco in relation to the type of tourism, the results have shown (Graph 5) that the percentages of tourists who agree are: 68.8% recreational tourism, 77.1% cultural tourism, 42.5% business tourism, 77% health tourism and 46.7% religious tourism.

**Table 3** Attributes according to types of tourism

Attributes	Recreational tourism			Cultural tourism			Business tourism			Health tourism			Religious tourism						
	Prof		Tr	Prof		Tr	Prof		Tr	Prof		Tr	Prof		Tr				
	R	Cat	R	R	Cat	R	R	Cat	R	R	Cat	R	R	Cat	R				
Weather	<b>C1</b>	<b>C1</b>	1	C2	14	<b>C1</b>	1	<b>C3</b>	12	<b>C1</b>	1	<b>C1</b>	6	<b>C2</b>	11	<b>C3</b>	13	<b>C1</b>	5
Environment	<b>C1</b>	<b>C1</b>	3	<b>C1</b>	9	<b>C1</b>	2	<b>C3</b>	13	<b>C2</b>	9	<b>C1</b>	7	<b>C1</b>	2	<b>C3</b>	11	<b>C1</b>	6
Touristic infrastructure	<b>C1</b>	<b>C1</b>	2	<b>C1</b>	8	<b>C1</b>	4	<b>C1</b>	2	<b>C1</b>	3	<b>C1</b>	8	<b>C2</b>	9	<b>C1</b>	6	<b>C1</b>	7
Primary infrastructure	<b>C1</b>	<b>C1</b>	10	<b>C1</b>	10	<b>C2</b>	11	<b>C1</b>	3	<b>C1</b>	4	<b>C1</b>	4	<b>C1</b>	7	<b>C1</b>	4	<b>C2</b>	9
Local gastronomy	<b>C1</b>	<b>C2</b>	9	<b>C1</b>	4	<b>C2</b>	9	<b>C1</b>	8	<b>C1</b>	6	<b>C3</b>	11	<b>C1</b>	1	<b>C2</b>	7	<b>C1</b>	2
Cultural sites	<b>C1</b>	<b>C2</b>	8	<b>C1</b>	3	<b>C1</b>	8	<b>C3</b>	14	<b>C3</b>	12	<b>C3</b>	12	<b>C3</b>	14	<b>C1</b>	3	<b>C2</b>	10
Wellbeing activities	<b>C2</b>	<b>C2</b>	12	<b>C2</b>	13	<b>C3</b>	12	<b>C3</b>	10	<b>C3</b>	13	<b>C1</b>	1	<b>C1</b>	5	<b>C3</b>	12	<b>C3</b>	12
Malls	<b>C1</b>	<b>C3</b>	5	<b>C3</b>	15	<b>C3</b>	14	<b>C1</b>	7	<b>C2</b>	10	<b>C3</b>	14	<b>C3</b>	15	<b>C3</b>	15	<b>C2</b>	11
Security	<b>C1</b>	<b>C1</b>	1	<b>C1</b>	1	<b>C1</b>	7	<b>C1</b>	1	<b>C1</b>	5	<b>C1</b>	2	<b>C1</b>	3	<b>C2</b>	9	<b>C1</b>	1
Hospitality	<b>C1</b>	<b>C1</b>	9	<b>C1</b>	2	<b>C1</b>	3	<b>C1</b>	5	<b>C1</b>	7	<b>C1</b>	3	<b>C1</b>	4	<b>C1</b>	2	<b>C1</b>	4
Language	<b>C2</b>	<b>C3</b>	14	<b>C3</b>	12	<b>C1</b>	6	<b>C1</b>	4	<b>C1</b>	8	<b>C1</b>	9	<b>C3</b>	12	<b>C2</b>	8	<b>C3</b>	13
Religious sites	<b>C3</b>	<b>C3</b>	15	<b>C1</b>	7	<b>C1</b>	13	<b>C3</b>	15	<b>C3</b>	14	<b>C3</b>	15	<b>C3</b>	13	<b>C1</b>	1	<b>C1</b>	3
Price	<b>C1</b>	<b>C1</b>	7	<b>C1</b>	4	<b>C1</b>	5	<b>C3</b>	11	<b>C1</b>	2	<b>C1</b>	5	<b>C1</b>	6	<b>C1</b>	5	<b>C1</b>	8
Nightlife	<b>C1</b>	<b>C3</b>	11	<b>C1</b>	12	<b>C3</b>	15	<b>C2</b>	9	<b>C3</b>	15	<b>C3</b>	13	<b>C2</b>	10	<b>C3</b>	14	<b>C3</b>	14
Geographic proximity	<b>C2</b>	<b>C3</b>	13	<b>C1</b>	11	<b>C1</b>	6	<b>C1</b>	6	<b>C3</b>	11	<b>C2</b>	10	<b>C2</b>	8	<b>C3</b>	10	<b>C3</b>	15

*Prof* Professionals

*Tr* Tourists

*Cat* Category

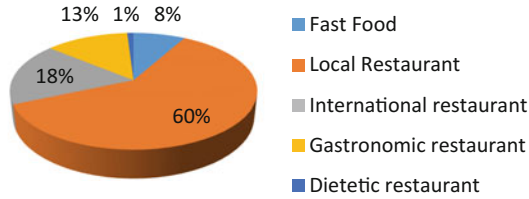
*R* Rank

**Bold:** First category of attributes

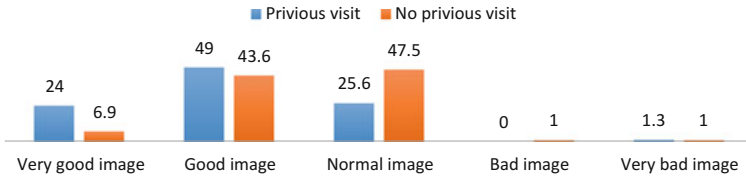
*Italics:* Second category of attributes

**Bolditalic:** Third category of attributes

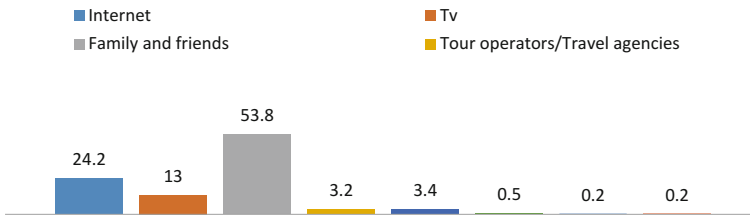




**Graph 1** Type of restaurants

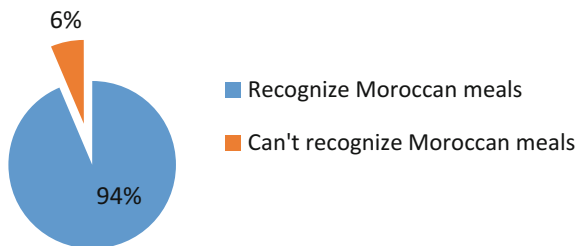


**Graph 2** Image of the Moroccan gastronomy for tourists with and without previous visit to Morocco



**Graph 3** Source of information

**Graph 4** Recognition of Moroccan meal

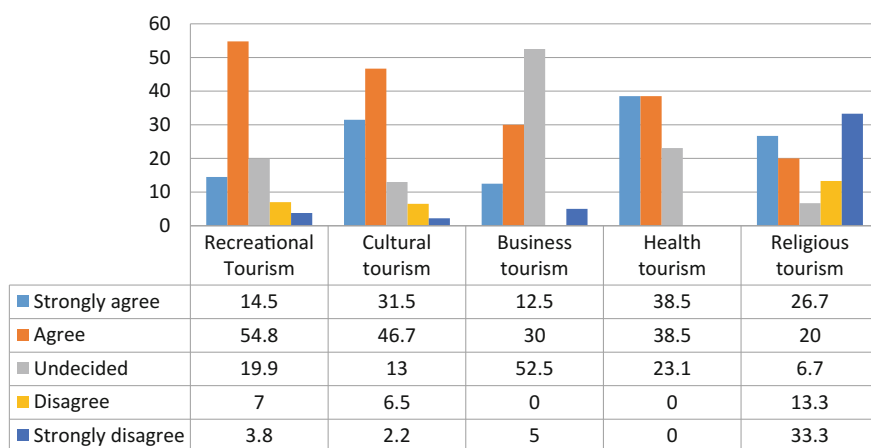


**Table 4** Interest in gastronomic holiday

Level of interest	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Fully interested	64	15.7
Interested	218	53.3
Maybe	93	22.7
Not really	26	6.4
Not at all	6	1.5
Missing	2	0.5
Total	409	100

**Table 5** Length of stay

Length of stay	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1 to 2 days	73	17.8
3 to 5 days	166	40.6
A week	40	29.4
More than a week	26	6.4
Missing	14	3.4
Total	409	100

**Graph 5** Moroccan gastronomy as a motivation to visit Morocco per type of tourism (in percentage)

## 5 Discussion

The objective of our study was to obtain information about types of tourism, the position of local gastronomy within other attributes of attractiveness, the image and the degree of familiarity with Moroccan gastronomy and the interest in a gastronomic trip in Morocco. Also, through the individual interviews done with professionals, we were able to make comparison between their judgment of attributes and tourists point of view.

The comparison between the responses of tourists and professionals shows that the importance of local gastronomy in the destination attractiveness is judged differently. According to types of tourism, large differences were noticed in recreational, cultural, health and religious tourism.

For tourists, the local gastronomy is a crucial attribute in business, health and religious tourism. While, it is considered as a complementary attribute for recreational and cultural tourism. Thus, local gastronomy is a significant attribute in the choice of a tourist destination.

For professionals, the local gastronomy plays a decisive role in the attractiveness of a destination for recreational, cultural and business tourism. Indeed, it is judged as a complementary attribute for religious tourism and an optional attribute for health tourism.

According to the results obtained, tourists during their travel prefer to try local gastronomy because it allows a new experience and even influences their choice of the destination. In fact, Morocco offers a rich and diverse gastronomy that can increase the attractiveness of the whole destination.

When it comes to the image and the degree of familiarity with the Moroccan gastronomy, we noticed that it is well known by the majority of respondents. Actually, most of interviewees have recognized at least two meals out of four. Nevertheless, the major source of information is word of mouth through family and friends but not from the media that guarantees large coverage and reliable information. From another hand, the Moroccan gastronomy has a good image even for those who have never been to Morocco. Moreover, their level of satisfaction after tasting it is largely positive.

Although the informality of communication canals, the Moroccan gastronomy maintains a good reputation which can be improved with more structured and wider communication.

Another positive result, for all types of tourism Moroccan gastronomy is considered as a real motivation to visit the country. Actually, respondents are highly interested in a gastronomic stay in Morocco that preferably varies between three to four days. Unfortunately, this kind of products is not available. Yet it could be a niche product for a potential market according to the results obtained.

At last, the findings of this study confirm the second hypothesis (H2). In other words, the importance of the Moroccan gastronomy differs according to the type of

tourism. Therefore, the first hypothesis (H1) saying that Moroccan gastronomy is a crucial attribute of the attractiveness and the third hypothesis (H3) suggesting that the Moroccan gastronomy does not influence the attractiveness of the destination, are rejected.

## 6 Conclusion

To conclude, this paper shows that both tourists and professionals consider the local gastronomy as either a crucial or a complementary attribute. Moreover, it asserts the significant role that the Moroccan gastronomy could play in favor of the attractiveness of the destination, despite of the lack of communication and promotion.

Morocco should reinforce its tourism offer by launching new products related to gastronomy because as a main result of the survey, the majority of respondents are interested in gastronomic stays for three to five days.

For future research, we need to understand the reasons behind the divergence between the judgments of tourists and professionals noticed in the results concerning the importance of gastronomy in the attractiveness of the Moroccan destination.

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# Enhancing Hospitality Services Through the Engagement of Visitors in Local Gastronomy Experiences: A Marketing Perspective from the Supply-Side

Alexios-Patapios Kontis and Sofoklis Skoultzos

**Abstract** Increasing international tourism competition set new rules in the global tourism market, looking for new innovative and imaginative tourism products, since tourists are no longer satisfied with traditional services only. So instead they seek something that they did not have a chance to experience elsewhere. Public bodies and entrepreneurs involved in tourism focus on distinctiveness of place by using local attributes in the launching of innovative, new products and brands, which can help establish a more Unique Selling Proposition (USP). Local gastronomy has gained recognition as an integral part of the tourism product, and as a mean of destinations differentiation and it plays a crucial role to the construction of the unique character, identity and authenticity of each destination. Recognizing the current marketing trends, the Hellenic Chamber of Hotels (HCH) designed and is implementing an innovative program, which uses local gastronomy culture of each Greek tourism destination, as a vehicle in order to enrich breakfast content in hotels with local agro-dietary products, traditional recipes and viands. The aim of the current research was to investigate the perceptions of hotels managers about the impacts of “Greek Breakfast” on their business and customers from marketing perspective.

**Keywords** Marketing · Business networks · Gastronomy · Supply-side Hospitality

**JEL Classification** M31 marketing

## 1 Introduction

Food has long been associated with travel and leisure (Pitte, 2002), not just because it is necessary for the survival of the moving people, but because food is one of the fundamental elements of the tourist experience (Hall et al., 2003; Hjalager &

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Richards, 2002; Jones & Jenkins, 2002) as food is an essential commodity as well as social and cultural heritage. The use of local produced food and authentic recipes can contribute, directly or indirectly, to the various elements of enhancing destination attractiveness and reinforcing brand identity of the destination by focusing on food experiences (Telfer & Wall, 1996). “In consuming the locally produced food the local area is absorbed; intrinsic pleasures are embodied and savored, the tourist becomes one with the locality, if only for a brief period” (Yurtseven, 2011). Local gastronomy holds great potential to contribute to sustainability in tourism by, among others, broadening and enhancing the local tourism resource base, adding value to the authenticity of the destination, strengthening the local economy, both from a tourism and agricultural perspective (Nummedal & Hall, 2006; Pratt, 2007). According to the conclusions of the 3rd UNWTO World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism (2017), “Gastronomy is a key resource in the proposal of value and differentiation of destinations and gastronomy tourism has become a market segment in itself. But there is a pending challenge in terms of promotion and in the implementation of strategies and action plans that maximize the results. Corporate and personal social responsibility must be incorporated into this exercise”. In response to the process of globalization, those in many culinary tourism places have apprehended that the most effective way to be dynamic to compete effectively with other culinary related places is to produce high quality authentic products and services (Aylward & Glynn, 2006).

Any promising development initiative must have adequate financial, organizational, technological and human resources as the economic activities are increasingly based on the knowledge-based economy in conjunction with the service industry (Stolarick, Denstedt, Donald, & Spencer, 2010). The key characteristics are creativity, application and generation of knowledge, and use of technology. To pool the resources, many public and private bodies have a strong focus on innovation activities—partnerships and networks through a strategic alliance that give special emphasis to locally-generated development (Stolarick et al., 2010). Such emerging initiatives as an alternative strategy of development can be achieved by establishing a value chain of a creative food economy leveraging the primary and secondary sector as well as the service sector of tourism. So, the development of strategic alliances on food and gastronomy sector as part of an integrated and coherent value chains that directly involve tourism enterprises such as hotels, create favorable development prospects and benefits for the total of involved parties. The co-operation among small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is a powerful determinant to gain competitive advantage for both the networks as such and their individual member firms (Boari, Odorici, & Zamarian, 2003). Aylward and Glynn (2006) argue that this requires a collaborative approach and the formation of strategic alliances. In other words, this requires enhancement of supply chains through clustering, the improvement of infrastructure, the incorporation of marketing knowledge and know-how into decision-making to enhance the links between the primary and service sectors.

It is mentioned, that the creation of coherent business networks contributes to the introduction and provision of the necessary know-how to the cooperating members,

which is particularly important for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME) such as the majority of Greek manufacturing and tourism companies. In particular, at the total of 9,730 hotels in Greece for 2016 the average size of the hotels was 41.8 rooms, and at the same time, 80% of the hotel units had less than 50 rooms and are categorized as SMTEs (ITEP, 2017).

As a social partner, the Hellenic Chamber of Hotels (HCH) undertakes initiatives that contribute positively to supporting the development efforts of its members (e.g. hotels) as well as the national economy in general (other economic sectors). The HCH, has in recent years created a series of new innovative services and tourist products for its members, which by utilizing the new communication and information technologies serve the creative knowledge transfer. In this case, the Hellenic Chamber of Hotels, recognizing the multiple benefits that can be derived from the triangle cuisine, product and territory, designed and implemented an integrated program of enriching hotel breakfasts with local products and traditional flavours, according to the hotels' location. One of the ultimate objectives was to assist Greek hoteliers to move from mass tourism to more alternative and sustainable oriented experiences so to create quality products for hotel guests through familiarization with local products and cuisine from Greek destinations. At the same time, based on Greek Breakfast, the development of culinary cluster in a context of synergies between tourism and gastronomy, local communities can benefit both farmers and residents economically and culturally in the creation of many different kinds of culinary-related, small-scale local businesses, jobs and income generation. Hall (2012) suggest that "food consumption is integral to tourism and its economic impact can be important not only for immediate businesses that directly provide food for tourists (such as hotels), it can also have significant economic impact throughout the food supply chain", especially if the food provided is supplied locally.

### ***1.1 Greek Breakfast Project***

The "Greek Breakfast" is a distinct tourist product in the field of gastronomic tourism, aiming on the one hand to increase Greek tourism competitiveness by adding new tourist products, and on the other hand, to contribute to the development of local production grids. The project follows an integrated approach for the creation of a cohesive network of certified business (hotels and local producers), encourage the direct cooperation among different actors, in order to offer new and traditional tastes of Greek cuisine based on authentic recipes and local gastronomy customs of each destination (Kontis & Gkoumas, 2017).

The design followed a clearly defined framework, compatible with the current international trends in the creation of intangible tourist products. So, for the program's needs, a web-based platform was created to support the participating companies (direct communication between hoteliers and producers, information, creation of customized communication material, customized product marking, etc.)



and to constantly and effectively control the quality characteristics, as providing a tourist product from a large number of hotels with highly diverse business priorities is a particular challenge. Effective horizontal and vertical networking of integrated businesses is a vital issue for the success of the project as a whole. One of the main blocks of activities focus on points out that good mapping of regional capabilities in the food sector, understanding of the origins of food products and exploration of cultural identity linked to food production and tourism is vital for the successful implementation and maximize contribution of the project.

In order to create evidences, emphasis was given to the development of communication strategy for the effective promotion of the new product and the promotion of the “Greek Breakfast” as a strong tourism brand with powerful and easily identified logo (Kontis & Gkoumas, 2017). The brand of “Greek Breakfast” is simple, comprehensive and memorable, combining geographical identity (Greek) with contextual description (Breakfast). The new brand demonstrates a highly competitive identity, represents the core essence and unique characteristics of the product which stands out from the competition. “Greek Breakfast” is an illustrative example of sound interaction between destination’s values and assets with visitors’ perceptions.

## 2 Gastronomy and Tourism

It is widely accepted that evolution of tourism demand led to various differentiations of the offered tourism product which have been reflected to the development of special interest tourism (SIT) and special forms of tourism. As a result, a growing number of destinations globally focus on practices and activities that enhance the experiences that they offer. Culture, sports, heritage, nature etc. may be the core components of such activities. Moreover, several forms of tourism have been evolved to sub-categories which evolved to niche markets as well. For example, it has been argued that cultural tourism has three stages in its evolution (Jovicic, 2014): During the first stage the focus of the activities is based on the attractions. During the second stage the focus is based on the most important elements of the destination. Throughout the last stage, new niche markets are developed (e.g. creative tourism) and due to this fact, the wide differentiation of cultural tourism can be explained. Culinary tourism (or Gastronomic tourism or food tourism) is considered one of these new markets.

Food is actually placed at the core of the tourism product despite the additional activities that a tourist may choose to do during his stay (Symons, 1999; Yurtseven & Kaya, 2011). As UNTWO (2012: 8) clarifies: “*the cuisine of the destination is an aspect of utmost importance in the quality of the holiday experience*”. Although food has long been associated with travel and leisure (Pitte, 2002), culinary tourism as part of a creative economy has only been given attention in recent years. Nevertheless, a niche market in the global tourism market focuses only on the cuisine of the destination and as a result various attempts have been made to define

this type of tourism. UNWTO (2012: 9) argues that “*gastronomic tourism applies to tourists and visitors who plan their trips partially or totally in order to taste the cuisine of the place or to carry out activities related to gastronomy*”. Additionally, the International Culinary Tourism Association (2009) states the following about gastronomic tourism: “*the pursuit of unique and memorable food and beverage experience ... The natural beauty of a place, the authenticity of the surroundings and the presentation of the food, are key features of gastronomic tourism*”.

As mentioned above, tourism demand has evolved rapidly and nowadays tourists are more experienced and rigorous in their choices. Additionally, competition at international, national and even local level has been increased and destinations use food and culinary tourism as a tool for increasing their competitiveness. Culinary tourism has been developed because of the growing interest of travelers for meeting the local cuisine as part of the everyday life of the host destination. Local gastronomy is now considered to be a strong element for the enhancement not only of offered tourism experiences but also for brand of destinations. Actually, food and culinary experiences can contribute to the increased locality of the offered experience, because they are part of the local identity. For this reason, food has been promoted as a way to increase the local image of the tourism product (Lagos, Skoultzos & Vasileiou 2016). Undoubtedly, there is a strong correlation between gastronomy and the wide range of the new traveler’s mindset such as meeting the local tradition, authenticity, sustainability etc. (UNWTO, 2012). Therefore, the development of culinary tourism at a destination complies with the demand trends globally.

Another advantage of focusing on culinary tourism is its contribution to other sectors of the economy. In general, tourism is capable of supporting the secondary and primary sector by inducing the demand for necessary and supplementary products and services that are offered from tourism business. Especially, special interest tourism due to its focus on the special elements of a destination can contribute to the support of other sectors of the economy. In particular, tourism is considered to be a catalyst for the socioeconomic sustainability of the host destination. According to the aforementioned, culinary tourism can support the primary sector of the host destination. It has been argued that through the use of local culinary products, a wide range of producers can be positively affected. Yurtseven (2011: 9) argues that “Localized gastronomic systems promote environmental sustainability, social justice, and fair trade.” To sum up, literature review reflects three main correlations between food and tourism which may be issues for further research: the role of food as tourism product, the role of gastronomy as a marketing tool for destinations, the role of gastronomic tourism to the socioeconomic sustainability of the host destination (Henderson, 2009; López-Guzmán, Di-Clemente, & Hernández-Mogollón, 2014). It is important to highlight that the success of the development of culinary tourism to the host destination depends a lot on the consumption of local products. This is essential in order for the destination to fully benefit from gastronomic tourism. The added-value for the customer derives from the use of local products and destination improves its image by using them.

### 3 Methodology

The aim of the current research was to investigate the perceptions of hotels managers about the impacts of “Greek Breakfast” on their business and customers from marketing perspective. The rationale behind asking general or food department managers was attributed to the literature recommending that focus is placed on managers and decision makers because they have the necessary experience. A quantitative study was consisted of a questionnaire survey, comprised mainly multiple choices questions on a five-point Likert Scale. The survey instrument was an online structured questionnaire, which was tested on 9 tourism stakeholders. Some obscurities were discussed and some questions have been changed, but no essential corrections have been made. Those 9 questionnaires have not been included in the further analysis. The questionnaire was supplemented by a cover letter developed by the researchers ensuring the confidentiality of answers and outlying the purpose of this research. The research sample included the total number of hotels which have joined the project until the time period that survey was conducted. In terms of the research sample, the authors of this paper contacted all participants hotels listed in Hellenic Chamber of Hotels’ directory in order to improve the quality of results and the representativeness of the research. Table 1 shows some descriptive facts about the units (hotels) that participated at the “Greek Breakfast” project per geographical area during the period of survey (Table 2).

The questionnaire was sent to 771 respondents and a total of 209 responses obtained a response rate of 27.11%. Regarding the nature and the difficulties of the survey the percentage of the sample was considered to be acceptable, taken into account previously conducted studies (see e.g. Trihas, Kyriakaki, & Zagkotsi, 2015). The survey was performed from 26th September to 16th October 2016. Over this period, several reminders of the questionnaire, personal visits and direct phone calls were conducted and e-mail messages sent to remind potential respondents and encourage them to participate in the study. The questionnaires were collated and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Program. The methodology adopted for the data processing, includes descriptive statistic measures and Non-parametric statistic (Table 3).

**Table 1** Percentage allocation of hotels based on size (2016)

Hotels size	5* (%)	4* (%)	3* (%)	2* (%)	1* (%)	Total (%)
Family run (1–20 rooms)	1.4	11.8	23.1	41.5	22.2	42.5
Small (21–50 rooms)	2.0	9.9	24.7	50.6	12.8	37.5
Middle (51–100 rooms)	6.1	19.4	39.0	33.3	2.2	12.2
Large (>101 rooms)	31.7	43.5	19.8	4.7	0.3	7.8

*Source* Hellenic Chamber of Hotels, Research Institute for Tourism

**Table 2** Hotels participating at “Greek Breakfast” project per geographical area

Geographical area	Hotels	%
Epirus	39	5
Thessaly	57	7
Thrace	15	2
Crete	127	16
Macedonia	105	14
Aegean Islands	186	24
Ionian Islands	71	9
Peloponnese	74	10
Central Greece	97	13
Total	771	100

Source Hellenic Chamber of Hotels (at the time of survey)

**Table 3** Hotels participating at “Greek Breakfast” project per class (at the time of survey)

Class	Population		Sample	
	Hotels	%	Hotels	%
5-star class	161	20.9	34	16.3
4-star class	244	31.6	53	25.4
3-star class	223	28.9	83	39.7
2-star class	124	16.1	36	17.2
1-star class	19	2.5	3	1.4
Total	771	100	209	100

## 4 Survey Results

Of the 209 hotels participated in this survey, 34 hotels belong to 5-star class (16.3%), 53 hotels to 4-star class (25.4%), 83 hotels to 3-star class (39.7%), 36 hotels to 2-star class (17.2%), and just 3 of them to 1-star class (1.4%). Hotels ranked in the upper classes have significantly higher participation in the “Greek Breakfast” program, and therefore dominate the current survey. One reason for the high participation rate of upper and middle classes units was probably their interest for the program, which covers the real need to enrich and improve hotel services to their clients. Concerning the size of the hotel units, the percentages are almost equally divided, since small units (1–50 beds) represent the 52.8%, while big units cover the 47.2% of the sample. Regarding to the operation period of hotels, more than half of the respondents are seasonal hotels (54.6%), followed by the all year operating hotels (45.4%) (Table 4).

This paper builds upon the discussions and lessons learnt by almost seven years experience of Greek Breakfast project, and aims to investigate the perceptions of hotels managers about the impacts of “Greek Breakfast” on their business and customers from marketing perspective. From the overall picture of the study, it is clear that participants in the “Greek Breakfast” program have a positive attitude towards the effectiveness of the program, recognizing to a large extent that it

**Table 4** Contribution level of Greek Breakfast

	Not at all (%)	Slightly (%)	Quite enough (%)	Much (%)	Very much (%)
Creates a unique experience for hotel's visitors	0.0	7.2	13.9	34.9	44.0
Creates an authentic experience for hotel's visitors	0.0	1.0	5.3	37.8	56.0
Is familiar to hotel's visitors as concept	23.4	22.5	26.8	16.3	11.0
Affects visitors behaviour after first tasting of "Greek Breakfast" (repeaters)	3.3	10.0	21.1	29.2	36.4
Enriches on-site hotels services	0.0	1.4	12.9	46.4	39.2
Diversifies the hotel from competitors	1.4	6.7	15.8	38.8	37.3
Enhances hotel's culinary identity	0.0	7.7	14.4	40.2	37.8
Promotes hotel's culinary capacity (Cross Selling for other food departments)	1.0	3.3	11.0	45.0	39.7
Contributes to creating repeat customers for the hotel	4.3	7.7	16.3	34.0	37.8
Attracts more quality tourists for the hotel	1.4	6.7	17.7	36.8	37.3
Contributes to revenue growth	9.1	17.7	19.6	28.2	25.4
Contributes to hotel's brand equity	0.0	0.5	9.1	40.7	49.8
Exploits cultural gastronomic wealth of destination	0.0	0.0	12.0	35.9	52.2
Acquaints producers and consumers	6.7	12.4	32.5	30.6	17.7
Enhances local producers and economy	1.4	8.6	21.5	47.4	21.1
Follows international gastronomy trends (Mediterranean diet, 100 miles diet)	0.0	0.0	2.9	38.8	58.4
Contributes to creating more positive comments on social media and internet	0.5	1.4	2.4	26.3	69.4

achieves its goals. Greater efforts have to be made on issues relating to the awareness of "Greek breakfast" by visitors, a process that takes time and particularly high investment in communication and promotional activities.

In the face of the changing global tourism and consumer trends, Greek Breakfast seems to follow closely international gastronomy trends such as Mediterranean diet, 100 miles diet etc., since the 97.1% of participants recognize much/very much this feature of the program.

The 85.6% of the participants underline that the "Greek Breakfast" enriches much/very much on-site hotels services, which one of the main priorities of the program. Especially, is very positive the contribution on the creation of an authentic experience (93.8% of the informants) and creates a unique experience (78.9%) for hotel's visitors.

The project aim to give to hotels guest the chance to get to know the gastronomic wealth of Greece (e.g. traditional and authentic recipes) and to taste the innumerable Greek products (such as Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) products, Protected

Geographical Indication (PGI) products, Traditional Specialties Guaranteed (TSG) products, etc.). According to hotels managers, the majority of visitors unfortunately are not familiar with the concept of “Greek Breakfast” yet, but after the first “contact” and tasting, visitors come back and want to taste local products and traditional recipes again.

In the era of the Internet and the dominance of social networks, hoteliers believe (93.7%) that the “Greek breakfast” is a very good call for positive commenting and pleasant experiences uploading on social media (facebook, instagram etc.) and good feedback on travel reviewing sites (tripadvisor etc.). In the same direction their views (90.4%) on the contribution of the program to hotels brand equity.

Furthermore, the respondents (84.7%), mainly of higher stars-class, claim that “Greek Breakfast” is a perfect chance to promote hotel’s culinary capacity in order to achieve cross selling conditions for other food departments of the hotels, and the 78.0% point out its significance to the enhancement of the hotel’s culinary identity.

Finally, according to the research’s results, for contribution to revenue growth, the percentages are almost equally divided with 53.6% of participants hoteliers believe that “Greek Breakfast” contributes positive to revenue growth and 46.4% of them believe that it contributes non-positive to revenue growth, because of the higher purchase costs of local products. In this field there is significant differentiation among 5 & 4\* hotels and the lower categories hotels.

## 5 Conclusions

It is clear that more and more in recent years, both policy-makers and researchers have increasingly underline the role that Food and Gastronomy have in local economic development. Scientists from different disciplines such as economists and territorial marketers focus on issues related to food industry including innovation and commercialization of local food products, linkages between food industry and tourism industry. The innovative entrepreneurial networking activities (e.g., diversification and specialization of production and consumption nexus) based on primary and secondary sectors contribute to the formation of an increasing tourism economy. In this economic activity, branding has become the essence of the creative process that is used to establish tourism product identity and image and to successfully promote the total of partners (producers and hoteliers).

The Hellenic Chamber of Hotels through the implementation of “Greek Breakfast” project as loudspeaker, aims to promote gastronomic wealth, incorporating the triangle between cuisine, product and territory. The inclusion of producers from the primary and secondary sector such as agricultural and livestock producers, dairy and cheese makers, beekeepers and bakers act as interpreters of the territory and all those who construct the identity of the place enrich the value of the related tourism businesses such as hotels and finally, the destination as a whole.

According to the results of the survey, till now the implementation of the “Greek breakfast” shows that it covers in a large extent the initial objectives concerning the

members of the Chamber, the hoteliers. An additional effort should be made on issues related to enhancing the awareness of “Greek Breakfast” by visitors.

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# Cittaslow Philosophy in Yedi Bilgeler Winery—Turkey

Alev DüNDAR ARIKAN and Irfan ARIKAN

**Abstract** Archeological excavations and research show that grapes and wine have played a key social and commercial role in Anatolia, dating back 6000 years. Over the past few decades, Turkey has been resurrecting its very ancient wine traditions, producing high quality wine made from native grape varieties, growing across the geographically sprad wine regions. Wine tourism offers a way to support rural areas, sustain cultural heritage and improve the economy. Wine tourism is more than visiting vineyards; it has the power to create and develop a region’s identity and increase distribution channels. Yedi Bilgeler Winery is an establishment in Turkey, Izmir, which was constructed in 2010. Yedi Bilgeler, the Seven Sages (of Greece) or Seven Wise Men was the title given by ancient Greek tradition to seven early-6th-century BC philosophers, statesmen, and law-givers who were renowned in the following centuries for their wisdom. The winery and the vineyards are at the center of Ionia and between the ancient cities of Ephesus and Magnesia. The philosophy of Cittaslow is implemented in the winery and free trainings for wine, olive oil and cheese tastings are provided for local manufacturers. The boutique hotel is also included in “Cittaslow Friends” to support and help raise awareness about the Cittaslow movement in Turkey. The aim of this paper is to present the Cittaslow philosophy in Yedi Bilgeler winery in Turkey and investigate the vineyards of the region in relation to tourism. As research methodology a literature review and the sources of secondary data were used.

**Keywords** Cittaslow · Wine tourism · Vineyards · Yedi bilgeler Turkey

**JEL Classification** L83

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## 1 Objective

Wine tourism is expanding around the world, with the number of new wine regions and vineries increased rapidly in the past decade (Khan, 2016). Wine tourism has been defined as ‘visitation to vineyards, wineries, wine festivals and wine shows for which grape wine tasting and/or experiencing the attributes of a grape wine region are the prime motivating factors for visitors’ (Hall, Longo, Mitchell, & Johnson, 2000). Wine tourism offers a way to support rural areas, sustain cultural heritage and improve the economy. Wine tourism is more than visiting vineyards; it has the power to create and develop a region’s identity and increase distribution channels. By attracting visitors to the place of production, the wine-focused producer-consumer interaction is promoting education about wine, raising awareness of wine products and putting wine regions and local cultures on the World map (Everett, 2016).

Rural tourism presents itself as an alternative or as complement to the traditional activities of farmers within the agrarian family unit. Employment can be generated in accommodation, food, local craft, other service, manufacturing, and construction sectors, encouraging population in rural areas. Moreover, the suppliers in rural tourism usually try to assure a good life quality level through the presence of some services and the maintenance of local culture and traditions. Rural tourism makes also easier the development of cooperation among local stakeholders as it encourages the community involvement. It improves also local resources, especially as regard wine and food, promotes local territory by using local identity. This type of tourism activity can enhance local features counteracting the loss of local diversity due to mass tourism. Rural tourists are attracted by the identity/diversity of a rural area (Marangon & Troiano, 2012).

Wine tourism is used not only as a significant marketing and branding tool and an additional income source in wine regions (Beverland, 2006), but it also reinforces the individual identity of regions and wineries by presenting and preserving the unique authentic social, cultural, historical and geographical characteristics of wine-producing regions (2016). Local hotels are also involved in environmental conservation efforts through programs such as Green Certified Hotels. These types of efforts are necessary in successful wine regions in order to create a positive balance between tourists and environment.

By analyzing wine tourists’ behavior it would also be possible to create an integrated offer of wine, regional products, activities and events that can be specifically designed to attract certain target segments: a differentiation of the supplied products and services based on visitor segment’s desires would surely improve the long-term overall profitability of the wine tourism business (Cavicchi et al., 2011). It is self-evident that winemaking involves creativity, especially for wines bearing the winemaker’s name. Like chefs creating cuisine from local ingredients, many winemakers want to create a wine that embodies the place where it is made. After water, the only beverage that generates as much interest as food is wine-not so much the production as the understanding of it (Marks, 2015).

Wine tourism is not just expanding, however, it is also evolving and becoming more sophisticated. Consumers are seeking more innovative experiences and expect more than just a traditional tasting. Many wine regions are combining the wine visit with culinary, environmental, and architectural offerings amongst others (Khan, 2016). Gastronomic tourism as a tourist phenomenon therefor has grown considerably and has become one of the most dynamic and creative tourist sectors (WTO, 2012). Both the tourism business and tourist destinations have realized the importance of food for diversifying their offer and boosting local, regional and national economic development (Leal Londono, 2017).

The aim of this paper is to present the Cittaslow philosophy in Yedi Bilgeler winery in Turkey and investigate the vineyards of the region in relation to tourism. As research methodology a literature review and the sources of secondary data were used.

## 2 Theoretical Framework

Research on sustainable tourism has provided many ideas and tools in advancement of sustainability in addition to defining the concept. Despite the theoretical contributions provided by extent research positive, real-world examples of the concept of sustainability of tourism in general and destinations in particular are necessary. Sustainability should be substantiated through policy and legislation and should be primary objective in all decisions regarding tourism. This covers a multitude of areas of study and implementation ranging from, but not limited to, environmental, social, economic and urban development and design. A good example is the Cittaslow or Slow Cities movement which originated in Italy but has gained popularity not only in Europe but also in the USA.

In October 1999 the new concept of a sustainable town was initiated by Paolo Saturnini, previous mayor of Greve in Chianti, located in Tuscany who consolidated with three other Italian mayors, namely Stefano Cimicchi (Orvieto), Francesca Guida (Bra), Domenico Marrone (Postiano) and the Founder of Slow Food, Carlo Petrini. The fundamental idea is to counteract the fast city movement in order to provide better living conditions for the inhabitants of the city. The concept of Cittaslow is metonymic with sustainability, history, tradition and hospitality. Through the protection of exploiting the natural resources and interference in the biodiversity, visitors can enjoy the pristine and pure-minded environment, for example tasting the culinary delicacy (Knox, 2005) and wine of the region. Furthermore, they have to promote an ecological policy, an infrastructure policy and have to characterize agricultural quality (Mayer & Knox, 2006).

The cities which are certificated as Cittaslow are distinctly marked with a logo that is based on the Slow Food emblem. It illustrates an orange snail which carries a pastel-colored skyline that is composed of numerous houses, roofs and a clock tower on its snail shell. Moreover the writing “Cittaslow” is displayed below the snail and the application of the logo is regimanted (Cittaslow International, 2015).

The participating cities put great emphasis on traditional handcraft, organic farmers, family businesses and promotion of regional products for the preservation of their own identity. In order to accomplish the objective set by the Cittaslow committee a strict pursuit of the following seven categories, which are written down in the Cittaslow manifest, is of fundamental importance (Semmens & Freeman, 2012).

- Environmental issues (recycling program, waste and pollution control);
- Infrastructure policy (control of traffic, pedestrian streets);
- Urban quality (support local traditions, entrepreneurs, employment);
- Appreciation of autochthonous products (local farmers, suppliers, organic farming);
- Hospitality (tourist information center);
- Cittaslow awareness (public relation activity for Cittaslow);
- Scenic quality (preservation of the scenic richness).

Cittaslow itself has been influenced by “slow food” movement in its development (Radstrom, 2005). Both these concepts rose out of the myriad of problems created by life in modern urban settings, such as air and noise pollution, urban sprawl, cultural and lifestyle degeneration and loss of local identity. These problems have led to novel, eco-culture friendly tourism practices (Matos, 2002). Cittaslow is a concept that is opposite of the fast paced lifestyles of modern cities. Life should be, tranquil and enjoyable while all aspects of life should include respect and responsibility. Good living means having the opportunity of enjoying solutions and services that allow citizens to live their town in an easy and pleasant way.

Living slow means being slowly hasty; “festina lente” latins used to say, seeking everyday the “modern times counterpart” in other words looking for the best of the knowledge of the past and enjoying it thanks to the best possibilities of the present and of the future. At present Cittaslow philosophy is just a particular way of carrying on an ordinary life-style rather than today’s trends, less frantic, yielding and fast, but more human, environmentally correct and sensible for the present and future generations. It promotes the use of technology oriented to improving the quality of the environment and of the urban fabric, and in addition the safe-guarding of the production of unique foods and wine. In addition, this philosophy seeks to promote dialog and communication between local producers and consumers of the region. With the overarching ideas of environmental conservation, the promotion of sustainable development, and the improvement of the urban life, Slow Cities provide incentives to food production using natural and environmentally-friendly techniques ([www.cittaslow.net/content/philosophy](http://www.cittaslow.net/content/philosophy)).

The term slow tourism means in a way “high-level wellness” to be obtained by tourism activities performed in a certain region, and involves “healthy nutrition”, “motion”, and “cultural” and “spiritual renewal” (Mueller & Kaufmann, 2001). To develop a region as a sustainable tourism destination by protecting its natural, cultural and historical potential from negative impacts of mass tourism, product development, service and promotion should also be focused on sustainability. In order to aim at the target of a sustainable tourism product the ecological balance of

an area needs to be in consistent with the economic system (Kuhn, 2007). The primary motivation factors of tourists who pilgrim to slow tourism destinations are enjoying the beautiful landscape with its fauna and flora untainted by pollution. The wider the spectrum of natural attractions a place offers, the more a tourist cherishes the experience and it will sink deep into memory. As an important tool to extend the awareness of tourist attractions out of our natural environment educational work needs to be done (Edgell, 2006). It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems (World Tourism Organization, 1995).

Due to the extreme stationary aspect of a destination and the increasing environmentalism of the visitors, a sustainable dealing with the environment and its fauna and flora needs to be ensured. Therefor certain environmental protection measures have to be taken into consideration (Simpson, 2001). Concerning the operational level, hotels also have to follow a strict waste disposal, water and electricity austerity measures as well as considering environmental protection regulation regarding the construction of the buildings.

An intact landscape and an unspoiled countryside are nowadays taken as evidences for a qualitative and valuable vacation. The creation of a niche-position due to the sustainable aspect of the destination enables the region to elude from the tough competitive pressure in the market and to focus on a selected circle of customers (Kristges, 2003). Mayer and Knox (2009) regard the international Charter of the Cittaslow association as a deeper elaboration of the philosophy which also serves as a guideline for the improvement of quality of life.

Moreover, in the philosophy of Cittaslow it is anchored that the local inhabitants are the primary target group for all the performed activities, not the tourists. According to Heitmann, Robinson, and Povey (2011) the concept of Cittaslow allows an indirect influence on customer segmentation as this kind of tourism primarily attracts quality tourists. These travelers, who prefer slow type of travel are seeking quality over quantity and focusing on the customized travel experiences.

The concept of Cittaslow can be expanded in a broader sense to the tourism development with a special focus on gastronomy within a rural context by Nilsson, Svard, Widarsson, and Wirell (2011). In order to make agrarian destinations more interesting for visitors is the consideration of the culinary richness and the application as a tourist attraction. This aspect extracts several advantages, namely an increase in travelers' expenditures, a source of income in the off-season and the promotion of local products which can be included in the restaurants' menus. The impact of the Cittaslow philosophy at a destination is particularly identifiable concerning local events that combine the eco-gastronomic aspect of the slow food context. The Slow Food Movement ([www.slowfood.com](http://www.slowfood.com)) should be theorized and considered within the wider concept of slow tourism and its philosophy and principles. Slow Food in action is the best welcome for new forms of responsible tourism. The Slow Food website claims: Slow Food envisions a world in which all people can access and enjoy food that is good for them, good for those who grow it

and good for the planet. This approach is based on a concept of food that is defined by three interconnected principles: good, clean and fair.

Slow Food and Cittaslow are working to give back a voice to those who have been voiceless—the indigenous peoples that have lost their cultivation techniques and their seeds and the small farmers who are the real scientists in the field and are not listened to. The women whose activities are closely connected to life, the old people who are guardians of our experiences, young people, who represents a real commitment to improving the planet. Carlo Petrini teaches us “The small farmers will save the world”. Only unaware and educating community can choose the Slow higher quality path—to give back hope to the entire planet. It aims to promote a new kind of farming and to support the ethical consumer. The goal of Cittaslow is to maintain their identity and the spirit of the community in the face of today’s problems, using the best aspects of globalization without sacrificing themselves ([www.cittaslow.net/content/philosophy](http://www.cittaslow.net/content/philosophy)).

The projected growth in food and drink tourism brings opportunities, but also significant challenges for regions seeking to maintain their local character, traditions and identity. Destinations and businesses will need to ensure they are changing to meet the growth of food tourism and the evolving (and increasingly demanding) nature of consumer tastes and interests. The philosophy reflects a wider desire to develop a slower and more sensitive tourism offering with wider-reaching local benefits. The lessons learned from food and drink tourism are certainly applicable to the wider tourism industry and are increasingly being adopted in slow tourism strategies. Overall, the general principles of shorter supply chains, ethical consumption, sustainability, local economic development and support, stronger relationships between producer and consumer, and host and guest underpin the philosophy. Slow tourism is about the pursuit of less intensive consumption patterns and approaches which promote concepts of immersion, dwelling, value, healthy living, engagement and sustainability. It encapsulates more than just speed reflecting also a state of mind, the mode of travel chosen, alternative engagement with spaces, how time is spent at a destination, and issues of environmental consciousness (Everett, 2016).

### 3 Yedi Bilgeler Winery

Turkey has world’s 4th biggest area of vines (after Spain, France, Italy) but accounts only for 0.25% of global wine production. Over the past few decades, Turkey has been resurrecting its very ancient wine traditions, producing high quality wine made from native grape varieties like Kalecik Karası, Öküzgözü, Sultaniye, Çalkarası, Papazkarası, Emir, Anatolien Narince and Boğazkere, growing across the geographically sprad vine regions. Archeological excavations and research show that grapes and wine have played a key social and commercial role in Anatolia, dating back 6000 years (<http://www.discoverturkishwines.com>).

Yedi Bilgeler Hotel, Restaurant and Winery is an establishment in Turkey, Izmir, Selçuk which was constructed on 50 hectare in 2010. The main building was designed with the components that have influence in the area's history of 2500 years. The Europe's reflection of wine tradition, Chateau Style was synthesized with Anatolia's caravanserai columns. The winery and the vineyards is at the center of Ionia and between the ancient cities of Ephesus and Magnesia. The region is also the place where the wine and the olive oil was produced and introduced to Mediterranean basin. Yedi Bilgeler, the Seven Sages (of Greece) or Seven Wise Men (Greek: οἱ ἑπτὰ σοφοί, *hoi hepta sophoi*; c. 620–550 BC) was the title given by ancient Greek tradition to seven early-6th-century BC philosophers, statesmen, and law-givers who were renowned in the following centuries for their wisdom. Yedi Bilgeler, are ancestors of humanity who lived on these lands and recognized worldwide. Although the list of sages sometimes varies, the ones usually included are the following: Thales of Miletus, Bias of Priene, Solon of Athens, Chilon of Sparta, Anaxagoras of Clazomenae, Lassus of Hermione and Pythagoras of Samos ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven\\_Sages\\_of\\_Greece](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven_Sages_of_Greece)). Yedi Bilgeler means philosophy, idea, knowledge, love for learning, chatting with friends, sharing, and “being” with wine. It means settings that can be shared all of the above. In a modern sense, all production from this area, in the ancient period, laid a foundation for civilization. The name is a sign of respect to the creators of philosophy and the concept of idea (<http://www.yedibilgeler.com>).

Wine in Yedi Bilgeler is produced from the grapes which are merlot, malbec, cabernet savignon and shiraz growing in the vineyard. The philosophy of Cittaslow is implemented in the boutique hotel with its 6 buildings and 28 rooms. Every one of the rooms has a garden, terrace or a balcony. The restaurant in the main building offers a la carte Italian and Mediterranean cuisine and has a wide view toward the vineyards. The design of the winery allows to be gentle to the grapes as the ultimate goal in winemaking is “high quality”. The grapes are transferred on conveyor bands to fermentation tanks without using pumps; and afterwards into stock tanks with free flow.

The first aim of the owners was to establish a different kind of life style using Cittaslow philosophy in the winery and to create a business that can provide employment to the local community, residents of Çamlık Village and other neighboring villages. With the help of the Yenipazar Cittaslow representative, the philosophy of Cittaslow was implemented in the winery. A philosophy workshop was held in the hotel. Local manufacturers are invited to the events like free trainings for viticulture, wine, olive oil and cheese tasting where they have the opportunity to introduce their products in the hotel.

The local people are invited to the seasonal activities such as the vintage, lavender harvest and pomegranate syrup making to help sustaining the tradition of collective work. The meeting of the organization of “Local Products and Geographical Indicators Research Network in Turkey” aiming to raise awareness of local cheese makers was sponsored and held in the hotel. Free sales stands are provided for Yenipazar Women's Environment, Culture and Business Cooperative. It is aimed to support women by selling their products without making any profit for

the facility. The money collected from the sales is directly transferred to the cooperative.

A section of the vineyard is used as local products garden. Vegetables and fruits are planted from inherited seeds in this garden; and the crops are used in the kitchen. With the support of the Seed Association of Karaot, half of the seedling was planted in the vineyard, and the other half was distributed to farmers in the villages nearby. The restaurant has a rich menu that pairs with the wines produced in the vineyard. Only the crops from the garden and homemade sauces are used for food production and canned products are not used.

In the landscape design, none of the trees were cut down and olive, fig and other fruit trees are included. The fruits from these trees are used to make jams, which are offered to the guests for breakfast. The olives and the olive oil, which is made of the trees of the vineyard, are also used in the kitchen and offered to the guests.

Sensor-fitted electrical system with energy saving led lights is used around the hotel. The lightening starts up automatically at sunset. Solar energy is used for heating and hot water. If there is not enough sunlight, the nature friendly fuel “pirina”, which is not a fossil fuel and does not include any sulphur, is used. The solid waste of the hotel is collected separately. The recycle bins in the facility enable the guests to separate their waste. The domestic waste from the kitchen is used in the local products garden and vineyard by composting system.

There are walking trails and bicycle roads in the facility. In order to motivate the guests to use bicycles there are bicycles complimentary. The rooms are designed as wheelchair friendly; there are non-threshold doors in every room. There is also a restroom in the restaurant for the disabled visitors.

## 4 Conclusion

The wineries can organize activities and events such as wine fairs and contests, develop promotion/communication plans, conduct research, develop criteria for the selection of members and create tour packages (e.g. rural tourism accommodation plus visit to local wineries). They can also combine wine with other complementary activities, such as local gastronomy, architecture and heritage, mountain biking, golf, etc. The first, as consumers seek to create a complete lifestyle for themselves, traditional opinion will be challenged more often and become less influential. Secondly, consumers will increasingly be more serious about and focused on their hobbies and interests. Thirdly, production related-factors will become less important for the consumer than issues affecting lifestyle. The consumers are focusing less on the ways in which wine is made and more on related recreational issues such as events, food and the overall experience of the vineyard. Wine tourism operates in conjunction with other forms of tourism such as food, environmental and heritage tourism (Correia & Ascencao, 2006).

The association between food, wine and sensory experiences is lucidly summed up by (Sutton, 2010), who comments on the significance of the relationship



between food and the sense. He states that: “food is central to cosmologies, worldviews, and ways of life” and is reflected in the term ‘gustemology’ as a means of understanding the spectrum of cultural issues that exist around taste and the sensory aspects of food and wine (Morgan & Tresidder, 2016). Culinary tourists are a different breed of traveler; they want to know equally who the hot chefs are, and what “mama” is cooking in the kitchen. And they really want to know where the locals go. And while Slow Food has been wonderful in preserving cooking traditions in many regions around the world, a standardized menu of dishes has emerged that uses local ingredients, but seems to showcase them in the same recipes time and again (Mair & Wagner, 2012).

The essence of tourism is based on pleasure derived from the destination and facility itself and activities undertaken when there. For travelers preferring Cittaslow approach this pleasure is derived from a lower impact and slower paced activity level. The following activities can be suggested for the managers who want to implement the Cittaslow philosophy in their establishments:

- Activities necessary for slow tourism visitors should be carried out, and the cooperation of local people should be ensured after determining the applicability of Cittaslow approach. Local population should be encouraged to participate in the Cittaslow movement.
- Projects which focus on and emphasize the economic, cultural and social benefits to be derived from Cittaslow philosophy should be undertaken to inform the local population of these opportunities.
- Training should be provided to build awareness and skills necessary for the processes and procedures involved in Cittaslow philosophy.
- Infrastructure should be improved, especially the infrastructure necessary for slow tourism.
- Food and beverage vendors which represent the authentic nature of the region and where regional dishes are promoted and served to visitors should be established on the basis of Slow Food philosophy.
- The awareness of locals and visitors should be raised in order to prevent damage to the historical and cultural environment, the carrying capacity of the region should be determined under sustainable principles, and local governments and non-governmental organizations should cooperate against adverse environmental effects caused by tourism.
- Foreign and domestic promotions should be made more effective through an effective web design.
- Festivals or events devoted to the region should be organized.
- It is expected that domestic and foreign visitors will in the future prefer greener, more serene, and more natural destinations where they can easily find the values stated in the basic principles of Cittaslow, and they feel healthy, relaxed and secure. “Counseling” and “orienting” approaches rather than “prevention” should be adopted in legislations; wine laws and vineyard register should be introduced and local authorities should be supported in their endeavors towards sustainability.

- In respect to structure of tourism, “nonindustrial” scale and types should be subjected to a different set of rules different from the areas and facilities of mass tourism.
- The success of Cittaslow philosophy depends on effective management and marketing involving the principles of pleasure, rest and hospitality. Public and local authorities, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, universities and professional organizations should cooperate in all practices.

The Cittaslow movement opens a new way to produce, to trade and to consume. The Cittaslow educating the community on shared social responsibility are key players measurable projects to improve the quality of life without never give up social justice and solidarity among people ([www.cittaslow.net/content/philosophy](http://www.cittaslow.net/content/philosophy)). Yedi Bilgeler Winery has a lot in common with the philosophy of Slow Food and Cittaslow and is included in “Cittaslow Friends” to support and help to raise awareness about the Cittaslow movement in Turkey.

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# Financial Analysis of Municipal Sport, Tourism and Cultural Organizations

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**Abstract** The current research analyses the performance of municipal sport, tourism and culture organizations in Laconia, Greece. The evaluation of local authorities is a very important issue, especially given the increasing decentralization in the decision-making process and resource management from the Central Government to local governments and the increasing responsibility of the local authorities to provide effective services to taxpayers. Result of this is the increasing need for effective management of sport, tourism and cultural organizations, which requires the evaluation of their performance. In this study, we perform a primary research regarding the financial analysis of two municipal cultural and sport organizations using financial ratio analysis. Also we provide a literature review regarding the conceptual definition, operation and methodologies of the evaluation of local governments and their entities, especially those regarding culture, tourism and sports. In conclusion, the study shows that, regarding the examined entities, while some ratios are positive, in contrast, other indicators are being considered as negative. Examining and taking into account the above positive and negative elements, it can be concluded that, by improving the planning of the regular (operating) income and expenditures, the negative ratios will be converted to positive, resulting in positive overall performance for both examined entities.

**Keywords** Financial analysis · Sport · Tourism · Culture  
Municipal organizations · Greece

**JEL Classification** M21 · M10

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## 1 Introduction

The evaluation of local authorities is a very important issue, mainly because the financial resources available to local government organizations (LGO) is reduced because of general cuts in public expenditure and also due to the increased participation of the municipalities regarding their activation in social policy areas. The result of the above factors is the increasing need for effective management of local government organizations, which requires the evaluation of their performance. An important aspect of the evaluation is that, through it, organizations achieve accountability, which is a central axis of good governance (Curtin & Dekker, 2005). Also, given that the LGO's are funded by the government—and practically from the citizens-taxpayers money—it is necessary for the public to be informed about the use of these funds and the success of the project that was funded. In this sense, the evaluation is a tool to determine if the proper allocation of capital has been achieved, and whether that distribution maximized the social benefit (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2007).

However, the measurement of economic performance of the LGOs has peculiarities in comparison to the evaluation of private companies, as these organizations are not for profit. There are many reasons why many LGOs exhibit poor economic performance, such as: (a) the fact that they employ more workers than those who really need, (b) there is a lack of employment of skilled human resources in order to meet the requirements of the position and therefore contribute to providing high quality services, (c) the lack of the necessary financial resources to finance the operation of their activities and recruitment of qualified staff mentioned above, (d) the unproductive use of resources and infrastructure and (e) lack of relevant legislation on the mandatory performance assessment (Ahmaro, 2014).

These problems can lead to the provision of reduced quality of services for citizens, as the lack of required resources make it difficult to function, organize initiatives and programs by LGOs, reinforcing the mistrust of citizens regarding the efficiency and quality of services (Schatteman, 2010). Based on the above, the examination and analysis of the economic performance of local authorities in Greece active in the field of culture, tourism and sport, are extremely interesting given the fact that local government organizations required to submit financial statements and controlled on a regular basis in accordance with the fiscal stability program of the Greek economy, which makes it imperative to effectively manage their resources.

According to Bennett and Balfiore (2008), through cultural, tourism and sport activities LGOs motivate citizens to take part on a social evolution which bring significant long-term changes in the way we structure the community itself, and the identity of cities. Cultural policy can have a grid of objectives, which however, should not be regarded as something fixed, but are formed each time in accordance with the broader social, economic, cultural, technological and other conditions. The objectives of the LGOs regarding their activities on cultural issues encompass a series of actions related to a wide range of fields such as: Pluralism, creativity and

innovation, internationalization, redesign the organizational structure of the administration, decentralization, education, social participation, the economic impact of culture and tourism, cultural heritage and many more.

The involvement of LGOs in the field of culture, tourism and sport has significant advantages for local communities. The study of Brown et al. (2001) is indicative of the importance of the involvement of the public in the issue of social cohesion. According to the findings of this study, providing preventive integrated care by local authorities, including sports programs and creative activities for children, led to a significant improvement in social cohesion, and there was a decrease by 15% per year for families in need of social welfare benefits. Also, as stated by Torjman and Leviten-Reid (2003), the activity of the municipalities in these areas result in a significant increase in social cohesion. Especially for Greece tourism is an important source of income and wealth (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2014). Cultural tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing global tourism markets. The field of culture is increasingly used to promote tourist destinations and enhance the competitiveness and attractiveness of the regions (Ivanovich, 2008). A basic element with respect to the attractiveness of the area and the tourist attraction is the creation of the brand of the region.

As for tourism, the existence of the brand is one of the key elements, both at regional level and at country level (Murphy, 1992). Through the brand of a tourism destination, the destination becomes immediately an “identity”, therefore, it is easy to reach the right market segment that actually targets (Middleton et al., 2009). To the extent that the provided outcome has the same quality as that expected by the public, it therefore can obtain the position desired in the tourism market. Conversely, without the creation of a brand, a tourist destination will not be able to focus on the development of comparative advantages, resulting in waste of resources, without the desired effect (Middleton et al., 2009).

As Pereira, Correia and Schutz (2012) report, tourists seeking to gain experience through special features that each destination has to offer, and these features are part of the brand and the site identity. According to Wheeler et al. (2011) the place branding (i.e. the creation of “identity” of the area) requires a holistic perspective, as it is a reflection of the complexity of local values, local culture and identity of the area. This means that creating a brand in the region requires a more comprehensive approach regarding values—social, cultural, historical, geographical, environmental, economic, symbolic and spiritual—governing a community and the elements that will help to create a tourist experience. The emphasis on the values of the local community as a core component of place branding stems from the fact that residents of the area of destination should be able to transmit to tourists these values, which would contribute significantly to the creation of their experience (Wheeler et al., 2011).

Greece is a country that can really build a brand that is linked to culture, tourism and sport, consequently, through the reinforcement of cultural, tourism and sports activities, LGOs can achieve the acquisition of an identity that is absolutely relevant to both the history of the areas—since all regions of Greece have direct reference to

culture and sport- and to the broader goals of municipalities associated with economic development. Nevertheless, in order to achieve the abovementioned goals LGOs need to incorporate a sound managerial framework that will allow them to measure, monitor and improve their performance, while using efficiently their scarce resources.

The purpose of this research is to study the economic performance and efficiency of LGOs in the prefecture of Lakonia in southern Greece, mainly because Laconia is active in the fields of culture, tourism and sports for many decades. The objectives of this research are to identify and establish the economic status of sport, tourism and culture organizations that have been selected as the subject of this investigation. Also, to identify any deficiencies and factors in these organizations which contribute to poor economic performance since this may limit their profitability and viability. Through the analysis of the financial statements of these entities we will be able to highlight any financial problems that exist, and the ways in which they could be overcome in order to increase the flow of funds not directly related to the state budget. The results of this research may be useful both to the specific legal entities and other municipalities involved in the respective sectors, along with the central governments which fund and monitor LGOs.

The significance and contribution of this research lies in the following factors: at first, the fact that the reduction of funds from the state budget to local authorities, in particular due to the economic crisis experienced by the country creates a unique setting of a natural experiment for examining the financial performance of LGOs during a period of financial turmoil (Cohen et al., 2012), in conjunction with the policy decision of the Government in recent years to impose dramatic cuts to municipalities, is imperative for LGOs to find other resources to meet their financing needs. Secondly, the need for enhanced reporting and accountability on behalf of local authorities, (Cohen et al., 2012) is another important reason that makes this research significant and especially the lack of similar studies in the literature, focusing on specific legal entities of local governments active in the fields of culture, tourism and sport. This study adds to the growing literature on financial performance of public and local government organizations which operate within an environment of reduced funding by the state as a result of the economic crisis, structural and organizational problems and the lack of clear performance measurement models and performance evaluation methods active on these organizations (Salazar et al., 2013).

The rest of the paper is structured as follows: The second section provides a literature review on financial performance measurement on public organizations and specifically on LGOs. The third section discusses the data selection procedure and the research design of the study. The fourth section discusses the results and main findings, while the final section concludes the paper.

## 2 Literature Review

Over the years, the concept of public administration began to be inherent in the concept of management, as formulated in the academic and practical framework of business administration. The theory of “New Public Management” was spread especially after the beginning of 1980. In the context of New Public Administration was given particular emphasis to objectives (Barzelay, 2002; Stillman, 2010). So the main concern was whether the objectives should be separated, as a concept and as a function of the administration of a public organization from that of a private organization. Since a public body exists and operates mainly on the basis of the revenue generated by taxation, taxpayers must be informed or even control the efficiency of its operation and the produced result. In this analytical framework, special emphasis was given to ensure a framework under which public institutions will set goals and commit on achieving them. Thus, the principles of public administration increasingly incorporated the existence of profitability and productivity objectives, especially when the public finances of the country were downgrading. As noted by Welch and Bretschneider (1999), the increase of budget deficits has led to an increasing demand for greater profitability and sustainability of public organizations. This combined with the view that, being assured of continued funding, administrators of public institutions do not take account of risks with the same weight regarding the use and allocation of funds, as managers of private enterprises (Nutt, 2005).

Of course, on the other hand, it is impossible to have a rational and effective management of a public body—for example, a cultural or sport organization without proper financial planning (Byrnes, 2009). Through the financial planning, organizations can determine how many resources are needed, where they will be absorbed and how much they will cost (Dimitropoulos et al., 2017). The provision of social services, in the case of a public organization, funded by the citizens of the country, or residents of a city, although should not have the reference point of the classic economic concept of “customer-consumer”, but that of citizenship and thus promoting citizens’ standard of living, since the existence of that organization’s is based on the citizens’ contributions. Thus, the financial planning of a public organization aims to fulfill its mission, to the extent permitted by the availability of resources. In this way, the broad strategic and operational planning should be designed so that it can create revenue streams for the organization allowing it to fulfill its mission (Byrnes, 2009). Thus, in the exercise of their administrative functions and fiduciary duties, LGO managers should consider ways in which they can increase its efficiency by redesigning the way in which social policy is exercised within restrictions of economic efficiency, in order to achieve the fundamental objective of providing social goods (in this case, sports and culture), accessible to the public without discrimination.

The evaluation of local authorities is a very important issue, in particular because of increasing decentralization in decision-making, resource management and allocation, and the increasing responsibility of LGOs to provide more effective services



to taxpayers (Cohen et al., 2012). The result of this environment is the increasing need for effective management of an organization, which requires the evaluation of its performance (Kloviene & Valanciene, 2013). Assessing the performance of a local government is very important as it affects the decision-making process, organization and management of programs and initiatives, and the improvement of the services offered by these institutions (Ammons & Rivenbark, 2008). Additionally, the performance evaluation of LGOs is especially important, as this will enforce accountability to citizens regarding the allocation and management of public resources thus justifying the use of money that people pay through national and municipal taxes (Cohen et al., 2012; Salazar and de Arkos Martínez, 2013; Dimitropoulos et al., 2017). This is directly related to the notion of accountability, both at the economic and the political level (Rivenbark & Kelly, 2006).

One of the most widespread methods of evaluation of LGOs is financial ratio analysis. Turley et al. (2015), identify as the dominant method for evaluating the performance of local authorities (municipalities, communities, districts) the analysis of their financial statements. In their study they determined the following economic indicators as vital factors of LGOs economic evaluation: (a) liquidity ratios, which measure whether municipalities have the necessary liquidity to meet their obligations, (b) autonomy indicators, which measure whether the municipalities have the opportunity to fulfill their obligations without the financial contribution of the Government budget, (c) indicators of economic efficiency, which measure the economic effect of municipal activities, (d) collection efficiency indicators, which measure the extent to which municipalities levy municipal taxes and (e) solvency indicators, which measure the ability of repayment of municipal loans.

One of the greatest aspects of the policy pursued by LGOs is whether the resources allocated actually generate a positive effect on the economy and society. Thus, the attention of LGOs and researchers' turned to redesign the way budgeting was performed and objectives were achieved (Hood, 1995). Thus, many analysts consider the performance of the LGOs budget based not by the financial result but based on the budgeting process itself, arguing that the mere introduction of performance metrics is not enough, (Rivenbark & Kelly, 2006). Therefore, researchers express the view that in order the evaluation to be beneficial and objective it should be based on program budgets, since with this way the evaluation will be made based on the stated objectives. In program budgets, costs and revenues are classified by program and not per organization. The programs are designed with pillars and medium-term strategic planning of the central government. The aim of the program budgets are, on the one hand the optimal allocation of resources and on the other to achieve the best result on the basis of available funds, based on the three pillars which are effectiveness, productivity and efficiency (Sudit, 1996; Vraniali, 2010).

### 3 Data Selection and Research Design

The sample includes accounting data from two LGOs annual financial statements (budgets, balance sheets and accounts) for the financial years 2011, 2012 and 2013. These data come from the Legal Entity of Solidarity and Sport “Nikiforos Brettakos” of Evrotas City and the Legal Entity SPC-Solidarity, Culture, Tourism and Sports of Monemvasia City, both of them located in the prefecture of Lakonia in Northern Greece. The data were hand collected after contacting and mailing a written request to President and Board of Directors of each legal entity by the researchers.

The research method used in this study is based on the work by Turley et al. (2015) who measured the economic evaluation of LGOs in Ireland. The reasons for the choice of this specific model are first of all, the fact that the economic assessment is the most critical parameter for the continuation of an organization’s activities. Without the economic evaluation, the LGOs will not be able to have knowledge on the progress of their economic indicators and therefore will not be able to structure their long-term planning. The second reason for the choice of this specific model is that it is based on financial data, which are measurable and thus objective. The objective evaluation gives the analyst the ability to restrict at the maximum extent the prejudices and bias that exists in an evaluation with subjective criteria. The third reason for the choice of the model is that the financial data have, under the current Greek political and economic reality of local government organizations, a central role. The LGOs resources are limited, therefore the money paid by the LGOs to their entities and organizations should take into account the efficiency regarding the use of these funds. Consequently, the financial indicators that will be used in this study cover the following areas of interest:

#### I. Liquidity

According to Turley et al. (2015), liquidity is an indication that and LGO can pay its current liabilities without having to sell their assets or resolve to extra borrowing. So in this study we will utilize the general liquidity ratio, which is estimated as:  $\text{Current assets/Current liabilities}$ .

#### II. Autonomy

Autonomy indicates whether the LGO can operate and fund its activities on the basis of its own generated revenues, without relying on subsidy from the central government budget. The autonomy indicator is derived by the ratio:  $\text{Income from own resources/Total revenues}$ .

#### III. Operational efficiency

The operational efficiency is referred to the use of revenues and the development of costs, and is assessed from three ratios:

- Operating result, this shows whether the LGO operates with a deficit or surplus and is derived from the formula:  $\text{Operating (regular) revenues—Expenses}$ .

- The functional efficiency per capita, showing how much deficit or surplus corresponds to each resident (citizen) of the municipality and is derived from the formula: Operating result (operating revenues—expenses)/Number of municipality residents.
- The operating result to total revenues ratio, which indicates whether the operating result corresponds to the total revenue derived from the formula: Operating result (operating revenues—expenses)/Total revenue.

#### IV. Solvency

The solvency shows the organization's ability to repay short-term obligations. In the study we incorporate the the following indicators:

- Total liabilities to total revenues measures how many times the total revenue covers the total liabilities and thus indicates the ability of the LGO to repay its obligations.
- The total liabilities to assets ratio, measures how many times the total assets cover total liabilities.
- Total equity to assets ratio, which measures how many times the total equity, covers total assets.

## 4 Results

Table 1 presents the financial ratios of the legal entity for solidarity, culture, tourism and sport of the city of Monemvasia. Regarding the current assets to current liabilities ratio in 2013 stands at 10.77, while in 2012 and 2011 was 7.32 and 14.70 respectively. For the total period of three years it was recorded a decrease of 26.75%, a decrease of 50.23% between 2011–2012 and an increase of 47.18% between 2012–2013. Concerning the own funds to total revenues, the ratio in 2013 stands at 0.59, an increase of 80.9% from 2012 and an overall increase in the three years up to 2.92%. Regarding the ratio of operating revenue minus expenses, while in 2011 the index was positive as ordinary revenues exceeded current expenditure, in 2012 experienced a significant reduction of regular income, by about 228,000 euros (536969.5 in 2011 to 308679.85 in 2012), which was not accompanied by a reduction in ordinary expenses, but instead accompanied by an increase by about 302425.94 euros. Although regular income almost doubled in 2013, yet ordinary expenses exceeded revenues thus recording a negative sign for a second consecutive year.

Regarding the operating efficiency ratio per resident, meaning the deficit or surplus of the entity for each resident of the municipality, in 2013 a deficit of 4.3 euro was recorded which was reduced compared to 2012 amounting to 14.81 euro per inhabitant. In 2011, the entity recorded surplus of 9.05 euro per inhabitant. Regarding the ratio of operating result to total revenues, for both years 2012 and

**Table 1** Financial ratios of the legal entity SPC-solidarity, culture and sports of Monemvasia city

Ratios	2011	2012	2013	% Difference 2011–2012	% Difference 2012–2013
Current assets/current liabilities	14.70	7.32	10.77	-50.23	47.18
Income from own resources/total revenues	0.57	0.33	0.59	-42.88	80.19
Operating (regular) revenues—expenses	201360.46	-329355.13	-96296.78	-263.56	-70.76
Operating result (operating revenues—expenses)/number of municipality residents	9.05	-14.81	-4.33	-263.56	-70.76
Operating result (operating revenues—expenses)/total revenue	0.25	-0.35	-0.09	-237.70	-72.98
Total liabilities/total revenues	0.04	0.04	0.03	12.32	-33.08
Total liabilities/total assets	0.05	0.09	0.06	61.54	-37.34
Total equity/total assets	0.58	0.77	0.69	32.01	-10.20

2013 the entity recorded a negative sign, while in 2011 the ratio stood at 0.25. In total for the whole period the index records a decrease of 137.20%. The ratio of total liabilities to total revenue, for all years of investigation is essentially close to zero, since the 2011 and 2012 liabilities accounted for 4% of total revenue and in 2013 accounted for 3% of total revenue. With respect to the ratio of liabilities to total assets, in 2013 the obligations represented the 6% of total assets, while in 2012 they represented the 9% of total assets while in 2011 only 5% of its assets indicating that the organization was under-leveraged. Finally, regarding the equity to assets ratio, in 2013 equity accounted for 69% of total assets, while in 2012 and 2011 the percentages were 77 and 58% respectively.

Table 2 presents the financial results of the legal entity of Solidarity and Sport “Nikiforos Brettakos” of Evrotas City. Regarding the liquidity ratio we can see extremely strong fluctuations, since in 2011–2012 the index changed from a negative sign of 97.71% and in 2012–2013 increased by 275.92%. Regarding the ratio of income from own resources to total revenue, also it recorded large fluctuations, with a decrease of 169.41% in 2011–2012 and an increase by 336.44% over the period 2012–2013. Regarding the index of regular revenues minus expenses, we can see a reduction due to the very large increase in costs, both in 2012 and 2013, with the index recording a cumulative three-year decrease of 494.45%.

**Table 2** Financial ratios of the legal entity of solidarity and sport “Nikiforos Brettakos” of Evrotas city

Ratios	2011	2012	2013	% Differene 2011–2012	% Difference 2012–2013
Current assets/ current liabilities	73.79	1.69	6.34	-97.71	275.92
Income from own resources/total revenues	0.22	-0.15	0.36	-169.41	336.44
Operating (regular) revenues—expenses	48399.39	-744328.26	-190909.13	-1637.89	-74.35
Operating result (operating revenues —expenses)/number of municipality residents	2.73	-41.92	-10.75	-1637.89	-74.35
Operating result (operating revenues —expenses)/total revenue	0.05	-0.73	-0.15	-1485.51	-80.16
Total liabilities/total revenues	0.01	0.04	0.04	317.09	14.73
Total liabilities/total assets	0.01	0.05	0.07	306.53	46.34
Total equity/total assets	0.80	0.87	0.67	8.55	-22.62

Regarding the operating result per capita, in 2011 there was a surplus of 2.73 euros, while in 2012 a large deficit of 41.92 euro per person was recorder. The deficit narrowed in 2013, reaching 10.75 euro per capita. The ratio of operating result to total revenues recorded a sharp decline for the three years at 374.84%, due to the fact that in 2012 a deficit was recorded in the operating result and the same for 2013. Total liabilities cover a very small percentage of total revenues, 4% for 2013, although the index shows an increase of 378.53% over the three years under investigation. These obligations, which are all short-term, comprise the 7% of assets in 2013. Although the index growth rate is very high, at 494.91% over the three years, the liabilities are more than adequately covered by the total assets, thus this organization as the previous one is characterized by low leverage. Equity represents the 67% of total assets in 2013. However, we recorded a decrease of this ratio by 16% over the three years, which is due to the decrease in equity in 2013.

## 5 Conclusion

Based on the analysis, we recorded mixed results regarding the economic evaluation of legal entities of the examined municipalities. Both organizations have increased costs, reflecting the greater activation in the issues of culture and sport. However, during 2012 and 2013 both entities record negative signs on the index of regular income minus ordinary expenses, which raises concerns about whether these organizations will be able to provide the same quality services to their citizens in the long term. Positive elements in both entities are that the short-term costs are outweighed by the total revenue, as in the case of the municipality of Monemvasia, short-term liabilities in 2013 are close to 6% of total revenue, while the respective ratio for the organization “Nikiforos Brettakos” of city of Evrotas for 2013 was 7% of total revenue. Also, both organizations are significantly under-leveraged. The results of the operating efficiency ratio per inhabitant, both organizations in 2012 and 2013 recorded a negative operating efficiency. To address this deficit, LGO can increase municipal taxes in order to finance the organizations to continue to provide the same quality services, or alternatively organizations have to reduce their expenses, with a corresponding cut in their activities.

The decision on the selection of the first or second alternative is multidimensional, and should take into account the additional benefits—which are not only in cash and may be recorded in the short term from the activities on culture and sport and their contribution to local societies. For example, an important benefit of cultural and sporting activity of LGOs to their citizens is to strengthen the ties of citizens by promoting the participation of citizens in social and economic life (Ogilvie, 2000). At the same time, these areas of sport and culture enhance the employment (European Commission, 1998; Kloosterman, 2004), increase the competitiveness of the region compared to other regions (Dziembowska-Kowalska & Funck, 2000) and enhance acceptance of diversity and intercultural dialogue (European Union, 2014). Also, as stated by Turner and Senior (2000) and Daykin et al. (2008) cultural activities have a positive impact on public health.

Therefore, precisely because of the great social importance of functioning of LGOs, the main focus should be on how to make better use of resources and even how to find new resources. A point of concern relates to the major changes occurring in some accounts, such as the regular income of LGOs. The large changes in regular income reduces the ability of LGOs to carry out long-term planning, since it will be difficult to predict future financial results and the inflow of funds on time. Additionally, the large variability in regular income creates correspondingly large variability in the operating efficiency ratio and the operating result per inhabitant, making it difficult to draw conclusions on the performance of these indicators. An important element that is also demonstrated in the study is that in both cities the main source of income is government funding. However, due to budgetary restrictions since 2010, the amounts of state funding have declined. At this point it should be emphasized that the reduction of public funds to cultural institutions is not just a Greek phenomenon, but is recorded in many countries, with the onset of

the economic crisis (Moldoveanu and Ioan-Franc, 2011). Due to the continuing economic crisis in Greece, if there is a possible further reduction of state funding there will be a higher reduction of the total revenue of LGOs, since the replenishment of the amount of income that will come from their own resources might not be sufficient. To address this possibility, the municipalities and the management teams of LGOs should seek new revenue sources in order to continue funding their entities and strengthen their activities. In this direction, the entities examined in the study may consider the issue of sponsorship as a potential source of additional revenues not related to the state budget or implementing alternative performance management techniques (Dimitropoulos et al., 2017).

In an overview, looking and taking into account the above positive and negative elements of the organizations under study, it can be concluded that by improving the planning of the influx of regular income and controlling of expenditure, negative ratios will be converted to positive, resulting to an improvement of the overall positive economic assessment of both examined entities. It should be noted that the findings of this study are based on a limited sample of two LGOs. Therefore, it is important to have relevant studies within other municipalities in Greece, in order to determine the degree of validity of the conclusions of this study. The municipalities in Greece have significant variations in the number of residents, their demographic and economic profile, their proximity to large urban centers, etc. Consequently, these factors constitute an important area of research so as to examine whether the degree of efficiency of legal entities of municipalities, whose purpose lies within culture and sports, are differentiated on the basis of these features. An equally important direction for future research is the parallel examination of the degree of efficiency of the culture, tourism and sports organizations of the municipalities and the degree of citizens' satisfaction derived from the services that those organizations offer. Through this analysis it can be observed if and whether there is a correlation and connection of the degree of satisfaction of the citizens with the financial performance of those entities.

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# Marine Animals' Ethology as a New Product in Recreational SCUBA Diving Market

George Skoufas, Anastasia Tsirika and Christian Michel

**Abstract** Recreational SCUBA diving market is a rapidly developing industry, which during the last years focuses among others in the observation of marine fauna and flora. An innovative approach towards this direction is to study whether animal, and particularly fish behaviour, can contribute to the development of SCUBA diving tourism. The principal two axes of the current survey were the enhancement of SCUBA diving safety (via the promotion of shallow waters biocommunities) and the marine life protection (via environmental awareness). The two study areas are located in Chalkidiki peninsula (Greece, North Aegean Sea). The preliminary part of this study demonstrated a non significant difference between males and females regarding their age, their diving experience (training level and hours of diving) and their diving preferences (depth and type of sea bottom). Nesting and agonistic behavior of three Labridae fish (*Symphodus ocellatus*, *Symphodus cinereus*, *Xyrichthys novacula*) were used as motivation factors in the three testing hypotheses. Among those three hypotheses, diving in shallow rocky bottom aiming at the observation of *Symphodus ocellatus* seems to be the most attractive for the divers. As a general remark, briefing is a very useful tool that can inform, but also orientate the customers. Additionally, the very poor knowledge of Mediterranean undersea wildlife, especially by the recreational SCUBA diving staff should be mentioned. As a conclusion, the current approach can be used for the enhancement

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of SCUBA diving product (i.e. promotion of specialties such as Fish Identification) or increase of SCUBA diving equipment (i.e. underwater cameras).

**Keywords** SCUBA diving · Marine tourism · Fish ethology

**JEL Classification** Z39

## 1 Introduction—Literature Review

Ethology constitutes a dynamic branch of Biology science that studies the animal behavior (reproductive, agonistic, feeding, etc.). In order to understand Ethology's aims, the most appropriate approach is to use the definition of one of the pioneers, N. Tinbergen that said: "...the science (ethology) is characterized by an observable phenomenon (behavior or movement), and by a type of approach, a method of study (the biological method) (Tinbergen, 1963). The study of ethology has multiple applications, as we will see in the present study.

Labridae fish family includes species which have been from the most studied behaviors in Mediterranean Sea. As the main source for the briefing demonstration, we used the previous investigation of Michel, Lejeune, and Voss (1987).

Recreational SCUBA diving market appears as one of the most dynamic sectors of marine tourism. Previous studies identified SCUBA diving as one of the world's fastest growing sports, with dive travel being a growing aspect of the sport (Dingam, 1990; Tababa, 1992).

In the general term of recreational diving three branches are included: SCUBA diving, free diving and snorkeling. Actually, the integrated aspect of "recreational SCUBA diving phenomenon" under the term of SCUBA Diving Tourism System (SDTS) has four principal axes: (a) the marine environment, (b) the SCUBA divers, (c) the SCUBA diving industry, d) the host community (Dimmock & Musa, 2015). However, it is very important to promote the marine environment (the potential product) under the clients (recreational divers) perceptions (Ince & David Bowen, 2011).

Large scale recreational SCUBA diving does not only increase the economic revenues in diving industry but it also increases the potential impact on the marine environment. The main impacts on marine environment concern benthic ecosystems. In particular, these effects can be summarized in contact with fins, with the diver himself, or with his equipment. Among these three cases, the most significant concerns contact with the fins (flapping) (Luna, Valle Pérez, & Sánchez-Lizaso, 2009). However, the majority of studies on SCUBA diving impacts on the marine ecosystems concerns sedentary benthic communities and not the related to benthos fish (Di Franco, Millazo, Baiata, Tomasello, & Chemello, 2009; Terrón-Sigler, León-Muez, Peñalver-Duque, & Torre, 2016).

It is a fact that recreational divers interact with fish either simply by their presence or by offering food, which is a bad habit that happens often in diving tourist resorts (Di Franco, Baiata, & Millazo, 2013). In some cases fish seem to be

familiar with the presence of divers and they exhibit an alternate behavior (Titus, Daly, & Exton, 2015).

The dynamic recreational SCUBA diving market needs to satisfy the demand for new products. Additionally, it is of a great priority to minimize the environmental impact of the divers' presence. It is important to keep in mind the necessity of a financial support for the MPAs (Marine Protected Areas), and in this case recreational SCUBA diving could be an economic resource (Rees et al., 2015).

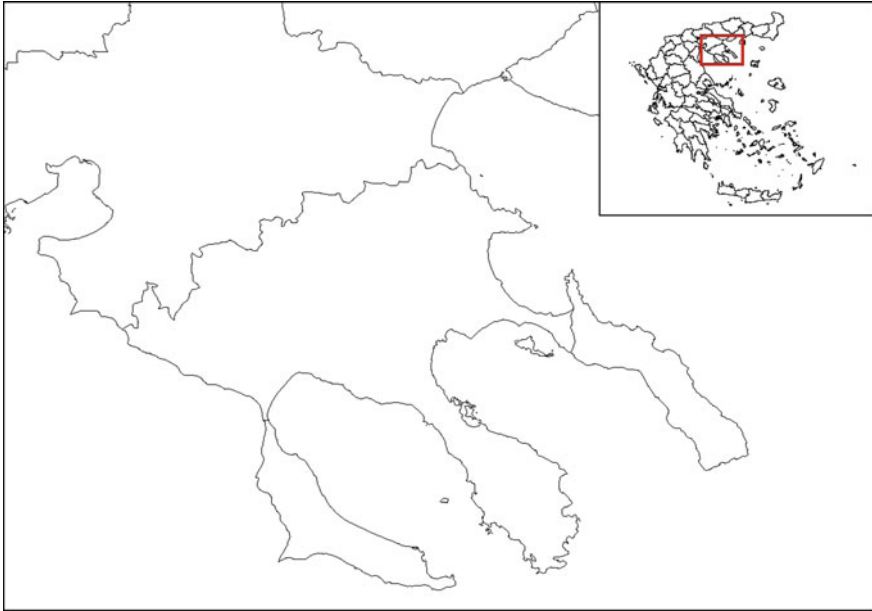
Two potential ways are adopted in order to minimize the environmental impact of SCUBA divers. The first one is to create an artificial environment in the context of the idea of reducing the pressure in the corresponding natural environment. Approaches of this order of idea are the artificial reefs (Saragih, 2016). Under the general term of "artificial reefs", different structures are included and satisfy divers' preference: Designer reefs (1.5%), Metal and limestone (biorock) (0.5%), Breakwalls (1%), Piers, jetties or platforms (3%), Rubber tyres (0%), Shipwrecks (76.5%), Concrete domed modules (0%), Cars or airplanes (2%) (Kirkbride-Smith, Wheeler, & Johnson, 2013). The second concerns the training of recreational divers through the briefing procedure.

The aim of the present study is to investigate two different aspects regarding the enhancement of SCUBA diving market in combination with the protection of natural resources and biodiversity. The first one focuses on how attractive "fish watching" can be as a new SCUBA diving product. The second one is to examine if fish observation can act as a new motivation and change the divers' preferences (regarding depth and substratum). In both cases the main tool is fish ethology of Labridae family representatives. The three species involved in the current survey are *Symphodus cinereus*, *Symphodus ocellatus* and *Xyrichthys novacula*.

## 2 Methodology

The current survey is an attempt to investigate whether the science of ethology could be a powerful tool in marine tourism service. The experimental part took place in two different locations in Chalkidiki region (Fig. 1) via the completion of questionnaires. Divers that received and completed the research questionnaires came from SEA WORLD diving center in Sani (Kassandra, Chalkidiki), which constitutes one of the larger diving centers operating in this important tourist resort. The research dives took place in Kalogria beach (Sithonia, Chalkidiki). It is an area where there exist no particular tourist development (hotel units), and could be described as a beach bathers. This location is a diving destination for many recreational divers. Also this area is a part of NATURA 2000 network. Kalogria beach is an excellent biotope in which various marine organisms can be observed. Among all others, in this area, it is possible to observe the reproductive behavior of many organisms.

Under the frame of the current survey, three fish types were selected. The basic criteria for selecting the fish were: (a) easy specific determination; (b) type of



**Fig. 1** Peninsula of Chalkidiki, North Aegean Sea, Greece

substrate where they live; (c) relatively small observation depths (within the open water diver limit, <18 m). The three fish species selected in this study are the following:

- (a) *Symphodus ocellatus* is an impressive fish. It is recorded at depths of no more than 10 m on rocky substrate. Special emphasis was given in the nesting process.
- (b) *Symphodus cinereus* lives on soft substrate (sandy). Its observation took place at depths of up to 5 m. As in the previous case, observation focused on the reproductive behavior and the nesting process.
- (c) *Xyrichthys novacula* lives on soft substrate (sandy) and although it does not show nesting behavior, its reproductive behavior is interesting and can be observed.

The structure of the questionnaires included the following axes:

- (a) Diver's personal characteristics: gender, age, diving experience (diving license).
- (b) Diver's preferences: depth, type of substrate.
- (c) Checklist before and after the diving briefing

The data were collected during the first two weeks of July 2014.

The two main questions were:

The information on *Symphodus ocellatus* changed the diver preference for deep diving on hard substrate to diving in shallow waters, also on hard substrate?

The briefing on *Symphodus cinereus* and *Xyrichthys novacula* changed the recreational divers' preferences concerning the depth and the substratum type?

### 3 Results

First of all, it is very significant to know the synthesis of the target group. In the present study our target group is recreational SCUBA divers. A preliminary investigation demonstrated that the majority of recreational divers are foreigners (Table 1), which represent 94.44% (187 divers) of the population, and only 5.56% (11 divers/only 2 women) are locals. The divers profile is of particular interest.

To determine the divers profile we focused on their gender and age. The age classes that we divided the sampling population were based on the following criteria: (a) 10–16: the age of the 10 is the entry level age in the recreational SCUBA diving and the 16 is the limit of the junior open water diving, (b) 17–25: the age of the “young-student” divers, (c) 26–35: the young employees and the “new family”, (d) 36–55: the senior employees, (e) 56–...: the third age of the divers. The results are shown in Table 2. Using as a criterion the age of the divers, the population of men and women does not differ significantly from one another ( $\chi^2, p > 0.05$ ). The two most important age classes for both locals and foreigners are those aged 17–25 and 26–35 (represent more than 50% of both sexes).

The two criteria that characterize the divers experience are given in Table 3. The first one is the divers training level: Open Water SCUBA divers, Advanced SCUBA divers, Rescue divers and Divemasters. The second criterion concerns the number of diving hours (Table 3). As we can see in the table, both women and men divers

**Table 1** Divers' profile: gender and origin

Local divers (11, 11.56%)		Foreign divers (187, 94.44%)	
Females	Males	Females	Males
3 (27.27%)	8 (72.73%)	21 (11.23%)	166 (88.77%)

**Table 2** Divers' profile: age classes

Divers' profile		
Age of the divers (years) ( $\chi^2$ -test, $p > 0.05$ )		
	Men	Women
10–16	8 (4.57%)	1 (4.17%)
17–25	42 (24.00%)	5 (20.83%)
26–35	68 (38.86%)	16 (66.67%)
36–55	44 (25.14%)	2 (8.33%)
>55	13 (7.43%)	0 (0%)

**Table 3** Divers' experience: training level and dives' hours

Divers' experience		
Training level ( $\chi^2, p > 0.05$ )		
	Men	Women
I (Open water diver)	89 (50.86%)	12 (50.00%)
II (Advance Open Water diver)	26 (14.86%)	7 (29.17%)
III (Rescue Diver)	37 (21.14%)	3 (12.50%)
IV (Divemaster)	23 (13.14%)	2 (8.33%)
Number of dives' hours ( $\chi^2, p > 0.05$ )		
	Men	Women
<50	138 (78.86%)	19 (79.17%)
51–100	30 (17.14%)	5 (20.83%)
>101	7 (4.00%)	0 (0%)

have low level of training (open water divers and advanced open water divers) (about 50% of both sex belong in this classes). Females and males divers did not exhibit significant statistical difference ( $\chi^2, p > 0.05$ ).

As previously mentioned, the second criterion of diving experience is the number of diving hours. In total, we divided the population into three categories according to the number of hours: (a) < 50 h, (b) 51 h to 100 h and (c) > 101 h. The results are presented in Table 3, and as we can see, more than 70% belong to the category with less than 50 h of dive in their assets. The two groups (males and females) do not exhibit statistically significant differences ( $\chi^2, p > 0.05$ ). Compared to the level of education, it is interesting to mention that in some cases low training level divers have a higher number of diving hours than divers with a high training level.

As a general conclusion emerging from both the training level and the diving hours, the group could be described as occasional divers, who only dive during the holiday period.

The divers preferences were examined by using two potential criteria: depth and type of substrate (sea bottom). The depth classes used in the current survey were: (a) < 10 m is the depth of the discover SCUBA (introduction in SCUBA); (b) 11–18 m, 18 m is the depth limit in open water training level, (c) 18–30 m the usual depth of recreational diving, and (d) 30–40 m, 40 m are the maximum allowed depth in recreational diving. The results are presented in Table 4 and we do not distinguish statistically significant differences between male and female divers ( $\chi^2, p > 0.05$ ). It is particularly important to notice that diving in shallow waters is not the first preference of divers who participated in this survey. Less than 50% of the asked divers prefer to dive in shallow waters (<18 m depth).

Besides depth, an equally important element is the substrate morphology. In many cases, morphology of the bottom plays a key role in selecting a site as a diving destination. Under the frame of the current survey we have chosen to distinguish the sea bottom in two broad general categories: hard substrate (rocky) and

**Table 4** Divers' preferences regarding depth and type of substratum

Dive area typology		
Depth (m) ( $\chi^2, p > 0.05$ )		
	Men	Women
<10	12 (6.86%)	4 (16.67%)
11–18	62 (35.43%)	8 (33.33%)
19–30	75 (42.86%)	8 (33.33%)
31–40	26 (14.86%)	4 (16.67%)
Type of substratum ( $\chi^2, p > 0.05$ )		
	Men	Women
Rocky	167 (95.43%)	19 (79.17%)
Sandy	8 (4.57%)	5 (20.83%)

soft substrate (sandy). As shown in Table 4, almost all divers prefer the hard substrate. We also didn't notice statistically significant differences between men and women regarding their preferences ( $\chi^2, p > 0.05$ ).

The above results were of a great importance in order to understand how the profile of the divers sample. Generally, men and women could be considered as a single group in terms of their preferences. They prefer to dive in moderate to deep depths and on hard substrate, and generally could be considered as occasional divers.

The sample group of divers, as elaborated by the above criteria, was divided into two subgroups: (a) the first subgroup did not receive the briefing process and this group was designated as a control group; and (b) the second subgroup followed a briefing procedure related to the three fish species.

Three distinct marine environments were examined, combining in each case a thematic subject: (a) shallow water-rocky bottom with *Symphodus ocellatus*, (b) deep water-sandy substrate with *Xyrichthys novacula*, (c) shallow water—sandy substrate with *Symphodus cinereus*.

The first hypothesis concerned divers who like to dive in hard substrate bottoms. In particular, we investigated the hypothesis if these divers would change preferences and choose to dive in shallow waters (i.e. >10 m) with rocky substrate. In this order of idea, they were informed about the nesting behavior of *Symphodus ocellatus*. The briefing procedure lasted 10 min. The results of the divers response are given in Table 5, and the statistical test showed that the two groups (divers that followed the related briefing and divers without briefing) differ considerably from one another ( $\chi^2$  test,  $p < 0.000$ ). Indicative of the impact of this demo dive is that 12 of the divers who attended the dive have asked to repeat it, while 14 said they would buy an underwater camera because of what they observed underwater.

**Table 5** Divers' response to the briefing procedure regarding *symphodus ocellatus* observation

Symphodus ocellatus observation ( $\chi^2, p < 0.001$ )		
	No briefing	Briefing
Shallow dive on rocky bottom	7 (12.28%)	38 (76.00%)
Deep dive on rocky bottom	52 (91.23%)	12 (24.17%)



**Table 6** Divers' response to the briefing procedure regarding *xyrichthys novacula* observation

<i>Xyrichthys novacula</i> observation ( $\chi^2$ , $p < 0.05$ )		
	No briefing	Briefing
Deep dive on sandy bottom	1 (2.70%)	7 (17.95%)
Deep dive on rocky bottom	36 (97.30%)	32 (82.05%)

**Table 7** Divers' response to the briefing procedure regarding *symphodus cinereus* observation

<i>Symphodus cinereus</i> observation ( $\chi^2$ , $p < 0.005$ )		
	No briefing	Briefing
Shallow dive on sandy bottom	3 (6.12%)	14 (30.43%)
Deep dive on rocky bottom	46 (93.88%)	32 (69.57%)

In general, as the preliminary results showed, recreational divers prefer scuba diving to deep depths and hard substrates. In the present study, we attempted to investigate whether divers would dive at the same significant depths, but on a soft substrate. The maximum depth was the limit of the open water diver level (first level of training, max depth <18 m). In this case, the motivation given to the recreational divers was 10 min diving briefing on the reproductive behavior of *Xyrichthys novacula*. As in the previous case, divers were divided into two distinct groups, depending on whether they received diving briefing or not. The results presented in Table 6 showed a statistically significant difference between the two groups ( $\chi^2$  test,  $p < 0.05$ ).

In the third hypothesis we attempted to combine two key features of the diving area that most divers generally do not like: shallow depth and sandy bottom. In order to motivate the divers, a diving briefing (10 min) on the nesting behavior of another fish of the Labridae family, of *Symphodus cinereus*, took place. The results (Table 7) showed a statistically significant difference between the two divers groups ( $\chi^2$  test,  $p < 0.005$ ).

In general, from the three cases investigated in the present study, the most impressive results were recorded in the first case (shallow depth and hard substrate type, as related to *Symphodus ocellatus* reproductive observation).

## 4 Conclusion

Tourism constitutes an important economic source and in many cases it is an important economic capital of national GDP. Recently, various new forms of tourism gained particular interest, under the general term of alternative forms of tourism. Among these forms of tourism, and especially for countries with a long coastline such as Greece, marine tourism appears as a priority field that must be developed. A dynamic subcategory of marine tourism is SCUBA diving tourism. However, the term of SCUBA diving tourism is not appropriate, and probably it is

needed to use the term of SCUBA diving industry, since around scuba diving there is a multiple development of economic activities directly (e.g. diving tourism development) or indirectly (e.g. accommodation, catering, etc.) related to this objective. Indisputably recreational SCUBA diving seems to be an important and dynamic financial source (Davenport & Davenport, 2006; Davis & Tisdell, 1996).

An interesting point observed through the current survey is that the local population participates with a poor percentage in the sum of divers regarding the studied area (less than 1 local/9 foreigners). Similar observations were recorded in other diving destinations as well (Daldeniz & Hampton, 2011). However, we should not ignore the dynamic of the domestic diving market.

As resulting from our study, it is possible to change the customers prejudice, as for specific characteristics such as depth and substrate. However, it appears easier to orient the customers to dive in shallow waters, than to dive on sandy bottom. Among the three testing hypothesis the one related to *Symphodus ocellatus* appears to be the most powerful motivation for recreational divers.

It is very significant to understand the dynamic of the SCUBA diving market and also to see the divers' motivation. Following recent studies shows that only a very weak percentage of the involved divers choose this activity because they like risking and the majority selects this sport for other reasons (Meisel-Lusby & Cottrel, 2008). The main risk of recreational SCUBA diving seems to be related to depth. This is the reason why diving training organizations, such as PADI, impose depth limits in recreational SCUBA diving. However, as shown from the results of this survey, many divers prefer to dive deeper than the limits of their training level (9 open water divers declare to dive at 30 m depth!). Additionally, 11 divers declare to dive deeper than 40 m, which is an unacceptable depth in recreational diving. So, it seems that recreational divers are rely on diving guides (divemasters and instructors) and do not have complete awareness of depth and the relevant risks. The danger of depth concerns both recreational divers and instructors, which are exposed to repetitive dives during the same day, increasing the degree of risk. Therefore, it should be a common target for all to dive at shallow waters. Scuba diving at relatively shallow depths (as 10 m) has two main advantages: (a) reduced exposure rate; (b) longer bottom time (according to decompression tables). The present study presents three of the many motivations, related to the promotion of natural resources that could enhance diving in shallow waters. In fact, it is at the discretion of recreational diving professionals to create new diving targets. The most significant problem towards this direction seems to be the reduced knowledge of the diving instructors and divemasters on the marine environment and life. A proposed solution could be the creation of special marine biology seminars for instructors and diving guides.

One of the key issues raised by this study is the low interest of recreational divers to observe and understand underwater life. The appropriate tool that could help towards this direction is diving briefing procedure. Diving briefing can be useful in many aspects. First of all, it can attract divers' attention in the wanted

direction. This presupposes that instructors and divemasters in SCUBA centers have sufficient knowledge on underwater life. Under the previously mentioned circumstances, briefing should focus on what divers will observe underwater and on the required skills in a particular dive. In most of the dives related to the observation of underwater life, buoyancy control seems to be one of the most basic skills (Toyoshima & Nadaoka, 2015). Proper buoyancy adjustment gives diver the ability to minimize contact with benthic organisms and thereby reduce the ecological impact. Numerous surveys deal with the impact of divers on sedentary benthic organisms (Giglio, Luiz, & Sciavetti, 2016). However, similar is the impact on errant benthic organisms or organisms that move and live near the bottom, as in the case of the three fish representatives studied in this survey. We conclude that the two basic conditions that divers should meet before the conduction of such a dive is an adequate briefing and a good buoyancy control. Briefing's importance in order to minimize the ecological impact was also underlined previously by several other authors (Camp & Fraser, 2012; Krieger & Chadwick, 2013; Medio, Ormond, & Pearson, 1997; Worachananant, Carter, Hockings, & Reopanichkul, 2008).

Considering that ethology is the study of animals' behavior, we should take into account whether the proposed activity could affect the fish' behavior. Changing an animal's behavior constitutes a serious ecological impact. One of the most common mistakes made by many recreational divers during their attempt to observe fish nearby is to try to feed them. The specific mistake is made by professional trainers as well in order to attract customers. It should be noted that fish of Labridae family (such as *Coris julis* and *Thalassoma pavo*) react positively to the food offered by divers. Recent studies have shown that feeding does not only alter the behavior of fish but also affects other fish species (Milazzo, Anastasi, & Willis, 2006). The tendency of tourists to feed wild animals is not just about fish but it is a more general phenomenon (Orams, 2002). The prevailing general perception is that this is a bad practice, which should be avoided. In the current survey we adopt the principle of fish watching, without fish feeding. Besides the deliberate feeding of fish, we shouldn't also ignore the possible attraction of fish from the movement of the diver's fins and the scraping of the sediment (Di Franco et al., 2013). This condition can attract predators of small invertebrates or predators of the fish nests that we observe. This can be avoided when the divers have good buoyancy.

In general, recreational divers do not interact with fish simply by deliberately or inadvertently offering food. For example, underwater breathing devices release bubbles during exhalation that cause submarine sound (Chapman, Johnstone, Dunn, & Creasey, 1974). This sound can either scare fish or attract them. In order to minimize the impact from the divers' sound a good SCUBA marketing practice is to promote the training and sale of rebreathers as a tool for fish watching.

However, a basic question that could be asked is whether fish are familiar with the presence of divers. Previous studies underline the most important behavioral changes due to the presence of divers: Color change, Fin twitch, Flight, Hiding, Maintaining distance, Parting, Slow flight, turning away (Heyman, Carr, & Lobel,

2010). It is emphasized that the above authors exhibit eco-tourism as an obligatory solution to the protection of the marine environment, and they agree that it is preferable to disturb the fish from threatening their lives. Crucial is the question if fish could be familiar in divers' presence. An investigation in tropical waters (Titus & Exton, 2015) showed that fish's familiar behavior appears as an occasional attitude to divers. In some cases it seems also to be an opportunistic feeding behavior.

Several conclusions arise from the current survey. The repetitive deep or medium depth dive could be a risk factor both for the recreational divers and for the professionals also who are involved in recreational SCUBA diving market. The present study attempts to provide a new perspective in order to minimize the depth risk and increase the customers' satisfaction. We remark the importance of the briefing procedure that can inform and orientate the customers. However, the majority of professional scuba guides doesn't have the appropriate knowledge background in order to promote the Mediterranean marine life. Following this order of idea, we propose the conduction of training seminars for the staff. Another benefit of the previous idea is the increase of the environmental awareness as well.

The idea of an advanced fish watching action in the field of recreational SCUBA diving gives also the financial opportunities to support the diving product, as well as training programs (i.e. fish identification and underwater naturalist of PADI schedule) or diving equipment sale (i.e. underwater digital cameras, rebreathers system). However, it's important to keep in mind that the marine organisms and wildlife in general, is a very sensitive domain, and the carrying capacity of the ecosystems must be the absolute priority in similar approaches. Contact with the marine wildlife but not so close, in order to minimize the anthropogenic impact.

The explosive growth of recreational SCUBA diving needs new products in order to have sustainability. However, approaches such as the fish watching behavior, requires further investigation related to the promotion of this product, as well as the use of good practices for the protection of the marine environment.

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# Impact Factor of Development of Entertainment Tourism in Macau—Industry Perspective

Iok Teng Kou, Jian Ming Luo and Ka Yin Chau

**Abstract** In recent years, entertainment activities have been pursued by tourists and have been an important part of generalized leisure tourism. The current studies of Entertainment Tourism have been focusing on casinos industry. To fill the gap of various entertainment business's effectiveness in contribution of tourism development, and to understand the current status and the possibility of further development of Macau as an Entertainment Tourism Center, research is undertaken to gather insights from local professionals in this industry. Through in-depth interview, this paper investigates 18 respondents who are all top management positions of private organizations in the entertainment industry. These findings highlight the fact that a 5 year, 10 year master plan for development must be in place. Government support and legislation on acquiring licence of entertainment business much be simplified. In addition, nearby areas such as Henqin can be used to create a regional effect of cross border cooperation. These results provided industry-based information about developing Macau into a Entertainment Center. It will enhance the abilities of policy makers, corporates as well as tourism educational institutions to prepare for such development. Regions/countries that are planning to diversify its tourism products can adopt the result as a reference.

**Keywords** Entertainment tourism · Macau · Impact factor

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## 1 Introduction

The importance of tourism products diversification has received considerable academic and industrial attention in past decades (Benur & Bramwell, 2015; Sharpley, 2002). Benefits include reduce risk of dependence on a single sector as well as attracting a wider range of tourists. Among various types of tourism products, Entertainment Tourism is one of the options. However, the current researches focus mostly on casinos, and in attempting to fill the current research gap, we are adopting Macau, Special Administrative region of China, as the area to evaluate gaming, as well as other forms of entertainment activities' potential in generating tourist 'visitation. Specifically, in-depth interviews were conducted with top managements from the entertainment industry of the city to delineate a general picture of the development of Entertainment tourism in the region, and the impact factors affecting its future development.

This study aims to:

1. Explore the major sectors of entertainment tourism at present;
2. Identify the impact factors of successful development of Entertainment Tourism,
3. Provide insights for government, policy makers and related parties of any country/region which consider the development of Entertainment Tourism.

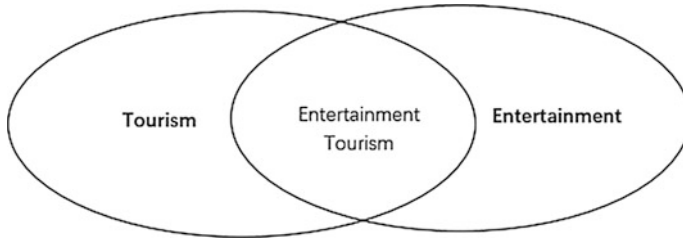
## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 *Entertainment Tourism*

The term Entertainment has a very broad meaning. It may refer to activities such as going to cinema, watching sports events, dancing and visiting theme park (Besciu, 2013), and/or defined as popular forms of the performing arts, such as variety shows and cabernet shows including singers, comedians, magicians, dancers as well as rock and pop concerts (Hughes, 2013). Entertainment activities has always been look into as activities for the local residents. However, there are increasing examples of successful adoption of entertainment activities in enhancing tourist visitation. As a result, entertainment destinations has been growing substantially during the past decade (Minton, 1998). At present, Entertainment activities are strategically developed as tourism products to create a memorable experience for tourist (Xu, 2010). It become a popular riches of tourism in different countries (Adeboye, 2012). There are tourists who plan their visit to a specific destination for the participation of entertainment activities (Fig. 1).

In addition to provide more leisure and entertainment opportunities for the local, entertainment activities serve as a tool for tourism development. It is not a competing sector with cannibalize revenue from other tourism activities. In fact, marketers see providing entertainment as important to a regeneration or rejuvenation





**Fig. 1** Conceptual model for entertainment tourism (Developed by authors)

strategy for a sector that depends on gambling (McCarthy, 2002) Research also show that having entertainment associated with gambling helps to create a more attractive image and package for the gambling industry (Loi & Pearce, 2012).

## 2.2 The Study Area

Macau, also known as Macao, is officially the Macao Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, situated at the western side of the Pearl River Delta in East Asia. By 2016, Macau covers an area of roughly 30.5 km<sup>2</sup> and accommodates around 0.7 million people. It welcomes more than 31 million of tourists per year, and is one of the most densely populated areas in China. Jurisdictionally Macau is composed of three parts, Macau Peninsula, Taipa Island and Coloane Island, with reclaimed are such as COTAI. Macau is border by Zhuhai, China while Coloane connects Hengqin, China with a bridge. Portuguese traders first settled in Macau in the 1550s. In 1557, Macau was leased to Portugal who administered the city under Chinese authority and sovereignty until 1887. Through a mutual agreement, Macau became a colony of Portugal. It was then handed over back to China in 1999 (Huang, Li, Zheng, & Li, 2006). Under the one country, two system policy, Macau enjoys a high degree of political and economic autonomy. During the past 15 years, Macau has generated a large amount of wealth through development of Gaming Industry. Since the Liberation of gaming license in 2002, Macau's gaming industry has rapid development. Until 2016, there are 36 casinos in Macau and Macau is one of the top ten World tourism earner according to UNWTO 2016 report. To secure such strong increase in tourism revenue under a competitive environment where the nearby countries are liberalizing their gaming license or permitting such development. Singapore, Taiwan, Japan, are potential treat. Thus, it is crucial to diversify its products offerings. Similar to the path of Las Vegas, the development of Entertainment activities and Entertainment tourism can be a solution.

### 2.3 *Entertainment Tourism in Macau*

The mixing of the Chinese and Portuguese cultures and religious traditions for more than four centuries has left Macau with an inimitable collection of holidays, festivals, events and activities. The amount of performances performed in Macau has also shown an increasing trend since the early 2010s, including the show House of Dancing Water, concerts, industry trade shows and international art crossovers. In the past, Cirque du Soleil, playboy club and several of shows were on the list, enriching tourist options in selection of entertainment during their travel. At the moment, House of Dancing Water is probably one of the biggest show in town. More performance are available in Macau. In addition, owing to the fact that there are more Integrated Resorts built in Macau, entertainment activities has emerged. The selection of high end spa and beauty treatment are available. Night club and bar is another example of night entertainment for tourists. Famous China Rouge at the Macau Galaxy Resort is one of the top bar on the list for local and tourists to spend a relaxing night and gathering with their friends. Almost all integrated resorts in Macau catered the needs of the customers by providing night entertainment with live band or dance performance as one of the strategy to attract visitation. According to the classification of Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO), the major sectors of entertainment tourism are Shows, Cultural and Creative Industries Zones, Family Fun, Sports and Recreation, Gaming and Nightlife. Table 1 is created using information on the website of Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO).

## 3 Methodology

This study uses the qualitative research methodology of in-depth interview guided by a phenomenological research approach (Creswell, 2009). In-depth interview, also known as unstructured interview, is a type of interview which researchers use to elicit information in order to achieve a holistic understanding of the interviewee's point of view of something or a specific situation (Berry, 1999). This kind of interview can also be used to explore interesting areas for further investigation and uncover possible research areas. Interview involves asking open-ended questions to obtain potential information or valuable data for the researcher. According to Patton (1987), there are three basic approaches to conducting qualitative interviewing, namely informal conversational interview. The general interview guide approach (commonly called guided interview) and The standardized open-ended interview. For this study, we are adopting guided interview. A basic checklist is prepared to make sure that all relevant topics are covered. However, the interviewer is still free to explore, probe and ask questions deemed interesting to the researcher. This kind of interview is useful as it allows for in-depth probing while permitting the interviewer to keep the interview within the parameters traced out by the aim of the study (Wenden, 1982).

**Table 1** An overview of entertainment tourism activities in macau

Type	Examples	
Shows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The house of dancing water</li> </ul>	Created and directed by Franco Dragone, the USD250 million production ‘The House of Dancing Water’ is a breathtaking water-based show that brilliantly expresses the Asian culture on stage. This popular show—rooted in the ‘seven emotions’ of Chinese Confucian belief—features fantastic stage effects for the most extravagant live production ever staged in Asia
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yueju Opera (Cantonese Opera)</li> </ul>	Yueju Opera—employing the Cantonese dialect as its medium of expression, and prevalent throughout Guangdong, Guangxi, Hong Kong and Macao—dates back some 300 years. Yueju Opera is the most influential opera in Southern China, and was listed as a “Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity” by UNESCO in September 2009
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The house of magic</li> </ul>	Designed, curated and hosted by acclaimed illusionist, Franz Harary, the House of Magic is set to become the premier performance venue for stunning magicians from across the globe. A range of mind-blowing shows will come on stage, including Harary’s spectacular resident show, Mega Magic, leading visitors to embark upon an amazing journey of magic
Cultural and creative industries zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AFA (Art for all society)</li> </ul>	<p>AFA (Art for All Society)—a non-profit art organization established in Macao in 2007 to enhance contemporary art development in Macao—facilitates local creativity and assists the Macao SAR Government in developing local cultural initiatives</p> <p>The 500-sq. m. AFA provides space for regular solo exhibitions, with displayed art including paintings, photography, sculptures, prints and video by representative and dynamic contemporary artists from Macao</p> <p>To further introduce Macao arts to Mainland China and construct an art exchange platform between Macao and Beijing, AFA established a 3-storey branch in Beijing in October 2008 located at 798 Art Zone, with showrooms and retail sections selling cultural and creative products, books and original music</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ox warehouse</li> </ul>	Founded in March 2002, Ox Warehouse—formerly known as the ‘Old Ladies’ House Art Space’—is a private non-profit art association. Ox Warehouse regularly organizes exhibitions

(continued)

**Table 1** (continued)

Type	Examples	
		in various mediums including painting, sculpture, poster design, installation, sketching, etc. to provide an experimental and exchange platform for local contemporary arts. In addition, it offers workshops for adults and children in drawing, music, and other artistic activities. The Ox Warehouse boasts attractive historic architecture, and is equipped with a small library, art information corner, CD corner and a café to spend quality time in before browsing further
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative macau</li> </ul>	This non-profit organization is a centre for local creative industries developed and managed by the Institute of European Studies of Macao, with the primary task of assisting local creative industries enhance their profile and potential value. Located on the ground floor of the Macao Cultural Centre, it provides space and a platform for art and displays from diverse creative industries; namely, advertising, architecture, crafts, design, fashion design, film and video, interactive leisure software, music, the performing arts, publishing, computer software and application development, as well as visual arts
Family Fun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Macao giant panda pavilion</li> </ul>	Nestled against a hill side in Seac Pai Van Park in Coloane in a fan-shaped layout of about 3000 m <sup>2</sup> , Macao Giant Panda Pavilion is designed to take advantage of combining the terrain's natural undulations with the architectural characteristics. The pavilion comprises two 330 m <sup>2</sup> indoor activity quarters and a 600 m <sup>2</sup> outdoor yard for the inhabitation of the giant pandas and a 900 m <sup>2</sup> indoor exhibit area. Two viewing paths of different elevations align along the front edge of the fan-layout indoor activity area, accessible to two streams of visitors. Internal facilities include a logistic centre with panda dens, bamboo-washing and storage quarters, feed preparation room, feed warehouse ...
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Macao science center</li> </ul>	The Macao Science Center—designed by world-renowned Chinese-American architect I. M. Pei—is instantly recognisable by its silvery, cone-shaped exterior. There are fourteen galleries arranged in a spiral and accentuated by an arch shape. After Beijing and Hong Kong, Macao is the third city in the world to possess the 8000 × 8000 pixel screen

(continued)

**Table 1** (continued)

Type	Examples	
		<p>equipment. The Center also generates 3D effects via a high definition 3D projection system in the Space Theatre of the Planetarium, the first digital system to be simultaneously equipped with ultra-high definition (8000 × 8000) and 3D visual effects in the world—all designed to give visitors an entertaining yet educational insight into the fascinating world of science. In addition, a same-scale model of the Shenzhou-VII spaceship and a number of automatic intelligent robots will be featured in the brand-new Macao Science Center</p> <p>• Mast climb, bungee jump, skyjump and skywalk X</p> <p>Conquer Macao's highest summit, at 338 metres, and stand atop a man-made tower by climbing 100 m up the mast's vertical ladder Or freefall from the World's Highest Bungee Jump at speeds of up to 200 km/h for the ultimate rush! Plunging from a platform 233 m high, challengers will experience freefall for an adrenalin-pumping 4–5 s...</p> <p>SkyJump utilizes the technology of 'Fan Descenders' to enable daredevils to fly through the air at 75 km/h, without rebounding or inverting, before decelerating to a comfortable landing speed upon reaching the ground</p> <p>Skywalk X is a thrilling walk around the main outer rim of the tower, 233 metres above ground. Safety is guaranteed by a world-first overhead rail system... but there's no hand rail!</p>
Sports and recreation	<p>• Karting</p> <p>• Beaches and nautical sports</p>	<p>Speed merchants can find the 50,000 sq. m. 1.2 km kart race track adjoining Caesars Golf Macau near Seac Pai Van Park on Coloane Island. Ranked one of the most challenging tracks in Asia, the Coloane Karting Track is the only permanent track available in Macao or Hong Kong, and provides spectator stands and restaurant, as well as a sweeping panorama of the surrounding countryside</p> <p>Well stocked with karts, helmets and racing gear, the track—certified for Class-B safety facilities—regularly hosts international competitions in addition to attracting locals and visitors on weekdays and weekends</p> <p>There are two grand beaches in Macao—Cheoc Van Beach and Hác-Sá Beach—located in the idyllic southern and eastern part of Coloane Island. Adjoining Cheoc Van Beach</p>

(continued)

**Table 1** (continued)

Type	Examples	
		you can find a large open-air swimming pool, several restaurants, a romantic pousada (Portuguese inn) and a Nautical Club with equipment for canoeing and windsurfing, all connected by a palm-lined esplanade. Easily accessible by public transport, Hác-Sá ('Black Sand') Beach is Macao's larger and more popular beach, both for its safe swimming and various other water activities like sailing and jet-skiing. Several BBQ-stalls ply their trade just off the beach, and families can enjoy tennis courts, swimming pool, picnic area, children's playground, exercise area and several restaurants in and around the adjoining Hác-Sá Park
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bowling and ice skating</li> </ul>	Bowling and ice skating are high on the list for indoor fun with family and friends. Whether you are just getting the recreational juices going or are seriously competitive, the clack of balls on skittles or the swish of blades on ice all add up to great family fun in a well-equipped, purpose-built modern environment. Future Bright Amusement Park On the Macao Peninsula, you can find comprehensive bowling and skating facilities in Future Bright Amusement Park, as well as an arcade game centre, children's playground and restaurant. The Future Bright Skating Rink is popular with teenagers and ice hockey teams but welcomes all ages and levels. No special attire is required and ice skates are available for rental
Beauty and wellness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spa</li> <li>• Medical beauty care</li> </ul>	<p>Fancy a sensational spa after a full day's sightseeing and shopping? Many 5-star hotels in Macao provide excellent spa facilities offering all-natural products and experts versed in leading rejuvenation and relaxation techniques. Indulge yourself with special spa treatments, massages, health consultations, skincare, nail polish and facial services for a revolutionary refreshment rest!</p> <p>Medical beauty care is a combination of beauty and medicine providing patrons with a new health choice. You can benefit from the medical beauty service to reduce pressure and effectively improve your health following a hectic day</p>

(continued)

**Table 1** (continued)

Type	Examples	
Gaming	• Casinos	In recent years, Macao's gaming industry has developed at a rapid pace, with a number of larger casinos offering a free direct shuttle bus service to and from border crossings. Many casinos feature international cuisine restaurants, recreational facilities and top-flight family entertainment as well as gaming
	• Greyhound racing	Greyhound racing—which emerged in its recognizable modern form, featuring oval tracks, with the invention of the mechanical hare in 1912—has a long history in Macao, with 6–8 greyhounds in each race outfitted in different coloured vests for easy identification. Once the electric-motored rabbit powers away from the start, the greyhounds chase it, cheered on by spectators who can bet on the winner. Greyhound racing can be attended per nightly schedules
	• Horse racing	The long established Macau Jockey Club has over the years assembled a truly cosmopolitan group of trainers, riders and administrators to oversee its large horseracing operation, with animals imported from various countries in order to provide racing to international standards. Whether watching live or on the Diamond Vision or closed circuit television monitors, club members and public can enjoy top-line racing in private boxes or the air-conditioned grandstand. Races are scheduled throughout the year, except for the summer recess, with the stadium's Chinese and Western restaurants catering to a knowledgeable clientele
Nightlife	• Bars and lounges	If you are looking for bars and pubs, you will find a great number of them along the Avenida Dr. Sun Yat-Sen close to the Kun Iam Statue. With its picturesque location, facing the OuterHarbour and Pearl River, you can enjoy the music and wine whilst watching the boats glide by. The music is completely cosmopolitan, with bars throbbing to the rhythms of Brazil, Portugal, the UK, Africa and every part of Asia Most of the main hotels also have bars and lounges, some with international live bands

(continued)

**Table 1** (continued)

Type	Examples	
		and dance performances, while others offer stylish wine lounges. There are also some popular pubs on Taipa Island, with a casual ambiance that makes visitors feel right at home
	• Dance clubs	In the most popular discos in town, you'll find local and internationally renowned DJs spinning the latest hits. Many bars in the casinos feature live music and dance shows, which run from the afternoon till late

Source Macau government tourism office

On the checklist, there are two major questions, each with a couple of extended questions. Details as follow:

1. What are the factors contributing to entertainment tourist's successful experience?
2. As a manager, how do you view the success of entertainment tourism from a managerial perspective?

Altogether, 18 top managements from the entertainment industry in Macau participated in the interview. Participants invited based on the familiarity of one researcher with the local tourism industry. Three criteria were adopted to select participants for the interview. Firstly, the participants should have lived in Macau for more than 5 consecutive years. Secondly, the participants should be of top management positions. Thirdly, the participants worked in the entertainment Industry. Within a time frame of 1 March, 2017 until 15 May, 2017, a total of 18 interviews were conducted. One single interview last for around 30–100 min, and all the interview were audio recorded at the university campus, the workplace of the respondents or at a place of convenience for respondents. The discussions proceeded with a prepared checklist with the major questions listed on it. However, when necessary, questions were raised by the researchers for further clarification and explanation. Throughout the discussions. Owing to the nature of the interview, broad questions are used as a framework to generate baseline information are there was not an exhaustive list of questions the interviewers need to follow (Yin, 2015). Researchers meticulously managed their interactions with the participants to ensure the appropriate establishment of rapport and the development of relevant data. The discussions were conducted in Chinese or English, according to the mother tongue of the respondents, with the transcripts in Chinese and English. After all transcripts are collected, the Chinese one are then translated to English by native speaker who is familiar with both Chinese and English. Table 2 shows the profiles of a couples of the interview participants.

For qualitative content analysis of results, the researchers code the transcripts obtained through the interviews and to compare them against the three research objectives mentioned previously. For research objectives 2, the factors of



**Table 2** Profiles of some of the interview participants

Name	Gender	Position	No. of years in entertainment industry
Jessie	F	General manager	5
Richard	M	Senior director	30
Glenn	M	Owner/general manager	20
Jenny	F	Managing director	9

**Table 3** Examples of coding

Category	Example
Development of entertainment tourism products	We are having limited options of entertainment tourism products, for big show, House of the Dancing Water is the only one in the city
Government support	Government need to consider SMEs as we are facing lots of pressures with rental fee and manpower supply. I am not asking for money aid, but others like labor quota and include us in overall marketing campaign
Education and management of human resources	Staff need to be trained. They need to understand how to create an atmosphere where tourists/guests will be entertained

entertainment tourism that was mentioned in the transcript was coded. Text units, in the form of words, phrases, or short and long sentences are compared by the authors. The text units that related to the construct positively from a cooperation perspective were considered as contributing to the successful development of entertainment tourism, and vice versa. Data are code manually. As a team of three, each researcher code the transcripts individually accordingly to the key words. After the coding is completed, three researchers discuss the result and the data is only considered valid upon agreement of three. If there is any researcher object to a single coding, it would be considered invalid (Table 3).

## 4 Results

### 4.1 Findings

As a result, five impact factors of Entertainment Tourism development in Macau have been identified, namely, development of entertainment tourism products, promotion at target markets, government support, education and management of human resources, innovation and creativity listed here in a descending order in terms of importance with regards to the frequency of codes. These five impact factors are further discussed in the followings:

Firstly, participants identified the factor of development of entertainment tourism products as the area with highest importance for the growth of entertainment

tourism. The participants pointed out that the diversity of entertainment facilities are crucial for development. Products should be in a variety and special in attracting tourist visitation. For instance, Macau has a mega show “House of the Dancing water” that attracts tourists from the nearby region, such as Hong Kong and GuangDong provinces. Concerts of famous celebrities also invites their fans to travel to the destination. To successfully develop entertainment tourism in Macau, a variety of entertainment need to be offered. Las Vegas, the world famous entertainment city in USA, offers seven different Cirque shows in residence on the Las Vegas Strip, and with a large number of other varieties. At present, one of the challenges is the lack of land for such development. Eight respondents stated that Macau is too small for outdoor entertainment so consideration of nearby region such as Hengqin for development should be in plan.

Secondly, participants identified the factor of promotion at target markets. At present, the biggest markets in Macau is Greater China, which include Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Selection of Entertainment tourism products and Promotion targeting these major markets are crucial. Entertainment products need to be at their interest and taste. There were other western-style entertainment such as Playboys club and Circus de Soleil but are no longer available in Macau due to the mismatch of preferences.

Thirdly, government support is mentioned by the participants. Management from Small and Medium Enterprise (SMEs) pointed out that government support in extending the foreign labor quota. Owing to the rapid development in Macau, the unemployment rate is low and recruitment of front line staff is challenging with high turnover rate. Working visa of foreign labour from nearby region such as Mainland China and The Philippines can support SMEs’s development under this competing environment. In addition, legislation on acquiring license of entertainment business much be simplified. The current application process for opening more shops are slow and sometimes the whole process take six months to even a year.

Fourth, the aspect of education and management of human resources are pointed out. A master plan for human resources development shall be in place. Six respondents pointed out that the entertainment industry is one which require lots of professionals or talents. For example, the various show that require skilled performers or the extreme sports such as bany jump that require trainer or technical supports. For sustainable development, a five or ten-year plan should be in place so that well-trained staff are available in the market.

In terms of the fifth aspect, innovation and creativity, several of respondents pointed out that entertainment activities should not be a repetition of nearby countries. New ideas, new ways of delivery should be provided. With today’s advancement of information technology, different stage of entertainment services delivery can be enhanced. The marketing, information sharing, communication mechanisms, and even the experience prior or after participation can be offered in an innovative way.

## **4.2 Discussion and Implications**

This study attempt to delineate a comprehensive understanding of development pf entertainment tourism. Five impact factors of entertainment tourism development in the area are identified. Thsesse provides some reference for future theoretical and practical endeavors in this field. From the perspective of top management in Entertainment Industry, efforts are made to identify the ideas, perspectives, effectiveness and possibility of further development of Macau as an Entertainment Tourism Center. The observation may shed light on countries/regions which have a similar dependence on a single type of tourism products and are planning to diversify its products. The result may be of reference for future research efforts in this area, particularly in Asia's perspective and in Chinese context.

Owing to the lack of resources, this paper has quite a number of limitations that must be acknowledged. The sample selected for interview are limited. Further research can be done with larger sample size, and/or comparing results from a couple of Asian countries. Further research efforts may probe deeper into the impact factors in a Chinese context, probably with the aid of quantitative methods, which may lead to a comprehensive evaluation system to assess the development possibility or performance of entertainment tourism. At the same time, opinions from officials, from academia, or from junior levels and front line staff within the entertainment industry can be adopted. This study can be repeated by looking into government's perspective, visitor's perspectives, etc.

## **5 Conclusion**

The growing concern of diversification of Tourism products and avoidance of over dependence on a single type of tourism products has been discussed in the past decade. Thus, Entertainment Tourism is evaluated and the impact factors of its development are identified. In this paper, Entertainment Tourism activities in Macau are illustrated, follow by the major impact factors that influence this development. The five impact factors, development of entertainment tourism products, promotion at target markets, government support, education and management of human resources, innovation and creativity are discussed in this paper, attempting to evoke people's attention and scientific recognition to Entertainment Tourism. Base on the literature review and interviews of professionals, this article provided valuable insights into this type of tourism.

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# Profitability Determinants of the Greek Hospitality Industry: The Crisis Effect

Panagiotis E. Dimitropoulos

**Abstract** The hospitality industry remains one of the cornerstone sectors of the Greek economy employing hundreds of thousands of employees, contributing significantly to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The scope of this study is to examine the main determinant factors of financial performance of the Greek hospitality industry, especially during the sovereign debt crisis. We utilized the population of firms (limited liability companies and corporations) registered on the chamber of commerce during the fiscal years 2011–2013 and operating on the hospitality and food services sectors, leading to 13724 observations for analysis. Regression results indicated that firm size, sales turnover and operating cash flows contribute positively to profitability. On the contrary, firms with increased leverage and capital intensity (fraction of fixed assets) are associated with lower levels of profitability. Our study fills a gap in the existing literature on financial management of the hospitality industry in Greece, offering useful policy implications.

**Keywords** Hospitality industry · Food services firms · Profitability Crisis · Greece

**JEL Classification** M21 · G31 · M10

## 1 Introduction & Theoretical Background

The tourism industry plays a significant role as a source of economic growth in many economies worldwide. According to Song, Dwyer, Li, and Gao, (2012), the tourism industry is a labor intensive sector contributing significantly to the employment thus creating income and growth in the economy even during periods of economic recession. The current economic recession affected tourism revenues in several

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countries since the hospitality industry comprises a large number of small and interrelated businesses and according to Pappas (2015) it has less formal crisis planning than other economic sectors. The Greek economy is an example of a recessionary economy where the hospitality industry was severely affected since unemployment has reached up to 27% during the sovereign debt crisis. Nevertheless, the Greek sovereign debt crisis was unique relative to other countries since the existence of dual deficits in the current account and the central government budget worsened the economic situation and created severe problems for most sectors and firms were striving to survive. Moreover, the Greek sovereign debt crisis was accompanied by a bail-out plan which leads to the collapse of the government, and the increase of possibility Greece leaving the euro-zone. Both facts created an exceptionally unstable and uncertain economic and political environment with direct impact on the business activity and the real economy (Pappas, 2015).

The hospitality industry was not unaffected by the crisis despite its importance for the smallest economies due to their characteristics of isolated locations, lack of resources and even poor sustainable development. For such economies, financial capital is limited and therefore is crucial for businesses on this sector to be able to attract financial capital and even foreign investors. Sound financial growth and profitability could be achieved if firms on the hospitality sector are aware of the determinant factors contributing on these goals (Seetah, 2016).

Accommodation and the food services industry remain the backbone of the hospitality sector with distinct financial characteristics such as high fixed costs, low marginal costs and are firms of high leverage. These conditions make the profitability of this sector very sensitive to market conditions, demand and supply shocks, or other types of political instability (Hua, Nusair, & Upneja, 2012). Practically, a small decrease in sales causes profit margins to drop sharply since accommodation firms are unable to cut their large fixed costs in order to absorb the revenue loss. Also these firms operate with narrow profit margins which are easier to turn to losses when the economy hits recession (Hua et al. 2012). Therefore, the ability to sustain high profit margins becomes the focus of practitioners, academics and researchers in the hospitality industry especially when the pressure to enhance financial performance is enhanced over time. Moreover, the identification of hospitality firms' profitability potential is crucial to investors in order to assist them allocate their capital resources more efficiently while controlling relevant risks. This is justified by the fact that firms with stronger financial performance are more probable to continue to grow over a longer period of time.

The scope of this study is to examine the financial determinants of profitability of the hospitality industry during the fiscal year 2011–2013, when the sovereign debt crisis in Greece had a severe impact on the economy. The reasons for selecting this specific time period are the following: a) the sovereign debt crisis had an immediate impact on the credit supply contributing to the lack of liquidity. This fact created fear and uncertainty leading to reduced capital spending, employment, firms' long-range planning and future growth prospects (Dewally, Shao, & Singer, 2013). This lead hospitality firms to reduce expenses, dividend payments, and started other cash saving decisions, which all reduced liquidity, b) the hospitality

industry is prone to be impacted by the crisis due to its capital intensive nature and the cyclical sensitivity of sales and profits. According to Dewally et al. (2013), the hospitality industry provides services that are discretionary and directly connected to the level of income, thus the threat of economic recession would definitely affect their profitability and its determinant factors.

The present study contributes on the literature regarding the Greek hospitality industry on several merits: firstly, there is the only study examining the determinants of profitability especially during the crisis. Previous studies on the Greek hospitality industry have examined their marketing strategies (Pappas, 2015), strategic planning practices (Gkliatis & Koufopoulos, 2013) and total quality management (Bouranta, Psomas, & Pantouvakis, 2017) thus this study fills a significant gap on the literature. Also, the abovementioned studies have utilized a small sample size and data were collected through qualitative procedures and tools. These facts constitute their findings subject to perceptual distortion and self-rating bias. The present study utilizes the population of hospitality industry firms (accommodation and food services firms) which were operating during the period 2011–2013 and were listed on the corporate registry of firms. This allows us to analyze financial data extracted from the annual financial statements adding up to more than 13,000 observations, thus providing greater support to the empirical findings.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows: The second section provides a description of the Greek hospitality industry and its main characteristics. The third section discusses the data selection procedure and the research design. The fourth section discusses the empirical results and sensitivity analysis, while the final section concludes the paper.

## 2 The Greek Hospitality Industry

Tourism is the main pillar of development of the Greek economy, with significant contribution to GDP and employment. This indicates tourism's role in the growth of the economy and especially in the adoption of a new production model that relies to a greater extent in extroversion. The rich cultural heritage, the mild climate and the natural beauty of Greece, lead the country to be among the most important tourist destinations worldwide. The development of tourism can offer multiple benefits which are diffused throughout the economy, supporting productive structures and regional development, especially in areas of the country, such as the islands, where growth prospects are lower. This indicates the necessity of exploring interdisciplinary relations and the tourism sector contribution to domestic production activity.

The tourism industry in Greece is one of the most vibrant and dynamic component of the economy relative to its contribution to GDP and employment. Greece remains one of the top tourist destinations and is ranked among the 20 most visited countries. According to Bouranta et al. (2017), Greece attracted more than 18 million international tourists in 2013 contributing 28.3 billion euro in the Greek economy. The direct and indirect employment in the tourism sector was up to

66,000 people contributing to the 18.2% of total employment during that period. According to the Foundation for Economic and Industrial Research (IOBE, 2012), during the previous decade the hospitality industry in Greece experienced a stable increase in investments for the improvement of facilities and services, leading to enhanced employment levels and growth. Nevertheless, the majority of hospitality firms in Greece are small-medium enterprises of low capacity but they contributed up to 15.2 billion euro on the country's GDP in 2010, where almost 14.6 billion are the outcome of foreign tourists' contribution to the economy. The accommodation and food services activities contribute almost the two thirds of the direct impact of tourism on the economy and employment which was estimated to 741 thousand employees in 2010.

During the crisis, Greece was on the 15th position in the world on the foreign tourist arrival which was almost 22 million. Despite the spectacular rise of 23% made by the non-resident arrivals at the border, the country won only one position on the world rank relative to the previous year 2013. Nevertheless, it is generally recognized that in recent years the Greek tourism has lost positions on the world ranking as tourism destination due to a highly competitive international environment. This fact is illustrated both on the ranking lists of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) regarding the arrivals and according to the latest version of the annual report on competitiveness in the field of tourism and travel of the World Economic Forum (Hatzidakis, 2015). Greece, according to the above report, was just 31st in total of 141 countries (18th in Europe), slightly improving its position since 2013 when it was 32nd over 140 countries (Hatzidakis, 2015). Despite the fact that the capacity of the accommodation sector increased significantly over the last twenty years, in 2011 that pace was reduced due to the crisis.

Table 1 presents the averages of some key financial data of the accommodation and food services sectors within the crisis years of 2011, 2012 and 2013. As we can see, the investment in fixed assets reduced by almost half a million in 2012 but increased significantly in 2013 indicating that hospitality firms invested significantly on infrastructure and services improvement. However, current assets were above fixed assets suggesting that Greek hospitality firms are relied on cash and accounts receivable in order to support their daily operations. Also, retained earnings are negative for the three years under investigation indicating that on average Greek hospitality firms have aggregated consecutive losses which reduce the shareholders' capital and is attributed to the crisis strike which lead to the loss of revenues and profitability potential. Moreover, both long term and short term liabilities increased in 2013 and so the long-term and short-term borrowing of hospitality firms. Together those figures indicate the lack of liquidity which firms faced and needed additional borrowing in order to support daily operations and settle liabilities on time. Furthermore, net profit before taxes has reduced significantly in 2013–17060 euro on average relative to 13,781 euro during the previous year. This finding comes at odds when we look at the revenues and gross profit which both increased in 2013, corroborating previous arguments on the literature that the hospitality industry faces significant fixed costs and low net profit margins. Finally, Greek hospitality firms achieved positive operating cash flows but negative



investing and financing cash flows indicating that money spent on investing activities did not produce higher inflows of cash. Overall, the crisis seems to have impacted on the increase of hospitality firms borrowing and a reduction of net profits, reducing their ability to cover the increased fixed costs.

### 3 Data Selection and Research Design

Data used in this study include all firms which according to the Greek Law are obliged to prepare individual financial statements under Greek GAAP or IFRS. The sample period is focused during the crisis from 2011 to 2013. We collected financial data from accommodation and food services firms since those two groups consist the two thirds of hospitality firms on the country. For uniformity and comparability reasons we resolved to firms that prepare their individual financial statements at the end of the calendar year (31st of December). We further drop observations with incomplete data on net accounting income and cash flows from operations. Also we excluded firms with zero total assets and sales. As a result of these requirements, the final sample that was utilized in the analysis consists of 14349 firm-year observations spanning including 5168 firms in 2011, 4520 firms in 2012 and 4661 firms in 2013. In order to avoid potential outliers all continuous variables are winsorized at the 1th and 99th percentiles. The number of observations

**Table 1** Average financial data of hospitality firms during the crisis (amounts in euro)

Financial data	2011	2012	2013
Net fixed assets	2999877	2571967	4730923
Current assets	3170884	3128657	4048445
Equity	2464048	2310959	3520893
Retained earnings	-317272.3	-370567.4	-336686.4
Long-term liabilities	1136070	847396.7	1766817
Short-term liabilities	2562825	2539645	3521409
Sales revenue	5014157	5029538	7533982
Gross income	1115374	1062776	1239912
Net income before tax	102012.2	137818.5	17060.3
Operating cash flow	402659.5	294746	537625
Investing cash flow	-296877.3	-145104.2	-215985.7
Financing cash flow	-195011.7	-111787.9	-271207.2
Long-term borrowing	929381.4	625167.5	1436607
Short-term borrowing	864002	819784.7	1205674

*Note* All numbers are annual averages of key financial data extracted from firms' annual financial statements of hospitality firms. Total number of observations 14349 for all years under investigation

of the regression analysis is 13274 thus providing more than adequate data for the validity of the empirical results.

In order to examine the determinant factors of profitability we resolved in prior studies on the field. The first dimension that we consider is firm size. Hua et al. (2012) suggest that larger firms can achieve better financial performance due to economies of scale, improved asset efficiency, and operational synergies. According to Orlitzky (2001), Dimitropoulos and Tsagkanos (2012), firm size is positively related to firm performance and viability because it may lead to economies of scale in operations, greater control over external stakeholders and resources and better opportunities to access capital markets, a fact which can further increase their financial performance. Claver-Cortés, Molina-Azorín, and Pereira-Moliner (2007) and Hua et al. (2012) suggest that hospitality firms of larger size (SIZE) are associated with higher profitability. Thus we expect that larger firms to be more profitable relative to their smaller counterparts. In accordance with size we control for capital intensity following previous arguments on the literature that hospitality firms operate with large fixed assets which create additional fixed costs impacting on profitability. Thus, we expect a negative impact of capital intensity (CPA\_INT) on profitability.

Moreover, leverage (LEV) has been considered on the literature as a key risk factor indicating that highly leveraged firms are associated with lower profits. This fact is attributed to higher returns demanded by investors in order to invest on highly leveraged firms. Also leveraged firms are obliged to pay higher amounts on interest thus raising expenses and lowering profits. Singh and Faircloth (2005) document that high leverage adversely affects a firm's future investment opportunities, which in turn can lead on a negative impact on its long-term operating performance and solvency. Also Shin-Ping and Tsung-Hsien (2009) argue that financial leverage can be affected by firm-specific real characteristics which shape the firm's demand for debt. Based on those arguments leverage is expected to adversely affect net profits. Also, revenues (SALES) is the key determinant of profits since indicates firms' abilities to improve their market share and even sustain and increase their customer base. According to Hua et al. (2012), hospitality firms with higher sales are permitted less costs thus increasing firms' profit margins. Therefore, we expect a positive impact of sale revenues on net profits.

Additionally, liquidity (LIQ) indicates a firm's ability to meet short-term obligations and finance daily operating needs. Good liquidity management can improve profits since it can support adequate flow of resources and financing when needed, thus indicating lower default risk (Hua et al., 2012). However, too much liquidity may hurt firm's future potential by increasing opportunity costs. Thus, we may not infer a potential impact of liquidity on profitability. Also, we control for operating cash flows (CFO) since a significant coefficient on CFO indicates that hospitality firms are able to convert assets into cash thus resources can be used quickly so as to respond to profit opportunities (Dimitropoulos, 2009). Finally, in order to control for the macroeconomic environment of the Greek economy during that period which affect the profitability of hospitality firms, we included the effective tax rate (ETR). Taxes are a significant expense for all firms and during the crisis period tax

rates experienced a significant increase directly (through higher corporate income taxes) and indirectly (by reducing tax exempt amounts). This fact may impact negatively on profitability suggesting that higher tax rates lead to higher tax expenses and smaller profits.

In order to examine the impact of the abovementioned variables on hospitality firms' profitability the following regression model will be estimated on a cross-sectional basis with robust standard errors in order to control for the impact of heteroskedasticity on the residuals:

$$ROA_{it} = a_0 + a_1SIZE_{it} + a_2CAP\_INT_{it} + a_3LEV_{it} + a_4LIQ_{it} + a_5CFO_{it} + a_6SALES_{it} + a_6ETR_{it} + e_{it} \quad (1)$$

Where:

ROA	return on assets estimated as the ratio of net income to total assets
SIZE	firm size measured as the natural logarithm of total assets
CAP_INT	capital intensity measured as the ratio of net fixed assets to total assets
LEV	leverage measured as the ratio of total liabilities to total assets
LIQ	liquidity measured as the ratio of current assets to current liabilities
CFO	is the ratio of operating cash flows to total assets
SALES	sale revenues to total assets
ETR	effective tax rate for each firm and year
e	regression error term which is normally distributed

Subscripts i denotes the firm and t denotes the year

## 4 Empirical Results

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of the sample variables for the whole period of investigation. Profitability (ROA) has an average price close to zero (0.0004) indicating that hospitality firms in Greece generated 0.4 cents for every euro of investment on total assets. This figure indicates the deprivation of profits on this sector and is indicative of the impact of the crisis on the profitability on the Greek hospitality industry. Also, 33% of sample firms' total assets are comprised by fixed assets and also total liabilities (LEV) cover almost the 60% of total assets indicating that sample firms are financed by external sources (lenders and creditors). Nevertheless, liquidity is more than satisfactory since current assets cover current liabilities 11 times despite the fact that average operating cash flows are very low and close to 4.7% of total assets. Also, sales to assets ratio is significantly low since it is up to 97% a fact which can also attributed to the negative impact of the crisis. Finally, tax rates are on average up to 34% of income with a maximum value of 45% indicating that taxes consist a significant expense for hospitality firms.

**Table 2** Descriptive statistics of the sample variables

Variables	Mean	Standard dev.	Min	Max
ROA	0.0004	0.3731	-29.355	5.0723
SIZE	14.1305	1.6213	6.8886	22.5363
CAP_INT	0.3318	0.3001	0	1
LEV	0.5936	0.7528	-0.8289	47.1079
LIQ	11.3001	568.49	-73.3844	67473.4
CFO	0.0473	0.2539	-8.0642	5.0964
SALES	0.9769	1.4283	0.2469	56.3842
ETR	0.338	0.0390	0.1328	0.4501

Table 3 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients of the sample variables. Profitability is positively correlated with size and negatively correlated with capital intensity verifying the initial expectations regarding the association between larger firms and firms with higher capital intensity and profitability. Also, leverage is negatively and significantly associated with profitability something that is not true for liquidity since the relative coefficient was insignificant within conventional levels. Finally, operating cash flows and sales are positively and significantly associated with ROA.

Finally, Table 4 presents the results from the estimation of regression model (1). The regression F-stat is highly significant and the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$  adjusted) is up to 39% which is very satisfactory for the amount of observations on the sample, thus independent variables explain a significant level of variation on the dependent variable. All regression coefficients have the expected sign and are highly significant at the 1% significance level, yet only liquidity and effective tax rates were insignificant within conventional levels. The coefficient on the SIZE variable is positive indicating that larger firms are associated with higher levels of return on assets. This result verifies findings by Claver-Cortes et al. (2007) and Hua et al. (2012) suggesting that hospitality firms of larger size are associated with higher profitability due to economies of scale and better control of resources. On the contrary, capital intensity impacts negatively on profitability verifying our expectations that hospitality firms which operate with large fixed assets create additional fixed costs impacting on profitability.

Moreover, leverage found to impact negatively on profitability attributed to the fact that leveraged firms are obliged to pay higher amounts on interest thus raising expenses and lowering profits. Our findings corroborates previous findings by Singh and Faircloth (2005) who documented that high leverage adversely affects a firm's future investment opportunities, which in turn can lead on a negative impact on its long-term operating performance. Furthermore, operating cash flows and sales both impact positively on profitability. This finding verifies that revenues are the key determinant of profits corroborating evidence by Hua et al. (2012) that hospitality firms with higher sales are permitted less cost thus increasing firms' profit margins. The same arguments are valid for operating cash flows since the

**Table 3** Pearson correlation coefficients of sample variables

Variables	ROA	CAP_INT	SIZE	LEV	LIQ	CFO	ETR	SALES
<b>ROA</b>	1							
<b>CAP_INT</b>	-0.084 <sup>a</sup> (-0.000)	1						
<b>SIZE</b>	0.091 <sup>a</sup> (0.000)	0.205 <sup>a</sup> (0.000)	1					
<b>LEV</b>	-0.424 <sup>a</sup> (0.000)	-0.096 <sup>a</sup> (0.000)	-0.119 <sup>a</sup> (0.000)	1				
<b>LIQ</b>	-0.0001 (0.991)	-0.001 (0.868)	-0.015 (0.063)	-0.012 (0.138)	1			
<b>CFO</b>	0.245 <sup>a</sup> (0.000)	-0.012 (0.144)	0.071 <sup>a</sup> (0.000)	-0.044 <sup>a</sup> (0.000)	-0.003 (0.724)	1		
<b>ETR</b>	0.001 (0.998)	0.009 (0.281)	0.001 (0.959)	-0.006 (0.460)	-0.001 (0.986)	-0.001 (0.864)	1	
<b>SALES</b>	0.100 <sup>a</sup> (0.000)	-0.269 <sup>a</sup> (0.000)	-0.176 <sup>a</sup> (0.000)	0.199 <sup>a</sup> (0.000)	-0.009 (0.243)	-0.004 (0.581)	-0.006 (0.500)	1

Note p-values are on the parentheses. <sup>a</sup>indicate statistical significance at the 1% significance level

**Table 4** Regression results on profitability determinants

Variables	Coefficient	T-test	Standard error
Constant	0.0396 <sup>a</sup>	2.30	0.0172
SIZE	0.0085 <sup>b</sup>	7.17	0.0011
CAP_INT	-0.1453 <sup>b</sup>	-22.71	0.0064
LEV	-0.2295 <sup>b</sup>	-71.99	0.0032
LIQ	-0.0285	-0.93	0.0308
CFO	0.3263 <sup>b</sup>	47.10	0.0069
SALES	0.0079 <sup>b</sup>	5.46	0.0014
ETR	-0.0065	-0.14	0.4461
R <sup>2</sup> -adjusted	0.3858		
F-stat	1192.09 <sup>b</sup>		
Observations	13274		
Year dummies	Included		

Note <sup>a</sup>, <sup>b</sup> indicate statistical significance at the 5% and 1% significance level respectively

positive coefficient on CFO indicates that hospitality firms which are able to convert assets into cash can respond to profit opportunities (Dimitropoulos, 2009).

Finally, in order to check for the robustness of the main findings we performed some sensitivity tests. At first, ROA was replaced by return on equity (ROE) and net profit margin as alternative dependent variables, but the results remain qualitatively unchanged relative to those presented on Table 4. Secondly, the estimation of model (1) was performed separately for accommodation and food services firms so as to control for potential deferential effects between these two types of activities. Results were again unchanged yet they were more significant (in terms of coefficient and t-tests size) for the accommodation firms. Finally, mode (1) was re-estimated after changing the definition of several independent variables such as leverage which was estimated as the ratio of long-term liabilities to total assets, sales was estimated as the annual percentage change of revenues yet the results remained unchanged verifying the robustness of the main findings.

## 5 Conclusion

The scope of this study was to examine the financial determinants of profitability of the hospitality industry during the fiscal years 2011–2013, when the sovereign debt crisis in Greece had a severe impact on the economy. The study utilized a large sample of accommodation and food services firms listed on the national corporate registry and have published financial statements for the period under investigation. The final sample utilized in the analysis consists of 14349 firm-year observations which is by far the largest sample used in a study regarding the hospitality industry. Regression analysis results indicated that profitability is positively determined by the size of firms' assets, operating cash flows and sale revenues, while on the

contrary profitability is negatively affected by the level of a firm's capital intensity and leverage. Several sensitivity analysis tests verified the robustness of the results making the solid to alternative variable definitions and firms main activity.

The findings of this study could be proved useful for managers and owners on the hospitality industry. Specifically, hospitality firms are operating with large fixed assets thus have enhanced capital intensity forcing them to record large amounts on depreciation (as an expense reduces profitability) and maintenance which reduce profit margins. A potential solution is operating leasing of fixed assets which allows them to divert some of the maintenance and all depreciation expenses to the owner of the assets. Also, the reduction of liabilities is another way to improve profitability. This can be achieved through a better management of short-term liabilities (credit terms to customers and creditors) and a re-financing of long-term liabilities. We are aware that re-financing of loans during a recessionary period is difficult, nevertheless the slight improvement of profitability via the efficient management of short-term liabilities could assist on that direction. Finally, the ability of hospitality firms to increase revenues and operating cash flows contributes significantly on profitability enhancement. Higher revenues could be achieved by implementing better marketing strategies (Pappas, 2015), effective strategic planning (Gkliatis & Koufopoulos, 2013) and even the implementation of total quality management practices (Bouranta et al., 2017).

However, this study has some limitations that worth noticing, which simultaneously provide opportunities for future research. The present study is focused on a single country setting and despite the fact that control for the population of firms on the hospitality sector, the findings cannot be generalized to other countries. Therefore, future studies could extend the research framework to other popular tourist destinations in order to verify or reject the current study's inferences. Also, we have not controlled for other potential determinants of profitability (beyond accounting variables) such as corporate governance. Dimitropoulos and Tsagkanos (2012) suggest that the governance of an organization (board structure and even ownership structure) is affecting financial decisions and consequently financial results proving that higher board size and independence contribute to enhance financial performance and viability. Thus, future research can consider including governance variables as additional determinants of profitability.

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# Customer Oriented Strategy and Business Performance in Tourism and Hospitality Industry

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**Abstract** The primary purposes of this study were: (a) to determine the extent to which customer oriented strategy is implemented to four and five-star hotels, and (b) to examine the relationship between customer oriented strategy used by four and five-star hotels and business performance (profit, ROI, sales volume and market share). The research was addressed to all four and five-star hotels in the Region of Peloponnese (142 four and five-star hotels, which recognized by Hellenic chamber of hotels) and involved 142 experienced managers who were the most knowledgeable regarding marketing issues. Responses were received from 98 managers of 98 four and five-star hotels with a 69% response rate. For the purpose of this study a 40-item questionnaire, was used developed by Whiteley (1991). The reliability of the scale was found to be  $\alpha = 0.89$ . Also, the particular research used the subjective way of measuring performance. Business performance was judged against four criteria two financial (profit and ROI) and two market based (sales volume and market share). Descriptive statistics and Pearson chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) statistics were used to examine variables relationship using SPSS software (version 22). The results (means) indicated that customer oriented strategy is applied to a great extent from four and five-star hotels ( $M = 3.97$ ,  $SD = 0.66$ ). Also, there were

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significant and positive relationships between the customer oriented strategy and business performance (profit, ROI, sales volume and market share) of four and five-star hotels. This study is useful in extending the concept of customer oriented strategy to the tourism and hospitality industry. The study will be useful in helping managers to their further understanding of the customer oriented strategy process in their respective organization.

**Keywords** Customer oriented strategy · Tourism and hospitality industry  
Four and five-star hotel · Business performance

**JEL Classification** Z33 marketing and finance

## 1 Introduction

Customer orientation provides competitive advantage and increases profit of organizations (Shah, Rust, Parasuraman, Staelin & Day, 2006). Moreover, research has suggested that customer oriented strategy creates value for the customers and increases customers' loyalty (Macintosh, 2005; Shah et al., 2006) which in turn results in sales growth and hence firm performance (Asikhia, 2010). Since customer orientation affects customers' loyalty and satisfaction, customer oriented strategy has become an essential ingredient for the long-term success of the organizations (Matin, Jandaghi, Khanifar & Heydari, 2009).

Customer orientation has been defined as "the set of beliefs that puts the customer's interests first, while not excluding those of all others stakeholders such as owners, managers and employees, in order to develop a long-term profitable enterprise (Deshpandé, Farley and Webster, 1993, p. 27). Bartley, Comibuchi and Mann (2007) stated that customer orientation is the company's interest in the customer needs (past, present and future) and expectations and its commitment in understanding and fulfilling them, aiming at long-term development. Moreover, customer orientation has been defined as an integral orientation of the organism towards developing skills and broadening the services that satisfy customer needs and expectations (Korunka et al., 2007; Öberg, 2011).

Adopting customer oriented strategies involves commitment to customer orientation, which may include creating a positive experience for the customers by satisfying their needs and allowing them to participate in the design of services as well as improving the employees' customer-oriented behavior through empowerment (Bonacchi & Perego, 2011; Korkmazurek & Hazir, 2011; Van den Bergh, 2012). Preserving the clientele is naturally a priority, which is accomplished by placing strategically the customer at the heart of the company (Cheng, Hsu & Huang, 2011; Moxham & Wiseman, 2009; Oliver, 2003).

Customer orientation is widely considered a research priority and the implementation of customer oriented strategies is subject to extensive study (Bharadwaj, Nevin & Wallman, 2012). Although there is emerging consensus that becoming

more customer-focused is a strategic imperative, how it can be achieved is not fully understood. According to the literature, an issue that is not answered yet is the extent to which customer oriented strategy is implemented in the organizations (Bharadwaj et al., 2012). Moreover, empirical research on customer oriented strategy and organizational performance has been conducted in small, medium and large businesses (Tajeddini, 2011), in many sectors such as construction, food, telecommunications, using different performance indicators (financial and non-financial), and with different direct or indirect factors to influence it (Brockman, Jones & Becherer, 2012; Tajeddini, 2010; Williams & Naumann 2011). However, research regarding customer oriented strategy in four and five star hotels in Greece is still limited, even though maintaining and increasing the clientele contributes significantly to the company's success (Hurley, 2004).

The purpose of the present study was: (a) to determine the extent to which the customer oriented strategy is implemented to Greek tourism and hospitality industry, and more specifically in four and five-star hotels, (b) to examine the relationship between customer oriented strategy used by four and five-star hotels and business performance (profit, ROI, sales volume and market share).

The following research question was addressed in this study:

1. To what extent is the customer oriented strategy being used in Greek four and five-star hotels?

The hypothesis to be tested was the following:

- (a) The levels of customer oriented strategy (Low, Lower medium, Upper medium and High) are independent of business performance (as measured by satisfaction levels in profit, return on investment, sales volume and market share) of four and five star hotels.

## 2 Literature Review

Aligning the company with its customers and creating value for them through continuous improvement and innovation is essential for the success of any customer oriented strategy (Shah et al., 2006), while policy making that enhances customer satisfaction further contributes to this success (Kakabadse, Savery, Kakabadse & Lee-Davis, 2006).

Oliver (2003) highlighted the importance of commitment to Quality by strategically establishing a high-quality service environment around the customer, who—himself and his needs—should become the center of attention. This commitment contributes to customer satisfaction, which creates positive financial results compared to the antagonism (Schneider, Macey, Lee, & Young, 2009). Customer orientation, as well as innovation, significantly affects business performance indicators

in a positive way (Appiah-Adu & Singh, 1998). As a consequence, new ideas targeted at the customer needs are expected to secure and improve the company's status in the market (Tajeddini, 2010).

Brockman et al. (2012), showed that these statements apply to small enterprises as well, while additional factors such as undertaking risk and exploiting opportunities further improve the outcome. The implementation of customer oriented strategies require the Leadership of a company to be effectively committed to customer oriented culture (Nwankwo, 1995), and to be able to inspire, communicate and diffuse a solid entrepreneurial vision throughout the company's layers (Whiteley, 1993). The diffusion of this vision should also include great efforts towards satisfying customer needs, building long-term relations with the customers and adapting entrepreneurial strategies according to the information received by both the customers and the market (Bartley et al., 2007).

Customer oriented behavior stems from the combination of the employee's determination, skills and participation in the decision making process (Hennig-Thurau & Thurau, 2003). Training the employees in quality customer service and adopting a reward system that encourages productivity and commitment to the company has a great impact on their empowerment and their view of customer oriented behavior (Ro & Chen, 2011). Empowerment is important for acquiring a high level of customer orientation while highly customer oriented employees present a strong professional and organizational commitment and satisfaction from their work (Gazzoli, Hancer, & Park, 2012). In addition to this link between organizational commitment and customer orientation, Anaza and Rutherford (2012) comment on the positive impact the alignment between employees and customers has on the marketing mechanism and the fulfillment of their needs. Customer oriented behavior from the employees' part results in emotional commitment from the part of the customers that might lead to their membership being renewed (Kim & Ok, 2010).

A company's customer oriented identity can be significantly boosted by customer satisfaction and loyalty that comes as a result of precautionary conflict management and possible failure forecasting (Ndubisi, 2012). Customer satisfaction can be achieved by acquiring as much information as possible regarding the customer's needs, focusing on their fulfillment and developing new services and ideas that create additional value for the customer (Öberg, 2011). Malladi (2011), comments on the creation of a positive personal experience for the customer by participating in the creation of something innovative or through their interaction with the personnel and the managers. Problem solving and complaint management can contribute greatly to a company's success and survival if performed efficiently, or result in negative mouth to mouth communication otherwise (Gursoy, Ekiz & Chi, 2007). Complaint management improves the processes of a customer oriented firm at operational and strategic level (Uusitalo, Hakala & Kautonen, 2008) if proper feedback reaches the managers for the necessary decision making (Markey, Reichheld & Dullweber, 2009). Process improvement and problem elimination

result in customer satisfaction and extension of membership (Uusitalo et al., 2008) which is important since signing new members is a difficult and financially consuming procedure (Yavas, Karatepe, Badakus, & Avci, 2004).

Macintosh (2005) states that even if a lot of organisms favor customer orientation as a corporate value, significant knowledge is necessary in order to apply it strategically. Customer orientation and customer oriented strategies are currently considered among the most popular business concepts regarding thriving against the competition (Korkmazurek & Hazir, 2011), while exploring the potential of customer orientation has been the primal priority of researchers the last years (Bharadwaj et al., 2012). This paper is useful in extending the concept of customer oriented strategy to Greek tourism and hospitality industry. The paper will be useful in helping hotel managers to their further understanding of the customer orientation process in their respective organizations. More specifically, the present study of customer orientation process in Greek four and five star hotels will provided information concerning the extent of the customer orientation process currently being used in these organizations, and the relationships between the extent of customer oriented strategy used by Greek four and five star hotels and the hotel's performance.

### **3 Methodology**

#### **3.1 Sampling**

The research was addressed to all four and five-star hotels in the Region of Peloponnese (142 four and five-star hotels, which recognized by Hellenic chamber of hotels) and involved 142 experienced managers who were the most knowledgeable regarding marketing issues. Responses were received from 98 managers of 98 four and five-star hotels with a 69% response rate. According to the findings of this research, 54 (55.1%) of the participants were females and 44 (44.9%) were males; the educational level of the participants was grouped into three categories: 53 (54.5%) had elementary/high school education, 40 (40.4%) had university level education and 5 (5.1%) had post-graduate level education. In relation to the position of responsibility that managers of the four and five star hotels occupied, the 30.6% of the total population (30 administrative staff) were hotel reservations managers, while 28.6% of the total population (28 administrative staff) were persons that belong to the Marketing Department of four and five star hotels (Marketing Managers). In addition, the 19 (19.4%) of the total sample were General managers, 8 (8.2%) were Chief Executive Officers, 7 (7.1%) were Human Resources Managers and 6 (6.1%) were FNB Managers. Moreover, the work experience of the participants was grouped into three categories: 55 (55.7%) had more than 7 years, 27 (27.8%) had 3–7 years and 16 (16.5%) had 1–3 years work experience.

### 3.2 *Questionnaire*

For the purpose of this study a 40-item questionnaire, was used (developed by Whiteley, 1991) focusing on customer oriented strategy. The questionnaire was translated and modified by a panel of experts in the fields of tourism marketing, business management and strategic marketing, in order to provide information on how managers see their hotel in terms of the customer oriented strategy process, using a five point Likert scale.

The first part of the questionnaire was consisted of seven units and 40 questions based on the following seven key factors of customer oriented strategy:

1. Vision, Commitment, and Climate
2. Aligning Ourselves with Our Customers
3. Readiness to Find and Eliminate Customers' Problems
4. Using and Communicating Customer Information
5. Reaching out for Our Customers
6. Competence, Capability and Empowerment of People
7. Continuously Improving Our Processes and Products

The reliability of the scale was found to be  $\alpha = 0.89$ . The second part of the questionnaire included 4 questions in relation to demographic characteristics of the respondents such as: the gender, the educational level, the position of responsibility and the work experience of the respondents.

Also, the particular research used the subjective way of measuring performance. This means that managers were asked to evaluate the performance of their hotel in relation to their current years' objectives, in relation to their last financial years' objectives and finally in relation to their major market competitors on a five-point Likert scale. The reliability of the scale was found to be  $\alpha = 0.92$ . On each of the three bases, performance was judged against four criteria, two financial (profit and ROI) and two market based (sales volume and market share). The above criteria were adapted from the literature (Terzoudis, 2011; Rizos, Papaioannou, Kriemadis, & Vamvoukaki, 2016). The content validity of the questionnaire was determined by a panel of experts which consisted of 6 academics and practitioners in the fields of tourism marketing, tourism professionals, management research, and strategic marketing.

### 3.3 *Procedure*

The data collection was accomplished through questionnaires. The questionnaires were completed at each hotel's premises, after their consent, via appointments that were scheduled by phone. The sequence of events concerning the whole procedure was realized as follows: managers of the foresaid hotels were informed of the research and their consent was requested in order to realize the questionnaire.

After their consent was given, appointments were scheduled at specific dates with each and every one of the managers of hotels. Dates were rescheduled whenever requested due to heavy workload. The completion of the questionnaire lasted for approximately 30 min and clarifications were given to subjects when asked for. Additionally, another 10 min were required with each subject for completion of the business performance construct items.

### 3.4 Data Analysis

Additional variables and complex indicators were created for the better exploitation of the information selected, including indicators on the Overall Customer Oriented Strategy and the Overall assessment of the Business Performance. These variables were grouped in 4 groups in order to facilitate the statistical analysis:

1. Low (Mean = 1–3.5)
2. Lower medium (Mean = 3.51–4)
3. Upper medium (Mean = 4.01–4.5) and
4. High (Mean = 4.51–5).

The dividing points for each of the above variables were determined based on the logic that derived from descriptive statistics and more specifically, mean score and standard deviation.

The study was a quantitative design. The analysis was exploratory in nature and examined whether there is a relationship between the customer oriented strategy and business performance of four and five star hotels. Descriptive statistics were used to examine the purpose of the study, and more specifically, to answer the first research question, while Pearson chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) statistics was used to answer the first hypothesis, using SPSS software (version 22).

## 4 Results

Data of the four and five star hotels' managers responses were analyzed to gather information specific to the extent to which customer oriented strategy is applied to the four and five star hotels (Table 1). From the analysis it is shown that the actions related to "Vision, Commitment, and Climate of the hotel", "Reaching out for Our Customers", and "Aligning Ourselves (the hotel) with Our Customers" were assessed significantly higher (M = 4.51 SD = 0.39, M = 4.40 SD = 0.52 and M = 4.20 SD = 0.58 respectively) according to managers' perspective. Also, the data from the responders, indicated that the average score for actions regarding "Competence, Capability and Human resource Empowerment" was lower (M = 4.09 SD = 0.69), followed by the actions related to "Using and

**Table 1** The extent of customer oriented strategy of four and five star hotels

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. deviation
Vision, commitment, and climate of the hotel	98	1	5	4.51	0.39
Aligning ourselves (the hotel) with our customers	98	1	5	4.20	0.58
Readiness to find and eliminate customers' problems	98	1	5	4.00	0.72
Using and communicating customer information	98	1	5	4.07	0.63
Reaching out for our customers	98	1	5	4.40	0.52
Competence, capability and human resource empowerment	98	2	5	4.09	0.69
Continuously improving our processes and products	98	1	5	3.95	0.78
Customer oriented strategy	98	1	5	3.97	0.66

Communicating Customer Information” ( $M = 4.07$   $SD = 0.63$ ). The actions regarding “Readiness to Find and Eliminate Customers’ Problems” and “Continuously Improving Our Processes and Products” were evaluated with the lowest score ( $M = 4.00$   $SD = 0.72$  and  $M = 3.95$   $SD = 0.78$  respectively) by the managers of four and five star hotels. Finally, the results (means) indicated that customer oriented strategy is applied to a great extent from Greek four and five star hotels ( $M = 3.97$   $SD = 0.66$ ), according to managers’ perspective.

In addition, the results (Table 2) revealed that there was statistically significant relationship between the four levels of customer oriented strategy (Low, Lower medium, Upper medium and High) and the business performance of four and five star hotels (as measured by satisfaction levels in relation to current year’s objectives) ( $\chi^2 = 80.481$ ,  $df = 6$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ). Thus, upper medium customer oriented strategy is more probable to contribute to upper medium business performance and less probable to contribute to medium business performance.

Moreover, the results (Table 3) showed that there was statistically significant relationship between the four levels of customer oriented strategy (Low, Lower medium, Upper medium and High) and the business performance of four and five star hotels (as measured by satisfaction levels in relation to last financial year’s objectives) ( $\chi^2 = 74.825$ ,  $df = 6$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ). Thus, upper medium customer oriented strategy is more probable to contribute to upper medium business performance and less probable to contribute to medium business performance.

Also, the results (Table 4) indicated that there was statistically significant relationship between the four levels of customer oriented strategy (Low, Lower medium, Upper medium and High) and the business performance of four and five star hotels (as measured by satisfaction levels in relation to competitors’ objectives)



**Table 2** Chi-square analysis ( $\chi^2$ ) between the levels of customer oriented strategy and the business performance of four and five star hotels (as measured by satisfaction levels in relation to current year’s objectives)

		Business performance (as measured by satisfaction levels in relation to current year’s objectives) of four and five star hotels			
		Low	Medium	Upper medium	Total
Customer oriented strategy	Low	75.9%	20.0%		24.5%
	Lower medium	24.1%	40.0%	13.8%	20.6%
	Upper medium		40.0%	46.6%	32.4%
	High			39.7%	22.5%
Total		100%	100%	100%	100%

**Table 3** Chi-square analysis ( $\chi^2$ ) between the levels of customer oriented strategy and the business performance of four and five star hotels (as measured by satisfaction levels in relation to last financial year’s objectives)

		Business performance (as measured by satisfaction levels in relation to last financial year’s objectives) of four and five star hotels			
		Low	Medium	Upper medium	Total
Customer oriented strategy	Low	58.1%	43.8%		24.5%
	Lower medium	22.6%	56.2%	9.1%	20.6%
	Upper medium	19.4%		49.1%	32.4%
	High			41.8%	22.5%
Total		100%	100%	100%	100%

( $\chi^2 = 66.071, df = 6, p = 0.00$ ). Thus, upper medium customer oriented strategy is more probable to contribute to upper medium business performance and less probable to contribute to medium and low business performance.

## 5 Discussion

Based on the findings of this study the customer oriented strategy is applied to a great extent by Greek four and five star hotels, ( $M = 3.97$   $SD = 0.66$ ), according to managers’ perspective. This consists a unique and original finding since there is no related supporting literature.

**Table 4** Chi-square analysis ( $\chi^2$ ) between the levels of customer oriented strategy and the business performance of four and five star hotels (as measured by satisfaction levels in relation to competitors' objectives)

		Business performance (as measured by satisfaction levels in relation to competitors' objectives) of four and five star hotels			
		Low	Medium	Upper medium	Total
Customer Oriented Strategy	Low	60.6%	25.0%	3.5%	24.5%
	Lower medium	30.3%	50.0%	8.8%	20.6%
	Upper medium	9.1%	25.0%	47.4%	32.4%
	High			40.4%	22.5%
Total		100%	100%	100%	100%

Four and five star hotels implemented customer oriented strategies mainly, while these actions were primarily related to their "Vision, Commitment, and Climate, Competence", "Reaching out for Our Customers", "Aligning Ourselves (the hotel) with Our Customers", "Competence, Capability and Human resource Empowerment", and "Using and Communicating Customer Information" the mean score of which was higher than 4.05 in the 1–5 Likert scale used. This finding is in accordance to the literature (Anaza & Rutherford, 2012; Bartley et al., 2007; Kennedy, Goolsby & Arnould, 2003).

The factor of customer oriented strategy "Vision, Commitment, and Climate", was considered to a "great extent" by managers of four and five star hotels. This means that the primary goal of the four and five star hotels was the idea of creating satisfied customers by giving them individualized services which exceed their expectations in the things that matter most to them. Also, the four and five star hotels were fully committed to the idea of quality and served the customers' needs more than their own internal needs. In a customer-driven business, management and employees remain committed to satisfying the needs and expectations of the customers. In these companies, rewards, recognition and training are all strategies for ensuring excellent customer service and constitute a major factor in determining who gets ahead in the hotel (Whiteley, 1991).

In relation to the factor of customer oriented strategy "Reaching out for our Customers" it seems that the four and five star hotels tried enough to resolve all customers' complaints and their employees were encouraged sufficiently to go above and beyond to serve customers well. Moreover, the customers of the four and five star hotels had no difficulty to complain to them about their products and services, as well as to do business with them (Whiteley, 1991).

With regard to the factor "Aligning with our Customers", the four and five star hotels played a consultative and partnership role with their customers during the sales of products/services to them. They also, used a customer-centered orientation in production and delivery processes, which means that four and five star hotels

used information from their customers in designing desired products or services, while they applied marketing strategies (advertising and promotion methods) without promising more than they could deliver to their customers. Moreover, four and five star hotels had a good knowledge of which attributes of their products or services their customers valued most (Whiteley, 1991).

In relation to the key factor “Competence, Capability and Human resource Empowerment”, four and five star hotels have made more and better efforts toward providing their customer-contact employees with enough empowerment by increasing their information, training, knowledge, trust, (Melhem, 2004), and enriching them with the abilities and skills to fulfill customers’ requests and needs. It seems that frontline employees of four and five star hotels facilitated by explaining and providing answers to customers’ inquiries on the spot rather than waiting for their managers’ feedback and judgment because they had a good understanding of the products and services of their hotel. Moreover, frontline employees had the right ability, flexibility, and power to be engaged in customer oriented behavior, as well as they had more control over job-related issues and decisions, which allowed them to have more flexibility and responsibility with respect to various customers’ needs. Also, the frontline employees were treated with respect by their hotel, while they were cross-trained so that they could fill in for each other when necessary (Whiteley, 1991).

With regard to the factor of customer oriented strategy “Using and Communicating Customer Information”, it seems that the four and five star hotels had the awareness that their customers define the concept of quality and often provided opportunities to their employees at various levels and functions, to meet with customers. Also, they totally understand clearly the expectations of their customers and frequently provided information to their customers that helps shape realistic expectations. Moreover, the key managers of four and five star hotels understand their customers’ demands/requirements totally and regularly contact with them (Whiteley, 1991).

The main constraints of the four and five star hotels in Greece as far as customer oriented strategy is concerned is the following factors: “Continuously Improving Our Processes and Products” and “Readiness to Find and Eliminate Customers’ Problem”, which received the lowest score among the factors of customer oriented strategy (mean score = 3.95, and mean score = 4.00 in the 1–5 Likert scale). The low score regarding the key factor “Continuously Improving Our Processes and Products” pointed out that four and five star hotels did not work continuously to improve their products and services and also did not study the best practices of other hotels to get ideas about how to improve things. Moreover, it seems that the functional groups of four and five star hotels rarely cooperated to reach shared goals and more often competing with one other. Systematically four and five star hotels did not try enough to reduce their research-and-development cycle time, while they partly invested in the development of innovative ideas and resolved identified problems in relation to quality. Also, they managed information ineffectively, while

they had an indirect and impersonal approach towards their customers. Moreover, their employees were not trained in pursuing new and innovative services for their customers (Whiteley, 1991).

Furthermore, concerning the factor of customer oriented strategy “Readiness to Find and Eliminate Customers’ Problem”, it seems that the four and five star hotels monitored customers’ complaint partly, and irregularly asked customers to give them feedback about their performance. Moreover, customers’ complaints were infrequently analyzed in order to identify quality problems and consequently, the four and five star hotels looked for ways to eliminate internal procedures and systems that did not create value for their customers to some extent (Whiteley, 1991).

Also, the research findings rejected the hypothesis that the levels of customer oriented strategy are independent of business performance (as measured by satisfaction levels in relation to their current years’ objectives, in relation to their last financial years’ objectives and finally in relation to their major market competitors) of four and five star hotels. More specifically, the results revealed that there was statistically significant relationship between the levels of customer oriented strategy and the business performance of four and five star hotels. This result is consistent with previous studies on customer oriented strategy and organizational performance, in service and business sector (Asikhia, 2010; Shah et al., 2006), and shows that the level of customer oriented strategy which managers exercised in the four and five star hotels is related to their business performance.

## 6 Conclusion

A total of 98 (69%) of Greek four and five star hotels in the Region of Peloponnese responded to the survey. According to Babbie (2004), a response rate of 50% or more is generally considered an acceptable response rate in the surveys. Based on this fact and the high response rates, it appears that the results of the study could be generalized to the target population (four and five star hotels in the Region of Peloponnese).

The present findings add credence to the argument that customer oriented strategy is a major factor for tourism business activity, because it provides the Greek four and five star hotels with a better understanding of their customers, which subsequently leads to enhanced customers’ satisfaction and business performance (Asikhia, 2010), as well as illustrates the competitive advantage of four and five star hotels that undertake customer oriented strategies (Brady & Cronin, 2001; Shah et al., 2006; Wang & Lo, 2004). Our study implies that customer oriented strategy is applied to a great extent by the Greek four and five star hotels. Considering that customer oriented strategy plays a crucial role in ensuring that tourism organizations will survive and prosper, the managers of four and five star hotels can be encouraged to implement it in a greater extent. This could happen by developing a customer focus culture based on principals such as (Brooks, 1997; Whiteley, 1991; Galbreath and Rogers, 1999; Bartley et al., 2006):

- (a) Leadership—Customers drive organizational direction and actions where the vision, mission and values have a strong customer focus and are well communicated, and the senior leaders individually show their commitment through customer centred behaviours, including participating in the development of customer relationships. Moreover, the business strategy is driven by customer and market knowledge and the organization is structured to meet customer needs. Also the senior leaders ensure their people/processes are responsive to customer needs and a strong focus is on customer retention and building long-term relationships.
- (b) Listening—customers' views are actively sought and it is easy for them to make contact/do business. A wide variety of mechanisms for customers to contact the organization easily and effectively (for example, special number, e-mail and web site) should be available, a wide variety of mechanisms for seeking and learning customers' needs and expectations (for example, focus groups, customer surveys, customer visits and reviews) should be in place, a complaints process and guidelines should be established and the complaints should be properly recorded as well as customer relationships and partnerships should be encouraged.
- (c) Analysis and understanding—customer expectations and their key requirements are understood. This means that the performance of product and service delivery processes should be measured, a system for capturing and storing customer information should be in place, surveys, customer information and complaints, including the trends of results should be analyzed, the key customer requirements should be identified and comparative or competitive data should be used.
- (d) Integration and deployment—customer's expectations are acted upon. Integration and deployment practices where the product or service design, development and delivery are based on meeting the needs of the customer. Furthermore, the plans are made and action is taken based on customer surveys or customer information with a focus on agility and flexibility. Moreover, the customers are kept fully informed of the on-going development of new or improved products and services and actions are internally communicated within the organization, as well as the service standards and a published "service promise" are defined and communicated.
- (e) People—customer-focused culture is understood and embedded throughout the organization. The recruitment processes, the communication and training processes and the performance appraisal (including reward and recognition) emphasize customer focus, while the employee objectives and goals are aligned to meet the organization's customer-focused strategy.
- (f) Review and improve—customer-focused strategies, procedures and processes are frequently reviewed and improved. This means that customer-focused strategies and approaches are continuously reviewed for further improvement and key processes which impact the customer are continuously monitored and improved.

A rather obvious action involves the education and further training of the personnel so that they develop and improve their customer oriented behavior, along with their organizational commitment and the representation of their hotel.

The study was delimited to the four and five star hotels. Data for this study were only collected from the four and five star hotels and there was no attempt to generalize this information to all tourism and hospitality industry. The study was also delimited to a questionnaire designed to collect data regarding customer oriented strategy according to Whiteley (1991).

The following were acknowledged as the limitations of the study:

- The honesty, accuracy, and objectivity of the respondents when completing the questionnaire.
- The respondent's level of understanding of the customer oriented strategy vocabulary.

Furthermore, follow-up studies should be done to the same sample in three to five years to investigate possible changes in the utilization of the customer oriented strategy process. Research needs to be done to the same population (four and five star hotels) to assess qualitatively the extent of customer oriented strategy. Qualitative case studies rely upon data obtained from interviews, and observations. Some of the interview and observation issues would address members of the upper management and the type of leadership behaviour which appears to be needed to ensure the success of the customer oriented strategy process.

Areas of further research could also include measuring the impact of customer oriented strategy on the customer loyalty.

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# General Travel Behavior in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace

G. Yfantidou, A. Dalakis, G. Costa and G. Tzetzis

**Abstract** Holidays that include outdoor recreational activities are preferred by tourists. The opportunity given to tourists for active employment during holidays is one of the key reason for choosing regions that offer such activities. Our research took place in the region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace in a year base in order to monitor the tourist behavior of tourists. Participants in the survey were 3070 from seven different countries. Travel behavior in the survey was tested with 5 questions. The behavior of the tourists was different between Greek, English and Polish, who behaved differently from German, Bulgarian, Cypriot and Romanian. The favourable and preferred sports activities are the canoe-kayak, rafting, diving, mountain bike (m.t.b.), climbing-rappeliling, flying-fox and water sports.

**Keywords** Outdoor recreational activities · Tourism · Travel behavior  
Region tourism · Opportunities of tourism

## 1 Introduction

The growth and competition in tourism have stimulated significant interest in highly effective marketing and management strategies for tourism destinations, and made competitiveness a critical emphasis in today's changing market. Therefore, destination competitiveness is now becoming a crucial issue in the tourism industry and an established topic for researchers. Furthermore, evaluation of the competitiveness of a tourism destination is increasingly being recognized as an important tool in the strategic positioning and marketing analysis of destinations (Hudson, Ritchie & Timur, 2004). Ritchie and Crouch (2000) also indicated that destination

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competitiveness has “tremendous ramifications for the tourism industry and is therefore of considerable interest to practitioners and policy makers”.

The concept of tourism can be viewed from two perspectives: a theoretical, covering all aspects of the phenomenon such as economic, social, psychological and a practice one, regulating exchange relations. From the theoretical point of view it can be determined the temporary movement of people from their permanent residence in another place, for reasons mainly psychological, without profit motive and organized effort to attract, welcome and serve the people, and from the perspective of practice, the concept of tourism aims to find an appropriate understanding of all those who are involved in international scale with tourist activities. The specific tourism formula has two sides: the first refers to the movement of people, which represents the consumers of tourism and coincides with the tourist demand and the second refers to the reception and service of mobile, thus accounting for the productive part of tourism coincides with the tourist offer (Gartner, 2001). International studies suggest that tourists travel not only just to see places and monuments or simply overnight in a hotel as nice and comfortable it is. The modern tourist is looking forward to obtain various experiences in the tourist destination, often participating actively in his/her daily activities, taking part in local activities, and experiencing feelings and stories about the cultural and natural heritage of the destination (Yfantidou, Costa, & Polemitis, 2012). For example, it is neither architectural nor historical value nor the stylish of the balcony of the Verona building that attracts thousands of tourists every day to the city. The motivation to visit this city is mainly the love story of Romeo and Juliet (which has never been, but is Shakespeare's creation) that has been linked to this balcony and creates the need for people to visit it and experience similar feelings (Sigala, 2013). Consequently, the main factors that attract tourists to a destination are no longer only their “material” and “tangible” resources, but above all the intangible values, stories, myths and feelings to be used to describe and to promote these resources and create the need for the tourists to experience something unique (Yfantidou, Costa, & Michalopoulos, 2010).

Travel demand management is a collection of different measures (e.g. policies and strategies) implemented with the aim of modifying people’s travel behavior and changing the demand for a specific travel mode (Meyer, 1999). To encourage people to change their travel behavior, incentives are frequently used (Gneezy, Meier, & Rey-Biel, 2011). These can be used either alone or in combination with, for instance, marketing campaigns. One advantage of incentives is that the individual may be motivated, due to these having either monetary or non-monetary value, to try an alternative behavior.

Strong and positive destination images can attract more tourists and establish a successful and competitive positioning (Stylos, Vassiliadis, Bellou, & Andronikidis, 2016; Zhang, Fu, Cai, & Lu, 2014). Destination image influences tourists’ intention to travel, destination choice, experience, and satisfaction levels, which could be used as a strategic management tool for a destination. On the other hand, travel constraints prohibit people’s traveling to a destination or lead to negative effects on the quality of travel. (Lai, Li, & Harrill, 2013). The constraints affect not only travel intentions, but also tourists’ participation, preferences, and experiences while taking a trip (Nyaupane & Andereck, 2008). When promoting a

destination, understanding and reducing constraints is necessary to increase travel intentions (Park, Hsieh, & Lee, 2017).

Tourism is one of the strongest economic sectors in European countries. Tourist activities in the EU 15, pay up to 12% of GDP (directly or indirectly) and 6% of employment (directly). All these numbers are expected to increase in the future, but not the same for all destinations. Today, in the EU, all this activity involves over two million tourism enterprises, with 7.7 million employees. This figure, according to European Commission is expected to increase by about 15% over the next decade. Particularly important also for the development of tourism in Europe is that more than 60% of holiday maker's citizens. The Mediterranean is considered as a leading tourist destination in the world. Spain, France, Italy and Greece remain by far the main destination for international tourism. Tourism nowadays is a dominant economic activity in Greece. The role of the economic growth is expected to grow further in the future, because the free time, vacation and recreation gain a central place in modern societies. During the last two decades, tourism has demonstrated clearly that it has the capacity to create wealth and economic prosperity for entire regions and destinations, jobs and prosperity for their inhabitants. Locations and sites based or look to him for their future (Agorastakis, 2006).

Tourism and recreation have become one of the most important economic and social activities in Europe. Tourism brings income and jobs, understanding other cultures, preservation of natural and cultural heritage, infrastructure development, which in turn have social and economic benefits. Tourism depends more than any other human activity on the quality of the natural and cultural environment. Such as agriculture, forestry, fishing and so tourism is affected by the environment. The term "tourism" includes all people travelling outside the place where they live, for any reason (fun, professional, educational, health reasons) and excludes people travelling for less time than 24 h. The majority of Northern European countries are net spenders. In Mediterranean countries like Greece, Portugal, Spain, Turkey, tourism has great participation in the national economy (Stanners & Bourdeau, 1995). Tourism nowadays is a dominant economic activity for Greece but also for many countries. The role of the economic growth is expected to grow further in the future, because the free time, vacation, recreation gains a central place in modern societies. During the last two decades, tourism has demonstrated clearly that it has the capacity to create wealth and economic prosperity for entire regions and destinations, jobs and prosperity for their inhabitants. 80% of all foreign tourists arriving in Greece by air. Participation of arrivals by air increased steadily due to the liberalization of air transport and the reduction of tariffs, while correspondingly reducing the involvement of other modes of transport. The tourism industry has uneven distribution to the country. Found a strong concentration of tourist activity in a few regions of the country. Five of the 13 regions account for 75% of hotel beds, while the concentration is significant differences within regions. The largest concentrations beds observed in the South Aegean Region (24% of total), Crete (19%), the Ionian Islands (11%), Attica (11%) (due in Athens) and Central Macedonia (10%) (because of Thessaloniki). Income from tourism services in Greece, have made spectacular rise in recent years. Although the majority of tourist

spending (mean 40%), intended for accommodation and food, Greece is still considered the country hosting the low-income level tourists. Although the numbers of Greek tourism are high and it is one of the economic sectors with the best prospects, it is observed an inability to its performances (Agorastakis, 2006). The purpose of this paper was to examine the travel behavior of tourists with different nationalities.

## 2 Methodology

### 2.1 Sample

The survey sample was 3070 tourists. There were three age groups divided the survey sample. The first was from 17 to 39 years (original maturity), the second from 40 to 59 years (middle adulthood) and the third 60 years and over (final maturity) (Gibson, 1994). The number of the sample was similar to the previous survey whereas the Virginia's sample was 3000 tourists.

### 2.2 Questionnaire

The scale of Meng (2006) was used in this research which was about the Destination Competitiveness from the Tourists' Perspective. The theoretical concepts of the research were four:

- (1) Quality of vacation Experience (with 4 phases)
  - (a) Pre-trip planning
  - (b) En-Route Experience
  - (c) Destination On-site
  - (d) After-trip
- (2) Perceived Destination Competitiveness
- (3) Tourist Involvement
- (4) Motivation.

The first theoretical concept of the research was the Quality of vacation Experience which had 4 phases. Pre-trip Planning Phase with 4 questions, the En-route Experience Phase with 6 questions, the Destination On-site Phase with 10 questions and the After-trip Phase with 5 questions. The second theoretical concept of the research was the Perceived Destination Competitiveness with 21 questions. The third theoretical concept of the research was the Tourist Involvement with 11 questions based on two scales for the involvement: Personal Involvement Inventory (PII) and Consumer Involvement Profile (CIP). The fourth theoretical concept of the research was the Motivation of tourists with 12 questions. Finally, the questionnaire had five questions regarding general travel behavior of tourists and at the last page there were 7 questions for the description of their holidays, 1 question

about the area of the 13 regions of the country where they usually go on vacation and 1 question about the sport activities they choose to perform in the vacation area. The last part contained 10 questions about demographic characteristics such as residence place, gender, age of participants, marital status, number of people included in the family, the number of children and their ages, educational level, annual income and occupation.

The questionnaires were in English and translated in Greek, German, Polish and Bulgarian language adapted to different nations in order to approach foreign tourists coming to the destinations in Greece. The procedure of double translation for each of the languages was followed and afterwards the questionnaire was translated from English (original) in Greek and adapted to the needs of the research. The Romanian participants in the research completed questionnaires which were translated in English.

Sport outdoor recreation activities that were included in the questionnaire were the most known: canoeing on lakes, rivers and sea, rafting, archery, diving, sport shooting, M.T.B. (Mountain bike), hiking, orientation, climbing—rappel, Flying-fox (rope games), mountain hiking, water sports, paragliding, motor sports and other.

All the questionnaire responses were given in 5 point scale of Likert from 1 “not at all important” to 5 “very important”. In the case of the tourist involvement on vacation, the 5 point scale of Likert was from 1 “absolutely disagree” to 5 “totally agree”.

### **2.3 Process**

Participants participated voluntarily in the survey. Informed of the content of the questionnaire and the purpose of the survey and then completed the questionnaire. The survey was conducted in the region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace (5 counties including the islands of Thasos and Samothrace) in north eastern Greece. The places that the questionnaire was distributed were the hotel Thraki Palace in Alexandroupolis, the hotel Agriani in Xanthi, on ships (ferry boat schedules Keramoti—Limenas Thasos Alexandroupolis—Samothrace line), at beaches (the island of Thasos and Samothrace, in Xanthi and Alexandroupolis) and at destinations where outdoor recreational activities took place (in different points of the river Nestos delta Evros river, the canyon of the river Aggitis, in Vistonida lake in Livaditi waterfall in Xanthi, the narrow river Nestos, the ski center of Falakro Drama), and at the city centers of Drama, Kavala, Xanthi, Komotini and Alexandroupoli or outdoor in the suburban forest of Xanthi, the monasteries of Xanthi, in Nymfaia area in Komotini, in St. Barbara park in Drama, at the Kavala castle in Dadia forest.

## **3 Results**

The participants in the survey were from 7 different countries. 1666 were from Greece (873 men and 793 women), 251 were from Great Britain (138 men and 113 women), 233 were from Germany (152 men and 81 women), 156 were from Poland

(67 men and 89 women), 461 were from Bulgaria (292 men and 169 women), 67 were from Cyprus (36 men and 31 women) and 64 were from Romania (37 men and 27 women) (missing values 172). The Greek participants resided in 47 of the 51 prefectures. The counties took numbering according to Wikipedia under “prefectures of Greece”. The participants were from the prefecture Argolida (4) Grevena (9), Lakonia (32) and Fokidas (51). The age group was 3 to 17–39 years 69.8%, 40–59 years 24.7% 60 years and over 1,7% (Gibson, 1994). Table 1 shows the profile of tourists who participated in the Greek research.

Tourists came from seven different countries (Table 2). The total number of the respondents was 3070 (172 tourists did not answer the question of their gender).

The general travel behavior of tourists was examined through five questions. The first question “In the past 18 months, how many vacations have you taken (for more than two nights away from home)?” was recorded in three groups (a) 0–2 times, (b) 3–6 times and (c) 7 or more times. 887 answered 0–2 times, 1864 answered 3–6 times and 250 selected 7 or more times. At Fig. 1 the question is presented according to these groups and nationalities.

The second question “How far in advance do you usually book the trip?” was categorized also into three categories (a) 0 days/I do not arrange my holidays, (b) 1–89 days/under 3 months and (c) 90 days/3 months or more. The first category was selected by 1300 tourists, the second by 1539 tourists and the third by 231 (Fig. 2).

The frequency responses of the third question “How many nights do you usually stay in the vacation destination?” were divided into three categories (a) 1 night up to 2 nights, (b) from 3 nights to 6 nights and (c) 7 nights and more. The first category was selected by 103 tourists, the second by 2240 and the third by 676 (Fig. 3).

The fourth question “Generally speaking, how many vacations do you take per year?” was divided into three groups (a) 0–2 vacation every year, (b) 3–6 vacation every year and (c) 7 and more vacation every year. 2208 answered the first one, 706 the second and only 72 the third (Fig. 4).

Finally, the fifth question “Who do you usually travel with on your vacation?” was divided into six categories: Alone 5,5%, Spouse/Partner 28,3%, Family members/Relatives 19,9%, Friends 37,6%, Organized group 4,9% and other 3,8% (Fig. 5).

Crosstab analyses were run between the categories of recreational activities. The positive answers are shown in Table 3.

## 4 Discussion and Conclusions

Due to the different nature of destinations or the types of tourism activities, it is difficult to measure, evaluate, and compare the destinations, as in many cases they are unique in their features and cannot be considered as identical to each other. However, it is important to develop a universal or widely accepted measurement for the various tourism elements when evaluating the competitiveness of a given destination. Existing tourism literature has attempted to answer this question

**Table 1** Demographic characteristics of Greek research sample

Demographic characteristics	Sample (%)
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	51.99
Female	42.41
Missing value	5.6
<b>Age</b>	
17–39	69.8
40–59	24.7
60 or older	1.8
Missing value	3.7
<b>Marital status</b>	
Single	49.3
Married	29.7
Widowed	3.1
Divorced	2.4
Separated	2.5
Cohabit	0.7
Something else	0
Missing value	2.7
<b>Education</b>	
Primary school	0.7
High school	1.7
Lyceum	21
Four-year college	16.4
University degree/Technological Institute degree	49.9
Master	7.1
Ph.D.	1.1
Missing value	2.1
<b>Total annual income</b>	
Under 20,000€	43
20,001€–40,000€	32.9
40,001€–60,000€	11.9
60,001€–80,000€	3.3
80,001€–100,000€	0.7
100,001€–120,000€	0.4
120,001€–140,000€	0.2
Over 140,001€	1.4
Missing value	6.2
<b>Occupation</b>	
Freelance	16.8
Private employee	25.9

(continued)

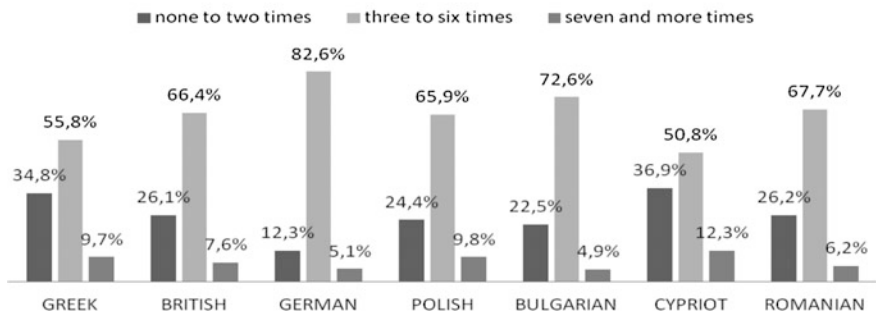
**Table 1** (continued)

Demographic characteristics	Sample (%)
Retired	2.5
Household	1.3
Unemployed	5
Student	33.3
State employee	11.4
Something else	1.7
Missing value	2.1

**Table 2** Participants in the survey listed by country

Countries	Men	Women	Total
Greece	873	793	1666
Great Britain	138	113	251
Germany	152	81	233
Poland	67	89	156
Bulgary	292	169	461
Cyprus	36	31	67
Romania	37	27	64
Total	1595	1303	2898

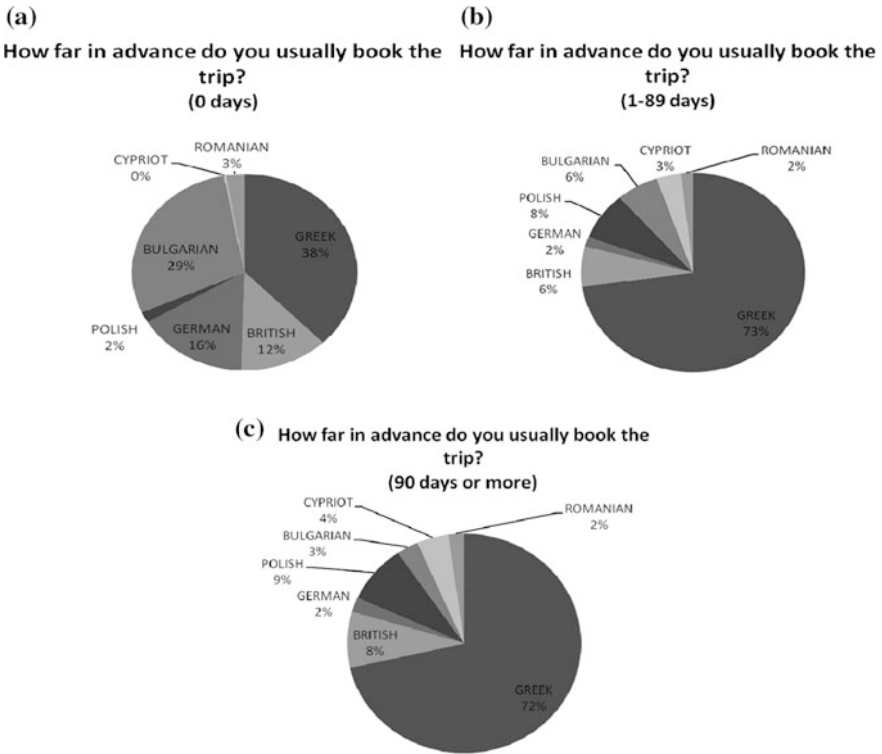
In the past 18 months, how many vacation(s) have you taken (for more than two nights away from home)? \_\_\_\_\_ times.



**Fig. 1** The general travel behavior of tourists with different nationalities

through different approaches, either supply- or demand-oriented in nature. Most recent studies examined destination competitiveness with suppliers as the target group, such as managers of tourism firms and other industry practitioners, and examined the topic related to tourism enterprise development, marketing, and

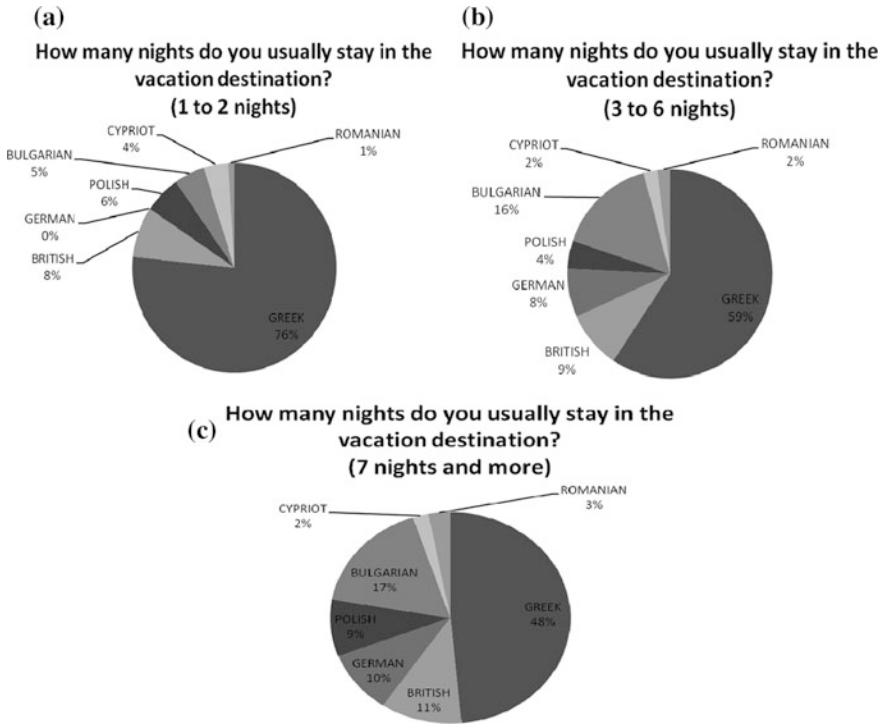




**Fig. 2** The number of days needed to book the trip before arrival according to different nationalities. **a** The percentage of 1300 tourists that selected this answer. **b** The percentage of 1539 tourists that selected this answer. **c** The percentage of 231 tourists that selected this answer

sustainable tourism (Dwyer, Mellor, Livaic, Edwards, & Kim, 2004; Enright & Newton, 2005; Hudson, Ritchie, & Timur, 2004). Findings from numerous studies have supported the view that effective branding lead to greater competitiveness which, in turn, leads to stronger brand loyalty. However, there are very few studies which support that an increase in competitiveness can lead to stronger brand equity (Wong & Teoh, 2015).

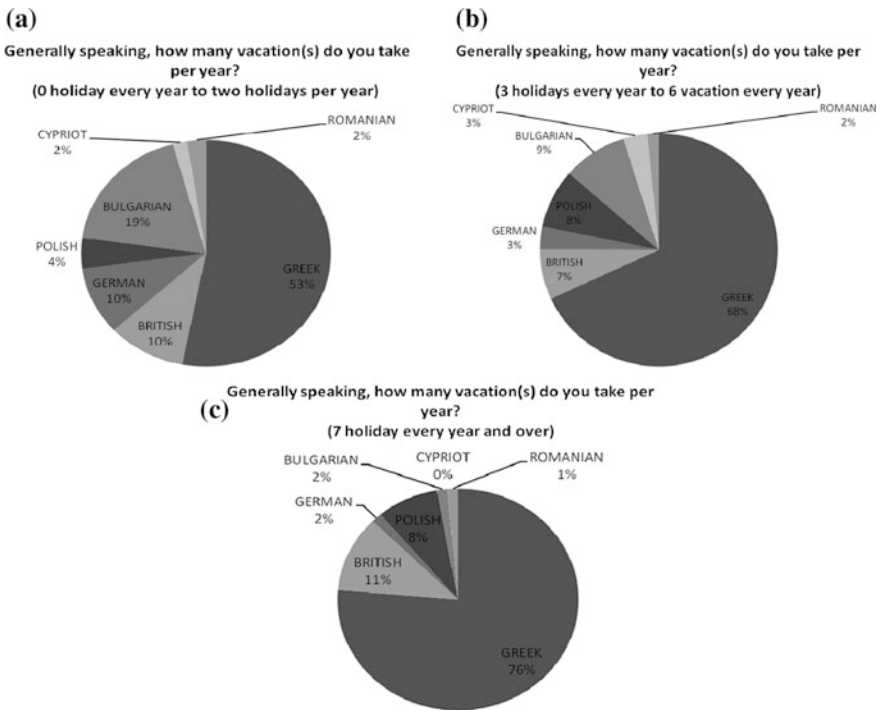
Monitoring the tourists and his or her experience is crucial for the competitiveness of a destination. This relates to common knowledge that the competitiveness of a destination ultimately depends on the satisfaction of its customers throughout the customer experience. Knowing the customer and retaining feedback from the customers will thus continue to be a key strategic asset on both the individual level of the entrepreneur and on the collaborative level of the destination. Easy monitoring techniques for destinations could be informal talks with guests;



**Fig. 3** The number of nights at the vacation destination between different nationalities. **a** The percentage of 103 tourists that selected this answer. **b** The percentage of 2240 tourists that selected this answer. **c** The percentage of 676 tourists that selected this answer

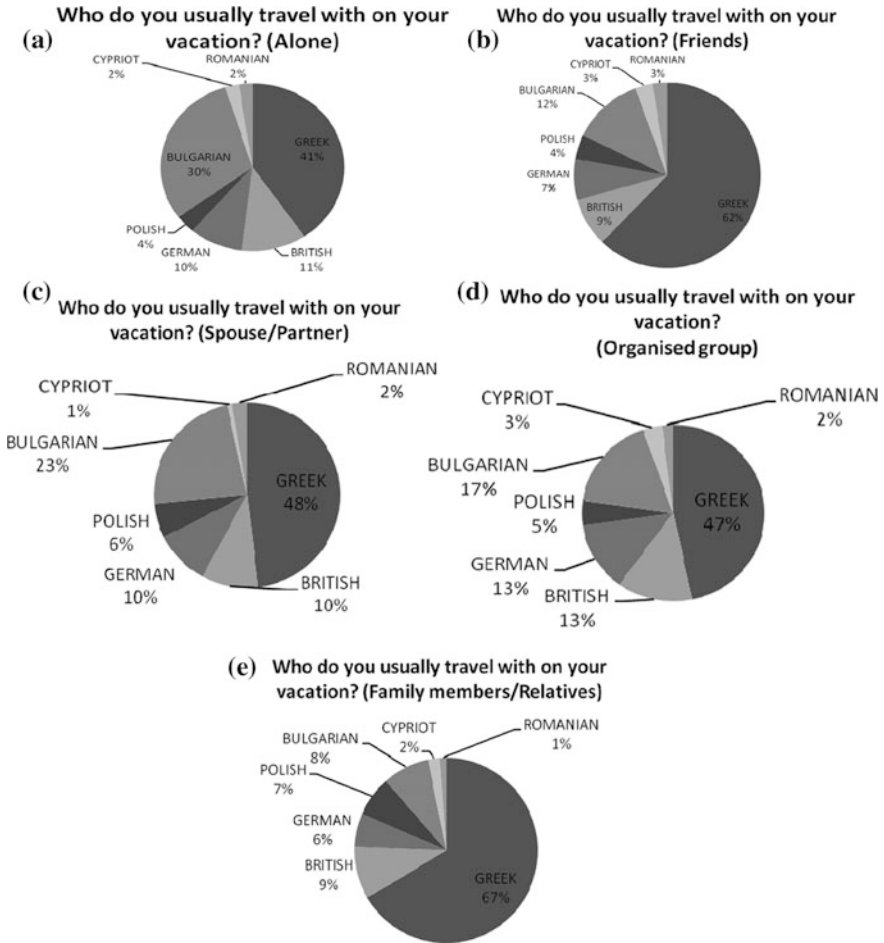
another option could be to implement guest surveys (Zehrer & Hallmann, 2015). In accordance to the above this research proposed a theoretical model to investigate the concepts of the quality of tourism experience and tourists’ perception of destination competitiveness with a questionnaire adapted to different nations.

As Ritchie and Crouch (2000) claimed, “The fundamental product in tourism is the destination experience”. Compared to a business traveler’s trip, the choice of destination is central to a pleasure traveler because his/her travel experience is tied to the destination itself. The tourism product incorporates the entire destination experience, which includes many individual segments, such as accommodation, transportation, attractions, entertainment, recreation, and food service. To develop modern tourism products and turn them into creative lures that will attract visitors and make them loyal to a business or a tourist destination, businesses and Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) will need to develop strategies and policies, which will be based on their tourist resources and will enrich them with



**Fig. 4** The number of vacations per year for the different nationalities. **a** The percentage of 2208 tourists that selected this answer. **b** The percentage of 706 tourists that selected this answer. **c** The percentage of 72 tourists that selected this answer

intangible stories, myths, emotional experiences, events and activities. Emphasis can and should be given to specific forms of tourism and tourism resources, where Greece has competitive and comparative advantages. The right planning and detailed analysis of the data can lead future tourists to a very pleasant holiday without any unexpected problems. Teamwork needs to be done by all stakeholders (public bodies and tourism professionals) in order to boost tourism results to the region.



**Fig. 5** The selected company on vacations between different nationalities. **a** The percentages of 5.5%. **b** The percentages of 37.6%. **c** The percentages of 28.3%. **d** The percentages of 4.9%. **e** The percentages of 19.9%

**Table 3** Positive responses for each activity

	Positive responses	Percentages (%)
Canoe-Kayak	1668	54.3
Rafting	1335	43.5
Archery	1045	34.0
Diving	1349	43.9
Sport shooting	1175	38.3
Mountain bike (M.T.B.)	1386	45.1
Mountain hiking	1201	39.1
Orienteering	716	23.3
Climbing-Rappeliling	1318	42.9
Flying-fox	1237	40.3
Mountaineering	711	23.2
Water sports	1608	52.4
Paragliding	850	27.7
Motor sports	466	15.2

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# A Scientific Modeling of Factors of Human Motivation in Organizations

Theodoros Stavrinoudis and Christos Kakarougas

**Abstract** The present manuscript has two key objectives, firstly it will model the concept of human motivation within an organization and secondly, based on this modeling, it will extract within a coded framework the key motivational factors, as well as the variables that describe/define those factors. To achieve the above-mentioned objectives, an extensive review of the international scientific literature was conducted, while the method of content analysis was adopted. This method allowed the creation of a new integrated model of human motivation in organizations, which led to the formulation and the novel codification of two main factors: the regulating factor and the motivating factor. The regulating factor within an organization can regulate/affect the motivating factor which in turn affects the behavior and the actions of the employees. The regulating factor within an organization depends on two agent factors: the human/employee (Maehr and Mayer in *Educ Psychol Rev* 9:371–412, 1997; Wiley in *Int J Manpower* 18:263–280, 1997) and the community/organization (Miner in *Role motivation theories*. Psychology Press, USA, 1994; Wiley in *Int J Manpower* 18:263–280, 1997). Likewise, the motivating factor depends on two agent factors: needs (Islam and Zaki Hj. Ismail in *Int J Commer Manage* 18:344–362, 2008; Koole in *Cogn Emot* 23:1–44, 2009; Fisher in *J Manage Rev* 12:384–412, 2010; Von Gilsa and Zapf in *The role of emotion and emotion regulation in job stress and well being*. Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2013) and the outcomes of actions/behaviors (positive or negative) (Amaratunga and Baldry in *Facilities* 20:327–336, 2002; Robbins and Judge in *Organizational behavior*. Prentice Hall, USA, 2010; Abadi et al. in *Int Bus Manage* 2:157–169, 2011). Based on the findings of this manuscript, the researchers will soon conduct a field research upon the motivation via reward

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447

systems in Greek luxury hotels and how these systems can contribute to the change of organizational culture in hotels.

**Keywords** Motivation • Human behavior • Factors • Organization  
Hotels • Modeling

**JEL Classification** M540 Personnel Economics: Labor Management

## 1 Introduction

The literature review will evolve in accordance with a logical sequence of two steps/stages. Specifically, the first step/stage will begin with the analysis of the concept of motivation within an organization (Abadi, Jalilvand, Sharif, Salimi, & KhanzadehS, 2011; Behnaz, 2013; Robbins & Judge, 2010), will continue with the presentation of the different motivation categories (Ankli & Palliam, 2012; Benito, 2015; Ho & Kuo, 2013; Lawrence & Jordan, 2009; von Gilsa & Zapf, 2013; Yang & Sanders, 2013) and will conclude by highlighting the three dipoles of control of human behavior within an organization (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Barker, 1993; Douglas & Judge, 2001; Loril, 2009). In the second step/stage the most important motivation theories that evolved from 1930 until today will be presented in a coded manner (Berliner & Calfee, 1996; Kusrkar, Croiset, Mann, Custers, & ten Cate, 2012; Locke & Latham, 2004; Weiner, 1990). Each one of the above steps/stages will be complementing the previous one and will develop an integrated model of human motivation in organization, which will lead to the formulation and the novel codification of the two main groups of factors: the regulating factor and the motivating factor.

## 2 Methodology

This manuscript has two successional goals. The first goal aims to establish a unified and prototype model of human motivation within organizations, based on the major human motivation theories. The second goal, based on the above modelling, aims to formulate, codify and present in a novel concise and practical way the variables that constitute the two main groups of agent factors which influence and motivate human behavior within an organization.

To achieve the first goal, an extensive content analysis in a variety of theoretical resources, including eighty-five recent and earlier scientific research-papers was conducted. The content analysis followed two successive stages, wherein each stage was based on the previous aiming to establish a unified and prototype model of human motivation within organizations (Fig. 2). The first stage includes the concept



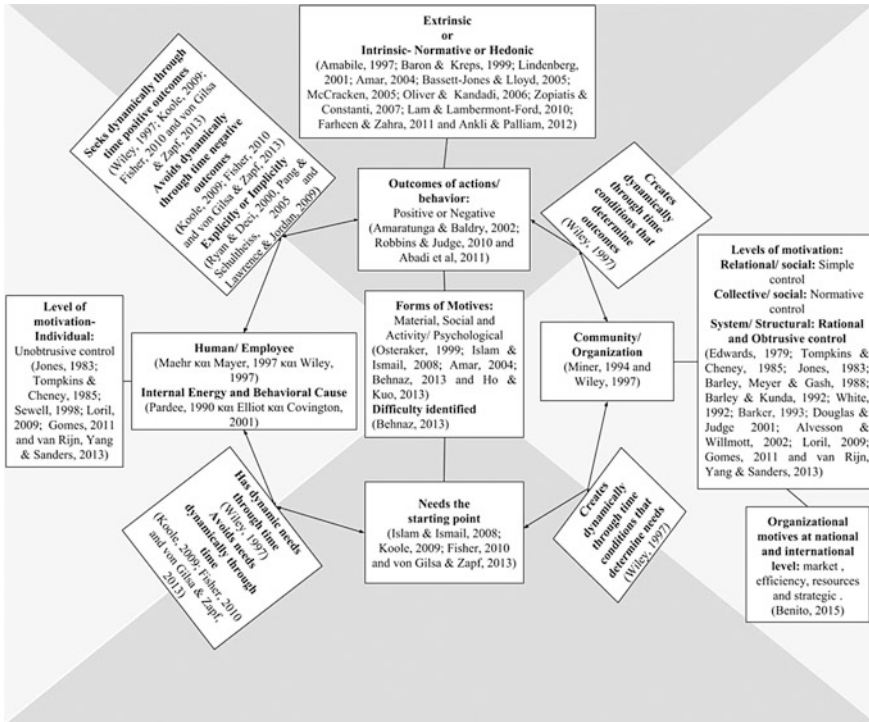


Fig. 1 Integrated model of motivation within an organization

of human motivation, the individual categories of motives and the three dipoles of human behavior control within an organization. From the synthesis of the above, a first integrated model (Fig. 1) emerged.

The second stage includes the content analysis the major motivation theories, aiming to identify the key characteristics of each one of the major motivation theories in the organizational context. Subsequently, those characteristics were incorporated in Fig. 1 and led to the final formulation of the integrated human motivation model within organizations (Fig. 2). This integration was based on the compatibility of the content of the central characteristic elements of each motivation theory in relation to the outline of the four interrelated and interdependent factors that compose the human motivation within an organization, presented in Fig. 1. Then, based on the integrated model of human motivation within an organization—Figure 2, the “regulating” group of factors as well as the “motivating” group of factors were formed and presented in a coded manner.

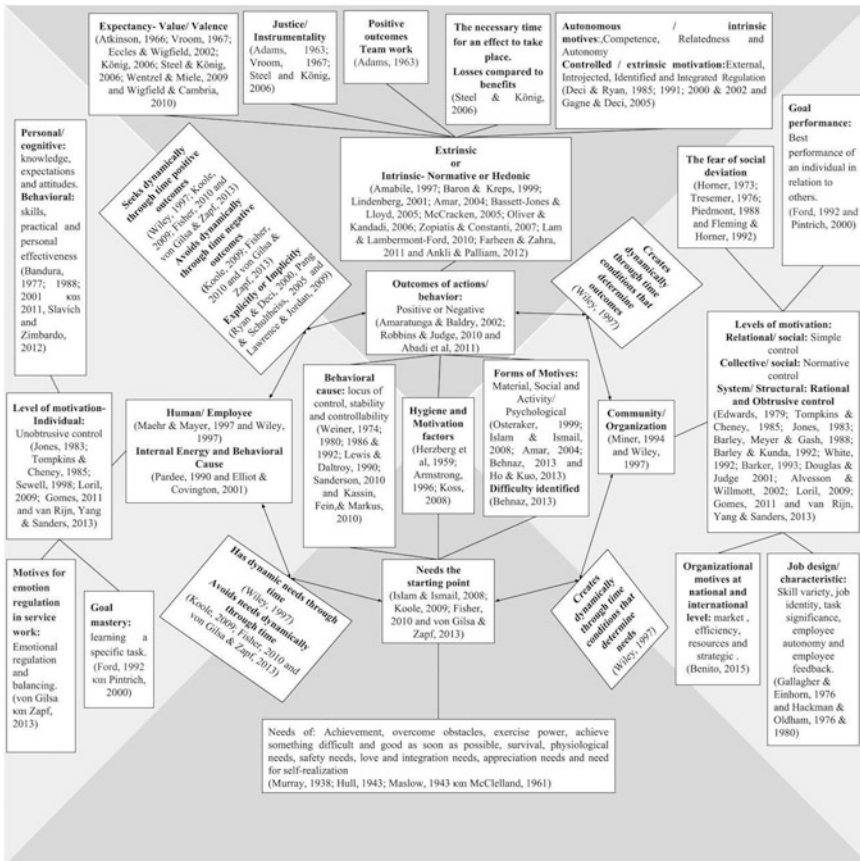


Fig. 2 Integrated model of motivation theories within an organization

### 3 The Concept of Motivation Within an Organization

Through the study of different definitions and characteristics of human motivation expressed by: Pardee (1990), Miner (1994), Maehr and Mayer (1997), Wiley (1997), Elliot and Covington (2001), Amaratunga and Baldry (2002), Islam and Zaki Hj. Ismail (2008), Robbins and Judge (2010), Abadi et al. (2011), Behnaz (2013) the researchers concluded that motivation is an internal, dynamic, volatile and very difficult to identify process which is determined over time by a set of social and individual characteristics. This process starts from a demand or an insufficiency that a person is seeking to recover, in physiological/material level and/or psychological/intangible level, through a positive result namely: an incentive, a distinction, or a reward, a prize, a fee etc. Therefore, motives within an organization are simultaneously an internal energy as well as a cause of stimulation, direction, persistence and repetition of the behavior of a person.

Based on the above findings and Fig. 1, the human needs and the compensations within an organization are two distinct concepts. More analytically, need is an internal process that drives individual behavior and is determined by individual and social characteristics whereas reward/compensation is a positive outcome that comes as a result of a person's behavior/actions. The degree that a certain outcome will be perceived as positive and will satisfy certain needs is determined by social and individual characteristics of the person. In conclusion, the above analysis provides four key elements whose interaction determines the concept of human motivation within an organization. These elements are: human needs, positive outcomes (rewards) that meet human needs, human/employee and community/organization.

#### **4 Categories of Motives**

The authors, through the codification of international literature, determined six categories of motives, which are analyzed and presented in the table below. The first category of motives includes human needs (Fisher, 2010; Koole, 2009; Von Gilsa & Zapf, 2013). The second category of motives of motives includes rewards: extrinsic and intrinsic (Amabile, 1997; Amar, 2004; Ankli & Palliam, 2012; Baron & Kreps, 1999; Bassett-Jones & Lloyd, 2005; Farheen & Zahra, 2011; Lam & Lambermont-Ford, 2010; Lindenberg, 2001; McCracken, 2005; Oliver & Kandadi, 2006; Zopiatis & Constanti, 2007). The third category of motives includes explicit and implicit motives (Lawrence & Jordan, 2009; Pang & Schultheiss, 2005; Ryan & Deci, 2000). The fourth category of motives includes the levels of origin: individual, relational/social and system (Gomes, 2011; van Rijn, Yang, & Sanders, 2013). The fifth category of motives includes the various forms of motives: material, social and activity/psychological (Amar, 2004; Behnaz, 2013; Ho & Kuo, 2013; Islam & Zaki Hj. Ismail, 2008; Osteraker, 1999). The sixth category of motives is including organizational motives at national and international level namely: the market motive, the motive of efficiency, the motive of resources and the strategic motive (Benito, 2015).

#### **5 The Three Dipoles of Human Behavior Control Within an Organization**

The study of the theoretical approaches on human motivation revealed that the control of human behavior within an organization is concentrating between three dipoles (Loril, 2009). The first dipole was expressed by Edwards (1979) who claimed that the control of human behavior within an organization is affected at the one hand by "simple control", while on the other hand by "structural control" (White, 1992; Douglas & Judge, 2001). The second dipole was expressed by Barley

and Kunda (1992), wherein the one end meets the “normative control” while in the other end meets the “rational control” of employee behavior (Barker, 1993; Barley, Meyer, & Gash, 1988). The third dipole was expressed by Tompkins and Cheney (1985), wherein the one end meets the “unobtrusive control” while in the other end meets the “obtrusive control” (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Jones, 1983; Sewell, 1998). All the above can be met within a group or organization or community while the one is affected and depended by the other (Loril, 2009). Figure 2 summarizes the three dipoles of human behavior control within an organization.

## 6 A First Unified Model of Human Motivation Within an Organization

The implementation of Fig. 1 was based on the above findings.

Through the study of Fig. 1, four interrelated and interdependent factors that formulate human motivation within an organization were highlighted. These factors are: the human/employee, the community/organization, the needs and the positive or negative outcomes of human actions or behaviors. Moreover, the theoretical review will focus on the most important motivation theories and will attempt, by using content analysis, to include the most important elements of these theoretical frameworks within the integrated motivation model.

## 7 Chronological Overview of the Major Theories of Motivation

According to Weiner (1990), Berliner and Calfee (1996) the evolution of motivation theories extends in three different chronological periods. The authors of this manuscript adopted this codification but proceeded to further codify these theories. The first chronological period extends from 1930 to 1960. In this period, it was developed the “Need to achieve theory” by Murray (1938), the “Drive theory” by Hull (1943), the “Theory of hierarchy of needs” by Maslow (1943) and the “Two factors theory” by Herzberg, Mausmer, and Snyderman (1959). The motivation theories of the first period will be briefly analyzed and presented in the table below. The next chronological period is extending from 1960 up to 1970 (Berliner & Calfee, 1996; Weiner, 1990). In detail McClelland (1961) expressed a need theory in his work the “Achieving Society”, Adams (1963) expressed the “Equity theory”, Atkinson (1966) developed the “Expectancy-value theory”, while Horner (1973) in 1968 began supporting the theory on the “Motive to avoid success theory” and Vroom (1967) expressed the “Expectancy theory”. The motivation theories of the second period briefly analyzed and presented in the following table. The third period covers the decades of 1970 up to 1990 (Berliner & Calfee, 1996; Weiner, 1990). Specifically, Weiner (1974) developed the “Attribution theory”, Gallagher

and Einhorn (1976) supported the “Job design” theory while Hackman and Oldham (1976, 1980) introduced the job characteristics model, Bandura (1977) introduced the “Social cognitive theory” and Deci and Ryan (1985) supported the “Self-determination theory”. The theories of motivation of the third period are briefly analyzed and presented in the table below. The period of 1990 up today, according to Locke and Latham (2004), Kusurkar, Croiset, Mann, Custers, and ten Cate, (2012), is the fourth period of evolution of motivation theories and it is characterized by the “Goal theory” of Pintrich (2000). Additionally, Amar (2004) developed a motivation theory for the workers of knowledge, while Steel and König (2006) presented “Temporal motivation theory” while Von Gilsa and Zapf (2013) supported the theory of the “Motives for emotion regulation in service work”. The motivation theories of the fourth period are briefly analyzed and presented in the table below.

## **8 Findings—The Integrated Model of Motivation Theories Within an Organization**

To complete the mapping of the human motivation concept, Fig. 1 will be combined-enriched with the elements of the major theories of motivation in the organizational context. This would result the integrated model of motivation theories within an organization (see below).

The analysis of the integrated model of motivation theories within an organization will start from the factors: human/employee and community/organization. Regarding the factor human/employee, the international scientific research supports that individual interpretation and determination of self and behavior springs from the individual himself, and given the “unobtrusive control” the external imposition is unnecessary. Based on the above finding the factor human/employee in the organizational context correlates with several elements such as: the mastering of specific objectives, the pursuit of individual emotional regulation and balancing and various individual characteristics regarding behavior and knowledge. Those individual characteristics formulate a set of needs that each human/employee is trying to satisfy through actions and behaviors that lead to positive outcomes.

The factor community/organization will be analyzed which includes and affects the human/employee at: relational, collective and system level. In detail, it was found that the factor human/employee is affected by: the fear of social deviation, the pursuit of better performance than the other members of the organization, the aspirations/motives of the organization at national and international level as well as by the characteristics of the work he/she performs. Because of the above characteristics, the factor community/organization can create, dynamically in time, conditions that on the one hand are generating and/or affecting the needs of the humans/employees while on the other hand are determining the positive or negative outcomes of the actions and the behaviors of humans/employees in relation to their needs. The researchers concluded that from the composition of the two factors

(human/employee and community/organization) arises a central factor which can be named “regulating”, because human motives are determined both by the characteristics of the human/employee, and the characteristics of the community/organization.

Subsequently, the analysis of the Integrated model will focus on the presentation of the findings regarding two factors: needs and positive or negative effects of human actions/behaviors. The factor needs were defined as an unpleasant deficiency situation arising from within the individual and is the starting point for every human action and behavior. The need factor can push human/employee explicitly or implicitly in specific acts and/or behaviors, which through their positive outcome can satisfy needs, thus helping humans/employees to avoid or move away from unpleasant and deficit situations that the needs are creating. Furthermore, it was found that human needs extend to a wide range of simple, daily and material needs to complex, rare and intangible ones.

Next, the presentation of the findings will focus on the factor outcomes of human actions/behaviors, which can be grouped into: extrinsic or intrinsic and regulatory or hedonic and are divided into negative or positive. The negative outcomes cannot satisfy the needs of an employee or are leading to an unpleasant and problematic situation within an organization. Meaning that those negative outcomes are not perceived as motives from the employee and they are not encouraging the repetition of an act or behavior. On the other hand, the positive outcomes can satisfy the needs of an employee and can be translated into rewards/compensation within an organization, leading to the repetition of an action or behavior. Additionally, in the context of an organization the positive outcomes must hold certain characteristics to be perceived as positive from the employees. Those characteristics are: the positive result from an action, the existence of teamwork, the expectancy of an outcome with great value for the employees, the sense of justice among employees regarding the way they are treated/rewarded, the satisfaction of intrinsic and extrinsic motives, the timely/immediate expression of the positive effects of a employee’s actions or behaviors, and the sacrifices that an employee will have to undergo in relation to the value of the outcomes to be gained. If the above characteristics are absent then the outcomes are perceived as negative. Finally, it has been found that while the factor needs is different from the factor positive or negative outcomes of human actions/behaviors, nevertheless they hold common elements that connect them. Specifically, both factors are regarded as the cause of human actions/behavior within an organization, can be defined as hygiene and motivating factors and can receive the same forms. Based on these connecting elements a second central factor named motivating factor can be expressed.

Summarizing, the content analysis of the international scientific literature helped the authors to create of a new integrated model of human motivation in organizations. The study of this model revealed two central factors and four agent factors that are correlating with the human motivation in the organizational context. More specifically the agent factors human/employee and community/organization are

formulating the “regulating” central factor, which determines the “motivating” central factor including the agent factors human needs and positive or negative outcomes of human actions or behaviors. The encoding of the central and the agent factors as well as the scientific and empirical contribution of this paper will be concluded in the following section.

## **9 Encoding of the Key Motivational Factors and the Variables That Correlates with Those Factors**

Based on Fig. 2 and the findings obtained through its analysis, the “regulating” and the “motivating” central factors will be presented in a coded way. The regulating central factor (Table 1), depends upon the agent factor human/employee (Maehr & Mayer, 1997; Wiley, 1997) and the agent factor community/organization (Miner, 1994; Wiley, 1997).

The motivating central factor (Table 2) depends upon the agent factor needs (Islam & Zaki Hj. Ismail, 2008; Fisher, 2010; Koole, 2009; Von Gilsa & Zapf, 2013) the agent factor outcomes of actions/behaviors positive or negative (Abadi et al., 2011; Amaratunga & Baldry, 2002; Robbins & Judge, 2010).

Concluding, the study of the items entitled: “Correlation with other factors” of Tables 1, and 2 indicates a sequence connecting the factors that formulate the employee motivation within an organization. This sequence will be presented through Fig. 3.

## **10 Scientific and Practical Contribution—Limitations**

The scientific and practical contribution of this manuscript is the creation of an original-prototype model which codifies and summarizes the most important motivation theories. This model allowed the formulation and the novel codification of the factors that correlate with the concept of human motivation in an organizational context which in turn helped on the composition of a “path diagram” which presents the sequence of the factors that determine employee motivation in an organizational context. The above will provide the theoretical basis for a future field research upon reward systems and how they can contribute to the change of organization culture in the Greek five-star hotels. The use of exclusively theoretical sources does not allow the generalization of the findings.

**Table 1** The regulating factor within an organization

<b>Central factor</b>	<b>Regulating:</b> regulate/affect the motivating factor in an organizational context			
<b>Agent factor</b>	<b>Human/Employee</b> (Maehr & Mayer, 1997; Wiley, 1997)	<b>Community/Organization</b> (Miner, 1994; Wiley, 1997)		
<b>Correlation with other factors</b>	<p><b>Creates dynamically through time conditions that determine:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needs</li> <li>• Outcomes: positive or negative (Wiley, 1997)</li> </ul>			
<b>Level of motivation</b>	<p><b>Seeks dynamically through time positive outcomes</b> (Fisher, 2010; Koole, 2009; Wiley, 1997; Von Gilsa &amp; Zapf, 2013)</p> <p><b>Avoids dynamically through time negative outcomes</b> (Koole, 2009; Fisher, 2010; Von Gilsa &amp; Zapf, 2013)</p> <p><b>Seeks positive outcomes explicitly or implicitly</b> (Lawrence &amp; Jordan, 2009; Pang &amp; Schultheiss, 2005; Ryan &amp; Deci, 2000)</p> <p><b>Has dynamic needs through time</b> (Wiley, 1997)</p> <p><b>Avoids needs dynamically through time</b> (Fisher, 2010; Koole, 2009; Von Gilsa &amp; Zapf, 2013)</p>	<p><b>Relational/Social:</b> Interpretation and determination of self and behavior derives from the close binary relationships a</p>	<p><b>Collective/Social:</b> Interpretation and determination of self and behavior derives from impersonal ties with groups of</p>	<p><b>System/Structural:</b> Interpretation and determination of self and behavior of individuals and groups within the organization (continued)</p>



**Table 1** (continued)

	<p>enforcement is not necessary (Gomes, 2011; Jones, 1983; Loril, 2009; Sewell, 1998; Tompkins &amp; Cheney, 1985; van Rijn et al., 2013)</p>	<p>person develops with his or her relatives/coworkers in the family or workplace context and other social groups</p>	<p>people or social groups, people's behavior is guided by social approval or rejection</p>	<p>and the behavior of individuals or groups outside the organization is guided by the set of organizational policies such as remuneration, systems and management</p>
<p><b>Factor characteristics</b></p>	<p><b>Personal/cognitive:</b> knowledge, expectations and attitudes  <b>Behavioral:</b> skills, practical and personal effectiveness (Bandura, 1977, 1988, 2001, 2011; Slavich &amp; Zimbardo, 2012)  <b>Emotional regulation and balancing</b> (Von Gilsa &amp; Zapf, 2013)  <b>Goal mastery</b> (Ford, 1992; Pintrich, 2000)</p>	<p>(Alvesson &amp; Willmott, 2002; Barker, 1993; Barley &amp; Kunda, 1992; Barley, Meyer, &amp; Gash, 1988; Douglas &amp; Judge, 2001; Edwards, 1979; Gomes, 2011; Jones, 1983; Loril, 2009; Tompkins &amp; Cheney, 1985; van Rijn et al., 2013; White, 1992)</p> <p><b>Fear of social deviation:</b> (Fleming &amp; Horner, 1992; Horner, 1973; Tresemer, 1976; Piedmont, 1988)  <b>Goal performance:</b> Best performance of an individual in relation to others (Ford, 1992; Pintrich, 2000)  <b>Job design/characteristics:</b> Skill variety, Job identity, Task significance, Employee autonomy and Employee feedback (Gallagher &amp; Einhorn, 1976; Hackman &amp; Oldham, 1976, 1980)  <b>Organizational motives at national and international level:</b> market, efficiency, resources and strategy (Benito, 2015)</p>		

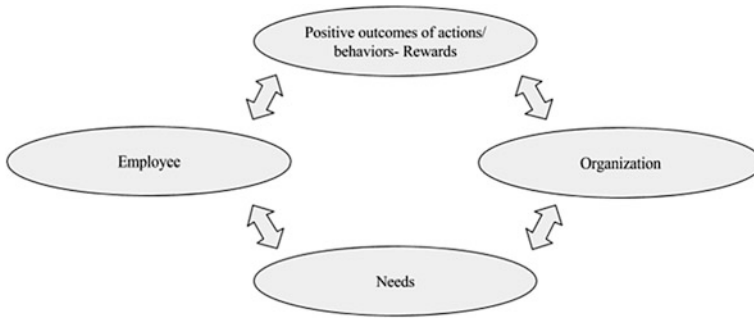
**Table 2** The motivating factor within an organization

<p><b>Central factor</b></p> <p><b>Agent factor</b></p>	<p><b>Motivating:</b> determines human actions and behavior within an organization</p> <p><b>Needs</b> (Fisher, 2010; Islam &amp; Zaki Hj. Ismail, 2008; Kooole, 2009; Von Gilsa &amp; Zapf, 2013)</p>	<p><b>Outcomes of actions/behaviors positive or negative</b> (Abadi et al., 2011; Amaratunga &amp; Baldry, 2002; Robbins &amp; Judge, 2010)</p>
<p><b>Factor characteristics</b></p>	<p><b>The origins of human behavior</b> (Hull, 1943; Maslow, 1943; McClelland, 1961; Murray, 1938)</p>	<p><b>Positive results are the desired outcome of human behavior, because they are satisfying human needs</b> (Fisher, 2010; Kooole, 2009; Von Gilsa &amp; Zapf, 2013; Wiley, 1997)</p> <p><b>Positive results are translated into rewards: physiological/tangible or psychological/intangible</b> (Abadi et al., 2011; Amaratunga &amp; Baldry, 2002; Robbins &amp; Judge, 2010)</p> <p><b>Negative results are not the desired outcome of human behavior and do not constitute a motive because they do not satisfy needs</b> ( Fisher, 2010; Kooole, 2009; Von Gilsa &amp; Zapf, 2013)</p>
<p><b>Correlation with other factors</b></p>	<p><b>Human/employee dynamically through time has needs</b> (Wiley, 1997)</p> <p><b>Human/employee dynamically through time avoids needs</b> (Fisher, 2010; Kooole, 2009; Von Gilsa &amp; Zapf, 2013)</p> <p><b>Community/Organization creates dynamically through time conditions that determine needs</b> (Wiley, 1997)</p>	<p><b>Positive outcomes satisfy human needs</b> (Fisher, 2010; Kooole, 2009; Von Gilsa &amp; Zapf, 2013; Wiley, 1997)</p> <p><b>Community/Organization creates dynamically through time conditions that determine outcomes positive or negative</b> (Wiley, 1997)</p>

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

<p><b>Forms of factor</b></p>	<p>Achievement, overcome obstacles, exercise power, achieve something difficult and good as soon as possible, survival, physiological needs, safety needs, love and integration needs, appreciation needs and need for self-realization (Hull, 1943; Maslow, 1943; McClelland, 1961; Murray, 1938)</p>	<p><b>Extrinsic or Intrinsic- Normative or Hedonic</b> (Amabile, 1997; Amar, 2004; Ankli &amp; Palliam, 2012; Bassett-Jones &amp; Lloyd, 2005; Baron &amp; Kreps, 1999; Farheen &amp; Zahra, 2011; Lam &amp; Lambermont-Ford, 2010; Lindenbergh, 2001; McCracken, 2005; Oliver &amp; Kandadi, 2006; Zopiatis &amp; Constanti, 2007 )</p>
<p><b>Common characteristics of the factor needs with the factor outcomes of actions/behaviors positive or negative</b></p>	<p>Material, social and activity/psychological (Amar, 2004; Ismail, 2008; Osteraker, 1999)  <b>Difficulty identified</b> (Behnaz, 2013)  <b>Behavioral cause:</b> locus of control, stability and controllability (Kassin, Fein, &amp; Markus, 2010; Lewis &amp; Daltroy, 1990; Sanderson, 2010; Weiner, 1974, 1980, 1986, 1992)  <b>Hygiene and Motivation factors</b> (Armstrong, 1996; Herzberg, Mausmer, &amp; Snyderman, 1959; Koss, 2008)</p>	<p>Material, social and activity/psychological (Amar, 2004; Ismail, 2008; Osteraker, 1999)  <b>Difficulty identified</b> (Behnaz, 2013)  <b>Behavioral cause:</b> locus of control, stability and controllability (Kassin, Fein, &amp; Markus, 2010; Lewis &amp; Daltroy, 1990; Sanderson, 2010; Weiner, 1974, 1980, 1986, 1992)  <b>Hygiene and Motivation factors</b> (Armstrong, 1996; Herzberg, Mausmer, &amp; Snyderman, 1959; Koss, 2008)</p>
<p><b>Special characteristics that determine the positive outcome of human actions/behaviors</b></p>	<p></p>	<p><b>Positive outcomes-Team work</b> (Adams, 1963)  <b>Expectancy-Value/Valence</b> (Atkinson, 1966; Eccles &amp; Wigfield, 2002; König, 2006; Steel &amp; König, 2006; Vroom, 1967; Wentzel &amp; Miele, 2009; Wigfield &amp; Cambria, 2010)  <b>Justice/Instrumentality</b> (Adams, 1963; Steel &amp; König, 2006; Vroom, 1967)  <b>Autonomous/intrinsic motives:</b> Competence, Relatedness and Autonomy  <b>Controlled/extrinsic motivation:</b> External, Introjected, Identified and Integrated Regulation (Deci &amp; Ryan, 1985, 1991, 2000, 2002; Gagne &amp; Deci, 2005)  <b>The necessary time for an effect to take place</b>  <b>Losses compared to benefits</b> (Steel &amp; König, 2006)</p>



**Fig. 3** The sequence of the factors that determine employee motivation within an organization

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# Tourism Consumer Behavior and Alternative Tourism: The Case of Agrotourism in Greece

**Dimitrios Belias, Efstathios Velissariou, Dimitrios Kyriakou,  
Konstantinos Varsanis, Labros Vasiliadis, Christos Mantas,  
Labros Sdrolias and Athanasios Koustelios**

**Abstract** The alternative tourism has a lot of segments according to the specific requirements of the customers, always in order to provide a designed customized leisure. (Ros Derrett, Cultural tourism, Paper presented to Momento, Queensland Merchandise Awards, Brisbane, Qld., 24 July, 2002) More and more travelers are being attracted by these types of tourism, and consequently this creates the development of new potential types of tourists. During the past years there has been a shift from mass tourism into special interest tourism. The reason behind this shift is related with changes on customers' patterns. According to (Alebaki and Iakovidou in *Enometrica* 3:15–24, 2010; Iakovidou, Vlahou and Partalidou, 2001. Quality directions in rural tourism in Greece, Proceedings of the International Conference on “New Directions In Managing Rural Tourism And Leisure”, Euro Scotland, 5–8/9/2001) tourists seek to focus on turning away from mass tourism since they feel that this mode of tourism does not satisfy their needs for quality driven tourist activities. (Alebaki and Iakovidou in *Enometrica* 3:15–24, 2010) have

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also identified other factors which have to do with local communities. On many cases, (Alebaki and Iakovidou in *Enometrica* 3:15–24, 2010) have examined the case of agro-tourism in Greece where communities need to develop their economies in a way where tourism will not disrupt their natural resources. On many cases tourism has been accused of damaging the natural environment and social cohesion. For example, a visitor can go to an agrotourist unit which produced organic food. He will stay in the hotel found within the premises of the farm while he will have the chance to eat dinners made from organic products. He can also go for hiking, mountain biking, rafting or any other activity near the unit. This means that the consumers who are choosing this type of tourism have their own distinctive behavior. The aim of this paper is to examine this difference. According to (Tsartas, *Sustainable tourism*, Kritiki, Athens, 2010) this is a special interest group which was developed during last years. It is made from middle age and high or medium income consumers. For many years those consumers constituted the core of mass tourism but now they feel that tourism on overcrowded destinations does not satisfy them anymore. They seek for more quality driven solutions such as spa tourism, sea tourism, etc. On the other hand they will like to visit a sustainable destination, such as an agrotourist unit but they seek to spend their days in a quality driven agrotourist unit and not the average one. They can afford to pay a considerable amount of money for their holidays and if they are satisfy they will not hesitate to suggest the destination on their friends. It is a growing segment and on many countries it has become they segment of special interest tourism. Their key motive is that they can find in those destinations the tranquility and quality that they are looking for. The expected outcome is that consumers who select agrotourist activities also tend to have their own distinctive characteristics, which is vital for the development of Tourism in Greece to examine them.

**Keywords** Alternative tourism · Consumer behavior · Agrotourism  
Greece

**JEL Classification** Z10 · Z32 · L83 · M10 · R11 · R58

## 1 Introduction

In the last decades, in particular, there is a great development of specialists and alternative forms of tourism in many parts of the world. These areas are trying to develop their infrastructure and service forms of tourism (Vasiliadis, Trivellas, Belias, Meleas, & Kyriakou, 2015). Special forms of tourism are characterized by being a special and dominant motivator in demand (e.g. nature) and growth of a corresponding specialized infrastructure in the tourist areas, which it seeks in the satisfaction and service of tourists of any special form of tourist activity (Trivellas, Kakkos, Vasiliadis, & Belias, 2015). Alternative forms of tourism are part of the specific forms and are also characterized by the existence of a sovereign special incentive to demand, which includes specific themes such as nature, travel

adventure, sports, tour, environment, acquaintance with local tradition (Caprio, Wohlgenant, & Boonsaeg, 2006).

In addition, in alternative forms of tourism, tourists are the ones that often choose a way of organizing and shaping the journey to which they are headed feature, is autonomy in choices and exploration—browsing with small or minimal use of organized tourism services. One of the forms of alternative tourism is Agrotourism or development of rural tourism has a direct relation to the need of the inhabitants of the big cities to escape the stress of everyday life and to calm down close to nature and the need for farmers to strengthen supplement their main agricultural income. This paper is going to examine in detail the case of agrotourism in Greece in respect of agrotourist behavior. For this reason it will make a literature review by using papers and other sources which will focus on the related theories and on cases over how agrotourism is been used in Europe and in Greece. The gap which is examined relates with the fact that agrotourism and especially agrotouristsbehavior has not been widely examined while there is a need to clearly define what agrotourism is and how it is implemented and to give focus on agrotouristsbehavior.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 *Definition—Meaning—Agrotourism Characteristics*

Agrotourism as it reveals the very prefix of the word was developed in rural area. Agrotourism, according to Greek data, is defined as the tourist activity developed in a non-city area, mainly by the primary and secondary sectors of production, and in particular in small tourist units providing goods and services, family or co-operative (Kyriakou & Belias, 2016).

It is a form of tourism which:

- is based on the correct use of natural, cultural and human resources, covers specialized individual needs of modern man and
- aims at restraining or returning the local population, improving rural incomes and the local economy and upgrading their living standards.

Agrotourism is a mild alternative form of sustainable tourism development and multifunctionality in the rural area that provides visitors with the opportunity to enjoy their holidays in a quiet place, close to nature and to the ordinary people who still retain the traditions and customs of their place (Caprio et al., 2006).

Authenticity is the element that characterizes this kind of alternative holiday as it is in contact with the nature and habits and habits of the everyday life of local farmers. Indeed, in the original definition of the Inter-Service Commission (1983) it was stated that: “Agrotourism is the tourist activity that develops in a non-urban space, in small units, family or cooperative form, complementary to the main activity that is and still is dealing with Agriculture”. Indeed, experts to joke on the

subject, say that Agrotourism is “the cultivation of tourists in the field”. This definition implies that besides entertainment and contact with the nature that visitors have when staying in the countryside; they are trained and learned experientially by participating in rural activities for the difficult but interesting life in the rural area ([http://www.lrf.gr/programmmedia/1402657613\\_2.pdf](http://www.lrf.gr/programmmedia/1402657613_2.pdf)).

The definitions of ‘farm tourism’, ‘rural tourism’ and ‘rural tourism’

“Agrotourism” acquire a different meaning in the various European countries. The distinction of these definitions is attempted by Jansen Verbeke (1990, in Apostolopoulos & Giagos, 2005) and Privitera (2009):

- Rural tourism is all forms of tourism that have as their main characteristic the activities in rural areas space. Rural tourism includes Agrotourism, tourism Adventure, nature tourism etc.
- Agritourism/Agrotourism is all forms of tourism that are directly related to the rural environment, agricultural products and accommodation in the countryside and also the suppliers of this tourist product are directly identified with rural life.
- Farm Tourism includes all forms of tourism that are directly related to farming, either by staying and providing meals or by having fun and daily tours to it. It basically parallels agrotourism.

In our country, Rural Tourism is identified—it is confused with Agrotourism, which is wrong because Rural Tourism includes—it includes all forms of tourism that can be offered by tourism entrepreneurs without being necessarily farmers. In the case of agrotourism, however, services are offered only by farmers who wish to have a supplementary income (<http://www.agrotypos.gr/Index.asp?mod=articles&fltrGrp=9&pg=427>).

In the European Union, the term ‘agrotourism’ refers to tourist services offered exclusively by farmers ([http://www.lrf.gr/programmmedia/1402657613\\_2.pdf](http://www.lrf.gr/programmmedia/1402657613_2.pdf)).

## 2.2 *Forms and Activities of Agrotourism*

The dominant forms of agrotourism at international level are holidays at farms and holidays in rural accommodation (farmhouses) located within the rural settlement. Greece, with the alternating landscape, with the its morphological contradictions and its climatic variations conditions, it has the preconditions for developing large-scale forms agrotourism.

These forms can be classified into two categories (Pittman, 2009):

- Pure agrotourism, where the guests are over the master their destination (holidays—rest), they are either rural work mostly on the farm (animal care, milking, cheese making, harvesting, harvesting, harvesting, fruit and vegetables, bee-keeping, wtc.), or often alongside recreational activities,
- Such as those offered by the rural area (swimming, fishing, hiking, mountaineering, hunting, horseback riding, etc.)

Main forms of pure Agrotourism in Greece are (ICAP, 2016):

In mountainous villages of particular natural beauty

- In island or coastal areas in traditional settlements who have a special architecture
- Near protected areas such as national parks and wetlands
- In cooperative housing, where members of cooperatives, mainly women, offer products of their own or local production, and authentic hospitality
- Complex agrotourism, where tourists, in addition to the above activities, they can also cover some their personal needs, which specialize in the agrotourism of the area, such as extreme tourism (e.g. rafting), health tourism, sports, nature, religion, culture.

Main forms of complex agrotourism in Greece

- Agrotourism in areas with thermal springs
- Agrotourism in mountainous villages
- Agrotourism in rural areas with sports facilities, where

All possibilities for rest and sport are offered

- Agrotourism in campsites, located in surrounding rural settlements
- Agrotourism for young children, which takes place in children's homes with sports facilities, complete hospitality and offer educational, entertainment program
- Agrotourism in centers of crossing tourists located in special nodes and passers-by to offer them hospitality
- Agrotourism in rural areas where there are cultural interests.

All the above forms of Agrotourism in Greece are located in rural areas, the types of accommodation are mainly rooms within the family home or accommodation that is an extension of residence, or regardless of the house rooms, so as to ensure its independence privacy of residents and visitors.

The rural area has a very important natural and cultural wealth. This wealth can be utilized with a variety of tourist activities, such as which can satisfy an ever more demanding and differentiated one to the requirements of the tourist public. These activities may be following:

#### **Accommodation**

Small units, usually up to 10 rooms

Family businesses

May be renovated traditional houses or new ones constructed for this purpose.

The hostels can be accommodated in a specialized way. They tend to serve customers such as:

Hostels for hunters

Hostels for fishermen

Hostels for skiers

Hostels for disabled people

### **Camping's**

They are seasonal

Food and Beverage

It can offer:

- breakfast
- Breakfast and lunch  
(Giannarou, 2009)

Customers can be: exclusive hotel guests and passers-by.

Necessary prerequisites for their good success are:

- the local character of the dishes offered: must based on diversity, locality and high quality,
- compliance with all hygiene and safety rules.

### **Tasting**

Visitors visit traditional local cooking areas which have unique products (tsi-pouro, wine, cheese, etc.) are guided to the site by the owner. The consumers try and buy which means that no meal is available. It is based on product traditionality, quality, clean rooms and friendly reception

### **Horse Riding**

These are horses for horseback riding.

### **Children and Youth reception**

This is the guided tour of the children and youth farm, usually up to 15 years, without their parents, with teachers for educational purposes.

### **Farm Products**

The owner owns—sells the products of his farm either fresh or processed, within his farm.

### **Other activities**

There is the possibility to develop other activities either alongside the above or individually, such as: fishing or hunting, mountaineering, mountain walks, product training seminars, etc.

The farmer does not want an idle vacation. Staying in the countryside can be enriched with so many activities, the so-called “sports near nature” or “adventure sports”. The raging river of a region can be a great opportunity to organize sports such as rafting or canoeing. Walking trails crossing areas of the country, such as the E4 or E9, are the reason for organizing strolls. Hiking, mountaineering, cycling or mountain climbing, archery, horse riding all forms of activity that combine adventure tourism with active participation in nature can help diversify the agrotouristic package. A special place also occupies in Agrotourism the activities that make the right use of the cultural, religious, folkloric, architectural, gastronomic possibilities of the region. Thus the possibility of visiting and touring old monasteries, churches, bridges, wineries, cheese making craft workshops, attending festivals and local celebrations, picking up the olive or vintage, and even training on local cuisine can all give In Agrotourism the unique local identity and to show him a unique product (ICAP, 2016).

### ***2.3 Reasons/Motivation to Develop and Engage in Agrotourism***

It is well known that the countryside has many structural, developmental and economic problems compared to large urban centers. Agrotourism, as well as any kind of alternative tourism, contributes to the economic empowerment of rural areas in a way that helps them achieve their economic independence. Rural areas have many weaknesses. Their population is constantly decreasing, with the result that permanent residents are mostly old. The lack of infrastructure degrades residents' living standards, and citizens are not actively involved in matters that concern them, since they lose their attention (Caprio et al., 2006).

According to McGehee and Kyungmi (2004), the main reasons for rural residents to engage in agro-tourism are:

1. The fact that employment affects all family members, which strengthens the links between its members
2. The supplementary income it brings to rural families
3. Various agrotourism support programs
4. The companionship they feel with agro-tourists, the result of their interpersonal contact with them
5. Proper use of the resources provided
6. The success that others have achieved in the same field and are successful examples
7. The learning they provide to tourists, which acts as moral motivation.

The reasons why a resident of the rural area will deal with agrotourism are mainly economic since agrotourism, if developed in well-organized contexts, will bring positive changes throughout the region and will develop it.

### ***2.4 Agrotourism in Europe***

Initially, the concept of agrotourism emerged in Europe in the 1980s, and since the 1990s a total of 12 countries (Belgium, Denmark, Greece, Holland, Portugal, Spain, Ireland, Great Britain, Italy, Austria, France and Germany) More than 100,000 rural tourism businesses had been created. In general, European countries as a whole have a positive attitude towards the progress of agrotourism (Gopal, Varma, & Gopinathan, 2008).

Below are some examples of how the selected European countries face and develop agrotourism through national policies as well as local actions.

CYPRUS. The development of Agrotourism in Cyprus has developed particularly in the last twenty years, triggering the establishment of the Tourism Organization of the country in 1991. Cyprus has been more sophisticated and

state-owned than all countries. He sought to apply an agrotourism model tailored to the island and develop it with simple and correct tactics.

More specifically, the program was called Laona project and its purpose was to alleviate the social and economic degradation in ten villages in Cyprus. Thus began the renovation of many traditional houses for tourist use, as well as the creation of cultural centers and shops. Agrotourism was encouraged by the provision of loans at low interest rates for the necessary works. Also, a central reservation system was created by the Cyprus Tourist Organization, non-profit, called “Cypriot Agrotourist Company”, which undertakes the reservations for the agrotourism businesses (ICAP, 2016).

GERMANY. In Germany, agrotourism had been promoted early. In 1965 there were 2 organizations, the German Agriculture Association and the Agricultural Media. Since the early 1970s, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry has shown interest in this sector, and in 1980 a development project started from the North Sea to the Alps,

To build 2,000 holiday homes, covering the area from the North Sea to the Alps. The most important agricultural tourism association in Germany is “Deutschland”, with an active role in the promotion of rural and agrotourism products ([http://www.landsichten.de/ueber\\_uns/bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft/](http://www.landsichten.de/ueber_uns/bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft/)).

It brings together about 2,000 members and is engaged in the promotion of agrotourism products and services. An equally basic agro-tourism company is the German Agriculture Company “DLG”, which has established a quality standardization system, which is internationally recognized (<http://www.landtourismus.de/>). About 900 farms have been recorded (Durlanche & Zeppenfeld, 2006).

There is also the European Center for Ecological Agriculture and Tourism, in which there are some 138 rural tourism businesses registered a relatively small number. This center accepts farms with officially certified biological activities that meet specific sustainability criteria (Durlancher & Zeppenfeld, 2006). As regards the state, the financial support that Germany receives for the development of agrotourism is provided by the programs for regional development. There is also the National Farm Holidays Action Plan which offers loans to farmers. Generally, however, funding is carried out by various organizations. In general, agrotourism plays a key role in the German tourism industry. In contrast to other European countries, agrotourism is being developed in Germany as a purely commercial exploitation activity rather than as a means of retaining the population in the countryside (Petrisor Mateut, 2008).

AUSTRIA. It is one of the leading countries in Europe on Agrotourism. After the Second World War and its devastating effects on the structured area, the peasants rightly took advantage of the inhabitants’ exit to the suburbs and the countryside. So they began to offer leisure accommodation to tourists and thus ensure a good income. The main motivation for engaging in agrotourism was the development of tourism in Austria, its economic status and the possibility of capitalizing the link between tourism and agriculture (Leeds & Barrett, 2004).

In general, the services offered are characterized by a high level and Austria holds a high position in favor of agrotourists, since it has the potential to highlight



the region. In addition, the proper organization of tourist activities compared to other European countries attracts agrotourists, with the consequence that the latter grow constantly.

**FRANCE.** The development of Agrotourism in France began in 1952 with the formation of “Agricultureet Tourisme”, aiming at the information and training of farmers for Agrotourism. In 1955, the National Federation was created, which has as main tasks the organization, strategies and advertising of agrotourism services and products.

**UNITED KINGDOM.** In the middle of the 70s, agrotourism first appeared and in the mid-1980s the number of farms focused on Agrotourism began to increase considerably. This was also promoted by the State Agricultural Diversity Grant Scheme in 1987, which provided funding to farmers who wanted to organize an additional business near or within their farm (ICAP, 2016).

**IRELAND.** In the early 1960s agrotourism began to appear, with the renting of hostels to visitors, which resulted in an increase in farmers’ incomes. Agrotourism units in Ireland are operating with great success and provide rest, breakfast But also other activities such as musical events, cultural events, traditional festivals etc., which bring many visitors to the country (ICAP, 2016).

## 2.5 *Agrotourism in Greece*

In our country, as well as in southern Europe, agrotourism is less developed. Excluding the ways of exercising policy on agrotourism, the relatively low demand for agrotourism products and services by the urban population is due to a significant extent to the recent history of Greek society as well. Unlike Western societies, rural exodus is a relatively recent phenomenon, which means that the Greek urban population continues to maintain close ties with rural areas (Reiser, 2009).

Mediterranean tourism is almost always the case for coastal tourism. International tourism agencies focused the interest of tourists, both domestic and foreign, more on coastal areas than on mainland rural areas, reinforcing this trend even more in recent years. The urban population’s need for “return to nature” and “exploration of a place” began to appear only in the 1980s as a consequence of the effects of the ecological—alternative current, as well as the saturation from the model of mass tourism. Both the organization and the development of Agrotourism are directly related to the local community and this is because they depend on local actors and the local population. The purpose is, therefore, what is called “bottom-up” development, that is, the local human potential is the one that organizes and controls its progress (Karagiannis & Stavroulaki, 2011).

In Greece, initially, the interest in the development of agrotourism was first introduced in the early 1980s by state bodies, who predicted that agro-tourism would hamper the economic and social problems faced by the Region and the agricultural sector. But then, as we will see in the following chapters, a variety of

problems have arisen, which have as their main cause the incomplete attention paid to the subject of agrotourism, its development and, above all, its institutionalization.

In our country an attempt was made initially to spread Agrotourism around two major axes. The first was in the various accommodation ranging from small hotels to rented rooms in the farmer's home, which operate in rural areas and are also the private initiative of Greek Agrotourism, while the second axis concerned Women's Agrotourism Cooperatives. With regard to the first axis, we can distinguish two categories of agrotouristic actions:

- (A) The first refers to the tourist activities (hospitality of the visitor to the hostel on the farm) developed by the farmer in the context of his farm, aiming at supplementing his main income from agriculture.
- (B) The second category refers to all tourist activities developed in the rural area by permanent residents of the area, who do not have as their main occupation the agriculture (may have it as secondary or Do not worry at all). At this point, we stress that things with Agrotourism may have been complicated because they were just involved in the field of agrotourism and those who were not farmers but tourists Industry. The reasons will be analyzed in a next chapter. The second axis, women's agro-tourism cooperatives, have been created over the past twenty years and are indeed an originality for our country.

The most successful examples of rural tourism development in our country are located in mountainous or less-favored areas characterized by a rich natural, cultural and cultural environment (tourism resources) and basic infrastructure. Since the 1990s, agri-tourism investments have been stepped up as part of the EU's structural policy, while a series of agrotouristic initiatives by public administration bodies such as the General Secretariat for Equality, the General Secretariat of the New Generation, Hellenic Organization of Small and Medium Enterprises Handicraft (EOMMX) of OTA And the cooperative space (PA.SEG.GES) and others.

The negative was the fact that, despite the creation of EU funding programs, there were no qualitative standards that would form the right bases for the creation of infrastructure that would lead to the substantial development of agrotourism.

Agrotourism was developed mainly as a private initiative, with the creation of accommodation in rural areas (Venetsanopoulou, 2006). The vast majority of accommodation (2/3) is located on islands and most of the rest in coastal areas, which would hardly be characterized as rural, in relation to the residential structure, employment composition and income of residents, But also the type of consumer patterns. Of these agro-touristic accommodations, half of them with accommodation also offer food. These accommodations are located individually, without going under a comprehensive development plan of a specific area where agro-tourism is a key area of development strategy.

It is therefore an agricultural tourism that has been diverted from the primary objectives of enhancing and exploiting rural resources in the context of ecological development, rural-city interconnection, through the cultural exchange and activation of the local community. We can see that there is no real agrotourism in Greece,

since the investments for rural tourism mainly concern the classic hotels that are being developed in the tourist developed coastal zones. The most organized and responding to the philosophy of the Agrotourism axis is the Women's Agrotourism Cooperatives. Of course, the creation of Female Agrotourism Cooperatives in Greece was initially aimed at the socio-economic empowerment of peasants and gender equality, not so much in the overall promotion of local resources and economies. The first of them, in Stone of Lesvos. Soon, others followed, such as the Women's Agrotourism Cooperative of Ag. German Prespa, the Women's Agrotouristic Association of FisardesFlorina, the Women's Agrotourist Association of Arachova, the Women's Agrotourist Association of DadiaSoufliou, the Women's Agrotourist Cooperative of Chios and others (ICAP, 2016).

Their main activity is hospitality in hostels or rooms to let. However, many other women's Agrotourist Cooperatives also operate who simply produce and standardize traditional products such as spoon sweets, jams, aromatic plants, pasta, etc. Thus helping to shape an agro-tourist product, which will not only be characterized by the provision of hospitality and food? Such cooperatives operate in Crete and other Greek islands, or are dispersed mainly in the mountainous and disadvantaged areas of our homeland. The role of Women's Agrotourism Cooperatives in Greece is very important both in terms of providing hospitality and at the level of production and distribution of products, because in this way they safeguard the old-fashioned techniques and handicrafts that pass from generation to generation (ICAP, 2016).

### **3 Methodology**

The methodology used in the present paper is the critical review of the literature.

The sources of relevant literature investigation derived from popular online bibliographic databases, such as Science Direct, Emerald, EBSCO host and scientific search engines such as Google Scholar and Scirus. General search engines such as Google have also been examined.

The types of bibliographic sources included in the research are articles published on scientific journals, books, conference proceedings, company papers and studies, white papers, online sites and online journals. The selection criteria of these literature sources were based on the relevance to the topic of the paper and this research is not exhaustive.

### **4 Discussion—The Behavior of Agrotourists**

Agrotourists seek relaxation, relaxation in a tranquil setting, so to temporarily cut off from everyday life in the city. They are looking for contact with nature so they can get to know both rural life and people who will teach them a different way of life. These tourists are considered highly trained and experienced. They are people

who have already known the cosmopolitan tourist destinations with the main feature of mass tourism and are saturated with this particular model, seeking a new philosophy, focusing on its cultural and naturalistic status but also on the opportunity offered to human contact and communication. Agrotourists belong to an extended age range. In countries in Europe agrotourism has grown considerably, constituting a family-friendly lifestyle, thus accounting for half of the annual family holiday. The younger people are the ones who prefer and mostly choose to combine the Agrotourism package with the so-called “adventure sports”, while the older ones are engaged in smoother activities, touring cultural, religious, folklore, etc. content (ICAP, 2016).

Agrotourists usually have a high economic and educational level. These people usually have a great ecological consciousness, multiple interests, a willingness to know and a cultural approach. They are neither attracted nor entangled by the mimetism and materialistic standards of the consumer society, and they have high demands on the services they offer. Throughout the world, the farmer is considered to be quality, high-quality and very important purchasing power. He knows exactly what he is asking for and he does not suffer in situations that do not satisfy him (Venetsanopoulou, 2006).

More specifically, agrotourists visiting and selecting Greece as their destination have specific characteristics that make them different with regard to the other agrotourist groups. They pay special attention to the cultural elements of the areas, the natural beauty and the areas where the mass of the urban population is not visited. They want to experience history, gastronomy, local customs and customs, and are interested in activities such as horseback riding, agricultural work, etc.

They also range from 35 to 50 years of age, traveling in couples or groups, knowing exactly what they are looking for and showing particular interest in a rural way of life (Giannarou, 2009; Derrett, 2002). Their economic size is usually high, they belong to the professions of freelancers and can be senior executives in public organizations and ministries. Most come from the UK and Germany, while many from Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, France, the USA and Russia. They also prefer to organize their holidays and their program on their own and travel mainly from April to October, as rural areas are not yet organized for 12 months of tourism (Gianarou, 2009).

## 5 Conclusion

Agrotourism in Greece is a form of so-called Rural Tourism. Rural tourism also has other types such as extreme tourism, ecotourism, cultural, skiing, religious and healing.

Unfortunately, in our country there has not been a clear separation of these two concepts, with the result that the two concepts are identical and many identify rural tourism with rural tourism, and it is only one of the latter’s manifestations. Rural

Tourism has the external characteristics of agritourism, but it can only be implemented by any entrepreneur.

The confusion therefore lies in the fact that in agrotourism the agrotourism is offered by the farmer rather than by the classical entrepreneur, as is the case with the other types of rural tourism such as the religious, the skiing and the mountaineering. In order to offer the product of Agrotourism, it must be a farmer, that is to have and grow his own land.

Agrotourism in Greece therefore does not exist legally, because it is not institutionalized. It is therefore pointless to discuss the problems of agro-tourism businesses in our country when there is not yet a legal framework around it. This is the primary and the main problem of purely agro-tourism businesses: they are not able even though entrepreneurs are farmers in their majority, to process their products and sell them directly to visitors (cottage industry) as well as not being able to host visitors on their farm and teach them how many of their products are grown (Agrotourism—service). Agrotourism, however, is an alloy between the primary sector (production), secondary (manufacturing) and tertiary (services). This brings the necessity for further research. A future research must focus on examining the views of the farmers and of the ones who are on the industry in order to evaluate what are their views over how agrotourism shall be formed. For this reason there must be a qualitative research which will shape the views of the practitioners but also the best practices. Through the outcome of the research the authors will be able to shape and understand how agrotourism is implemented in Greece so to make the appropriate proposals over how it must be shaped. Also, there can be a follow-up research with questionnaires that will evaluate the behavior of the tourists.

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# Governmental, Entrepreneurial and Social Dysfunctions and Responsibilities in Terms of Tourism Development Strategy Implementation in Greece: Quo Vadis?

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**Abstract** Greece is undoubtedly a country with a prominent tourism identity and a long –living tourism tradition. But while it is expected from its tourism sector that by the end of the next decade its total contribution to the country’s GDP and to employment in total will be huge, the weight that ought to have been given to it has not been awarded over time. The governmental strategies that were developed were circumstantial, fragmentary, lacking vision and prospect. On the other side, the local communities themselves as well as the tourist enterprises didn’t invest, as they should have, on quality, but merely on the opportunistic model of the three S “sun, sea, sand”, which, however, decayed through time lapse and cannot function anymore within the contemporary conditions of the international tourist market, where competition, mainly from the neighboring countries that offer an almost “similar” product, is intense and tough. Thus, today in the Greece of economic crisis, the need for taking all those strategic initiatives and actions so that this country manages to face the challenge of contemporary tourism, seems to be more imperative than ever before, since it will allow it to set its foot on a firm basis and stand out within a particularly complex and completely competitive setting, offering

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quality services and multiple differentiated choices that will satisfy the tourists' desires and needs.

**Keywords** Tourism · Environmental obstacles and dysfunctions  
Corporate social responsibility · Development strategies · Greece

**JEL Classification** Z30 · Z32 · Z38

## 1 Introduction

Tourism has traditionally constituted a source of drawing experiences, mental peacefulness, recreation and foremost of culture and civilization exchange. Greece, with its rich history, magnificent civilization and innumerable natural beauties, has always attracted plentiful tourists from almost all over the world. Those many advantages of it though, is what finally attributed to it a rather extravagant complacency and constituted an unsound foundation on which the spirit and mentality pertaining to the way tourism in this country operates was built. Policies without consistency, coherence and primarily without vision and a target, entrepreneurial ventures without investments on quality services but with emphasis only on easy and quick profits and a society uneducated on how to function effectively and manage the social effects and consequences of tourism.

Although it is widely acknowledged that tourism may as well be designated as a sector of strategic importance to Greece of the severe economic crisis and the various environmental insecurities, given that the contribution of the tourism sector

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to the formulation of the country's GNP exceed 10% over the last two years, the weight and attention owed were not actually paid to it by the corresponding governmental bodies and the social partners involved.

The results of such policies are reflected in the image that greek tourism currently presents. Thus, despite the increase in the number of visitors and tourists arriving at the country, the real income itself, which means the real net profit, tends towards an ongoing decrease, which is on the one hand due to over-taxation on the sector and the boom in undeclared work, and on the other owing to qualitative factors associated mainly with the profile of the tourists coming. The issue of seasonality remains particularly intense as well, in a country that combines natural beauties and favorable climatic conditions and is able to offer numerous vacation and recreation choices all year round.

Another significant issue for greek tourism is also the seasonal over-concentration of tourist flows on specific leading tourist destinations, resulting in their excessive and often uncontrolled exploitation, which has as an immediate consequence their "carrying capacity" and their added value being at the breaking point and threatening their morphology, beauty, specific features and their demeanor.

Given all these facts, the question that is reasonably raised and which constitutes the subject under investigation of the present article, is why tourist development in Greece follows intertemporally "erroneous paths", who are responsible for these facts and to which extend and degree operational and output gaps appear, so that should all the above be faced, the country could be helped to stand firm within an extremely demanding tourist market;

Beyond any doubt, the challenges are many and the greatest venture for greek tourism is to promptly recognize the signs of the times. It is therefore the responsibility of the state and of the tourism sector entrepreneurs, and of course under the prerequisite of an allied and at the same time a participating local community, to proceed towards taking up those strategies and policies that will point out the multidisciplinary and diversity of the tourist product. A product, which if combined with high quality, creative innovation and specialized services, will be able to satisfy the most demanding tourist audience, and thus to withstand international tourism challenges.

## 2 Literature Review

Contemporary tourism is a dynamic, existent reality that now extends across the whole globe. Namely, according to Davidson (1998), there is no more an other global activity involving an of so crucial in value interaction of economic, political, environmental and social elements like tourism.

According to Butler (1980), Varvaresos (2000), Varvaresos and Melisidou (2012), the life cycle of the contemporary tourist product seems to respond very positively to the development of the tourist destination and to the entire “democratization of” vacation, actually there where tourist demand addresses lower and lower, in terms of quality and income, classes and is portrayed in the model of the 4S (Sun, Sand, Sea, Sex). Therefore, the onset of the crisis can be combined with this model’s crisis. Besides, every country that has sea (and there are a lot of those) and sun (namely almost all of them) is self-defined as an excellent tourist destination, often convincing a large part of the tourist audience too, thus competing about the same international clientele with each other (Galanos, 2013; Varvaresos & Melisidou, 2014).

The study of the greek tourist product shows that the satisfaction stemming from the consumption of goods and services is reducing over time. As Venetsanopoulou (2007) points out, tourism in Greece has been facing serious problems for quite a few years now, owing to the complete lack of a realistic strategy and policy on what is considered to be “healthy” tourism development. On the other hand, a complete plan concerning this development has not been designed, which will promptly provide solutions to the problems harassing the sector of tourism. Additionally, state contribution up to now has not been the one that ought to be for a country which bases a large part of its economy on it.

Besides, the figures themselves, according to Ipsiladis’ reports (2013), confirm that over a number of decades greek tourism has developed against any entrepreneurial spirit. It would, in a popular way, be described as a seasonal “corner shop”, that will operate only during summer months, but the profits will allow its owners to easily sustain themselves for the rest of the year. From a point of view this concept may seem reasonable, since unfortunately, 56% of the foreign tourists visit Greece over the three month period from July to September. This is yet expected, since never before has the attraction of new groups of customers been systematically attempted, namely of customers with more qualitative standards and preferences, beyond those that would one way or another come to enjoy the sun and the sea.

To highlight all the above and according to Tsartas’ references (2010), the institutionalized, and not alone, efforts that have been made over time in the field of tourism were not based on a firm, long-term, coordinated and specialized tourist direction and vision, elements crucially significant for the course of development of a sector regarded as the “steam engine” of greek economy, since the imperfections, lacks and the obvious mistakes is the rule of this “paradox”.

To illustrate, we mention the total lack of funding for research on tourism, the incomplete and contradictory development policy, the various institutional and academic gaps in tourism education, the delayed and insufficient development of the utmostly important for the country’s sustainable tourist development special and alternative forms of tourism, the late creation of an independent body for exercising tourism policy (e.g. Ministry of Tourism) which until lately has been operating with very few responsibilities and limited jurisdiction to intervene in the development and promotion of the sector of tourism, the ongoing state tolerance towards

extensive tax evasion and undeclared or even illegal employment in various tourist areas of the country, etc.

As Koutsovasilis (2012) also states, the greek tourist product has been left over the last forty years to private initiative, which resulted in it having an extreme lack of quality uniformity and an uneven distribution. Indeed, according to the views of Zacharatos (2002), the state's political intervention has now to face mainly the more complex problems of the qualitative and less these of the quantitative orientation in the total of the country's tourism potential and tourism production factors. Thus, on the basis of the two above mentioned experts' convergent views, the reference and directions framework for the greek tourism strategy should nowadays be primarily relieved by the generally "shortsighted" character of its genuine tourism dimensions and assimilate all these elements which "are reinforced" by the rapidly changing international surrounding of greek tourism.

Finally, according to Massiani and Santoro (2012), Page (2014), raising the awareness of all the involved bodies about the negative repercussions stemming mainly from the phenomenon of massive tourism on certain destinations, has led expert scientists and researchers to lately make up the term "carrying capacity". Carrying capacity is related to how many visitors an area can sustain and is expectedly different for each place. The central idea is that since the volume of arrivals of tourists in a place-destination is constantly increasing, having as a result the corresponding increase in the negative effects on society and the surrounding environment, a moment comes, when beyond a particular volume of tourists present, these repercussions become unacceptable both by the local community and the by the tourists themselves. This place has crossed the threshold that leads to saturation, while the limits of its carrying capacity have been outreached (Chamberlain, 1997; Middleton & Hawkins, 1998; Page, 2014).

### 3 Theoretical Approach

".....If you decompose Greece, in the end you will be left with a remaining olive tree, a vine and a ship. Which means that with another one of them you build it again"? In this phrase of the greek poet and Nobel Prize winner Odysseus Elitis the beauty and at the same time the "curse" of Greece is summarized. Its sun, sea and climate are factors that distinguish it and these upon which one of the most important forces for this country's development has been counted and still does: Tourism. Besides, Xenios Zeus is an inherent part of each Greek's DNA and somebody can easily strike this responsive cord and realize how high the sense of hospitality they have inside them is.

Given on the one hand that, contemporary tourism is a dynamic phenomenon subject to frequent interactions and changes by the closer and wider socio-economic setting and on the other is internationally characterized as a heavy industry, the involve bodies, even the everyday people of the tourist destinations must realize that today there are higher consumer expectations than in the past, demands for

affordable and simultaneously qualitative tourism and of course with no seasonal restrictions (Varvaretsos, 2000). Therefore, these bodies ought to place a priority on a different from the usual kind of tourism planning, while at the same time they need to envisage and highlight what is finally required so that the development of travelling and recreation with an emphasis on a more qualitative value and outcome, is maintained (Varvaretsos, 2000).

The “systemic” study of the greek tourist product reveals that the satisfaction stemming from its consumption is year by year consistently declining. Consisting to a significant degree of a large number of unimaginative elements, it fails to lead to a felt improvement in the level of tourist-consumer satisfaction, often giving space to indifference, languor, quality degradation and in general to quick saturation. As a result, if the above involved bodies wish to offer from now on a complete and highly competitive tourist product, they ought at least to have it renewed, upgraded, expanded and differentiated (Poon, 1993; Dwyer & Kim, 2003; Mason, 2015).

Greece has however till now actually rested on the laurels of its distant past and its irresistible natural beauty. Thus trapped in a utopian consideration of its “uniqueness”, it neglected or didn’t manage to make out that it finally didn’t offer something completely different from its neighboring countries and that in competition the winner is the one to be the most aware and most efficiently prepared.

A point of convergence for the international tourist organizations and the domestic tourist bodies as well as for governmental views is the fact that Greece combines all those distinctive features that make it a uniquely ideal tourist destination, in the sense that it can satisfy a wide number of tourist choices and indeed with goods and services of higher added value all year round.

That is the focal point for someone to ask themselves how it is possible for Greece, on the one hand to raise the numbers of its tourists, and on the other to have its profits lowered. As the figures for the course of tourism development two summers ago come into publicity, with arrivals in August increasing by 1.8% but income declining by -9.2% related to 2015, serious concerns and questions are raised anew, regarding the competitiveness of this country’s tourist product, that is regarding the extent to which all these are the consequences of over-taxation imposed on the official economic activity of tourist businesses or it raises direct concerns on the relatively high price and lower quality of tourist product services in comparison to the adjacent in terms of tourism countries<sup>1</sup> (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2016).

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<sup>1</sup>According to S.E.V—Hellenic Federation of Enterprises (2016), the competitiveness of the tourist product is not defined merely by price, but also by the price/quality ratio. Therefore, the key to an increase in price without a loss in demand is always the increase in the quality of the tourist goods and services offered.

### ***3.1 Governmental Dysfunctions and Responsibilities***

A few years after the end of World War Two, as tourism has gradually started becoming massive, the state has systematically been intervening in the sector of economy, establishing the institutional framework for the facilitation of investments on tourism, offering in parallel the necessary infrastructure for the growth of various tourist activities (Lickorish & Jenkins, 2007).

In Greece, one of the most common mistakes made by the at times governments is, on the one hand, the inconsistency and discontinuity displayed in terms of strategic planning on tourism and on the other, the provocative disregard towards its representative bodies. Namely, the oxymoron is that while all those who practice state tourism policy underline its immense financial and developmental significance, the rest of the directly involved bodies have been deprived of their own reference framework concerning tourism policy, tourism legislation and in general the strategy for its development.

Even the few attempts that were undoubtedly made were short and fragmentary with completely contradictory results. At the same time, other fields such as industry, agriculture and the Maritime sector with lower contribution to income, to the GDP and to employment, have from their very beginning had their own body (ministry) and the appropriate institutional framework of which tourism has been deprived for decades - mainly due to petty political reasons. The recent establishment of the Ministry of Tourism is a clearly positive outcome which has however been very delayed in relation to most of the country's competitors in the international tourist setting and whose value is left to be estimated in practice.

Greece has for at least four decades been offering the same tourist product, that is sun, sea, sand. Yet, at the end of the 80s new competing countries have made their appearance (Turkey, Croatia, Bulgaria, Montenegro, Albania, etc.), which, with almost similar but much cheaper tourist packages, soon managed to conquer a large part of the regional tourist market. These new, important for greek tourism, challenges don't have to do only with the country's structural features and innate weaknesses, but also with the presence of some inhibiting parameters of its macroeconomic surrounding such as for instance its extremely expensive currency compared to that of the afore mentioned countries.

In combination with the relatively newly -built tourism "production" and contribution of the countries above, it is certain that these countries will pursue in the years to come an increase in the shares of the regional tourist market, thus depriving them of a problematic, due to the severe economic crisis as well, country like Greece.

Moreover, during a significant for post-war Greece period, more specifically from the middle 50s until the middle 80s, the effort for the growth of Tourism was based on an excellent strategy for approaching and entering specific tourist markets of countries with high per capita income and excellent tourism consciousness on the part of their citizens. This strategy was based on two rudimentary pillars. The first one was the establishment of Tourism Bureaus in most capital and metropolitan

cities of the countries mentioned above. Along with a very trustworthy and internationally renowned partner, Aristotelis Onassis' Olympic Airways, greek tourism gained considerable growth dimensions during that time and indeed through money that were exclusively reaching Greece and made a substantial contribution to its course of development. The second pillar was the introduction of promotion policies through cinematographic art. Films such as *Zorba*, *Never on Sunday*, *Stella* etc., with directors, composers and actors of wide international fame, contributed complementarily, establishing a widespread and of high quality attraction to important, basically island destinations, of the international tourist audience.

However, accumulated financial scandals led mainly by the at times government officials and leading members of these bureaus, along with emerging multinational business interests in the sector of tourism, led or even forced the governmental bodies that were in charge of tourism to withdraw the above strategy since the end of the 80s. This way a lot of capitals don't even flow in greek economy, whereas greek entrepreneurs of the hotel industry are left to the exploitation will of the "harsh" multinational tourist organizations.

Since then, the sector of tourism has been operating in Greece in a state of spatially central and functionally gathered mechanisms that inhibits the necessary development of decentralized and relatively independent Tourism Organizations (e.g. Regional Branches of the Ministry of Tourism). These units could apply concrete and more efficient strategies of tourism development based on the area's individual environmental elements and features. They could also promote in a better way the name and image of this place internationally, but also achieve the better promotion of the local tourist products. They could also reinforce even more their communicative substance (media awareness) with the international tourist institutions and the travelers-citizens of the world who are inspired by and opt for what is more qualitative and innovative.

What is however considered to be a "major error" in the governmental policies of the last few years, comes from the stakeholders involved with tourism themselves, who justifiably complain about an unrestrained over-taxation on the sector of tourism, which literally led to their being financially drained (Delladetsima, 2006).

Besides, it is well-known that Greece is far from the desired flexible and attractive framework of the majority of its competitor countries. To illustrate, we mention the high basic taxation rates on profits, the heavy bureaucratic burdening of businesses, the abolishment of V.A.T exemption on islands, as well as the eight changes in accomodation and meals V.A.T from 2008 until today (Karagiannis & Polo, 2016; Karampela, Papazoglou, Kizos, & Spilanis 2017).

Unfortunately, the various governmental policies which viewed the sector of tourism as a field for easy profit acquisition caused a lot of negative effects both on employment and tax evasion and also on tourism competitiveness in a period that can contribute decisively to the country's exit from the economic crisis.

Additionally, another blot on the governmental schemata has until recently been the inefficiency in applying the at times development laws. Money from the European and Greek taxpayers were invested on finally unutilized plans on development, while some of it was given to untrustworthy politically oriented

investors- entrepreneurs, from whom many government executives receive illegally huge financial benefits in reward. Moreover, for those of the modest investors-entrepreneurs who didn't succumb to transactions of this kind, the distribution of funding was deliberately very late and as a result, many of them were unable to cover the planned investment expenses and were forced to place themselves at the mercy of any usurer.

Therefore, a variety of focused actions that could be realized and that would have a practical impact on tourism, such as ski centers, golf courts, seawater treatments installation, health tourism centers, sport tourism premises, thematic parks, small and large hotel complexes, investments on alternative forms of tourism, etc., namely, organized forms of tourism that would differentiate and expand the already saturated greek tourist product, have failed.

A state omission of high importance concerning the sector of tourism has to do with the field of education. Among the totally 91 new departments of tertiary education founded since 1996 in Greece, only two University Departments on the science of tourism were established. Later on though, and more precisely according to "Athena" scheme, the two departments mentioned above were abolished even before they welcomed their first students. This way, the tertiary education in Greece includes, in the sector of tourism, the Technological Educational Institutes of Tourism and Hospitality Businesses and the Higher Schools of Tourism Education. But even these institutions are operating under severe inadequacies in educational staff, laboratory infrastructure and practical experiences. A result of these lacks is the absence of competent and appropriately educated executives that could support tourism and provide the prerequisites for its further qualitative control (Stratigakis, 2016).

It is finally worth mentioning two factors that have made their appearance the very recent years. In particular, the phenomenon of uncontrolled illegal immigration having the splendid islands of the Eastern Aegean Sea as its main entrance-reception point, as well as the frequent inaccurate and pressing for Greece "restricting guidelines" issued by the powerful countries on earth, and then, under their mandate by various other smaller ones towards their citizens for supposed imminent dangers to their physical safety by a potential choice of Greece as their tourist destination. In both cases, the recent governments seemed incapable of efficiently managing the situations described above, resulting in the consequences being very harmful for the country's fame and economy.

### ***3.2 Business Dysfunctions and Responsibilities***

For quite some years in the past there had been a steadfast and mistaken impression in tourism entrepreneurs that made them count on the natural and cultural beauties of Greece and believe that tourists will one way or another prefer it because it is a country that additionally combines rare natural beauties. Unfortunately, this argument was very easily refuted through time lapse. Other neighboring countries offered

an almost similar product, providing at the same time much more upgraded and qualitative services, thus managing to attract a higher number of visitors and therefore financial inflows.

But while they have over time realized that in order to attract tourists of higher quality they ought to proceed to an ongoing enhancement of their tourist units and also to the provision of high level goods and services, they still follow a short-sighted view aiming at the achievement of the highest profit possible with the least sacrifices possible on their part.

Beyond that, the absence of mutual trust between them and the State seems to be continuously intensified. The imposition of high taxes on the part of the State combined with real profit concealment on the part of the entrepreneurs make the establishment of a firm investment and taxation framework very difficult (Greek Tourism Confederation, 2016).

As a result of all the above, these entrepreneurs operate under a state of “partial autonomy”, since they realize that their sector can only this way attain some progress, in a country like Greece with huge organizational and institutional problems which have been intensified due to the year-long periods of policies guided by Financing Memoranda.

In addition, the recent economic crisis, has negatively affected the organizational and employment “atmosphere” of most hotel agencies. Applying strict scale economies these agencies eliminated a lot of their structural and functional elements. Since then, they have demanded more hours of employment under very difficult conditions, they have significantly limited their staff’s education costs, its salary and its insurance costs, along with the various performance related incentives that were provided up to then.

The staff, physically and psychologically exhausted, often displays phenomena of psychological alienation from its place of work. These phenomena are usually expressed in terms of limited staff performance and frequent verbal hostility towards customers’ excessive requirements, resulting in informal conflicts coming up or even complaints addressed to the hotel’s management mainly on the customers’ part. As expected, the consequences of such a situation cause multiple problems in the potential re-election and fame in general of the hotel unit.

An issue of importance to the greek tourist enterprises, and therefore to the owners of these units is also the absence of Corporate Social Responsibility. Despite the European Commission’s repeated recommendations on tourism issues towards these enterprises for the even optional incorporation of social and environmental concerns into their business activities and contacts with other interested parties, it seems that their response is very little. There are only very few exceptions of businesses that display some environmental, social and humanitarian sensitivity and action, such as for instance, energy conservation, the use of environmentally friendly products, recycling, fundraising in charity associations, the organization of charity events, compliance with health and safety rules, etc.

If this study is extended towards the direction of the small hotel units, it will also find out very easily quite a few responsibilities and omissions of these units, summarized in the following three points:



- Inability to follow processes of new technologies such as for example, the on-line holiday “booking” that ensures quicker and cheaper booking for the contemporary tourist.
- Inability to promote their services online, an inhibitor against the increase mainly in their domestic clientele and in the extension of their operation period.
- The avoidance of utilization of tools and international certification standards and environmental management, thus manifesting their irresponsibility towards the place of their establishment and the quality of the products and services they offer to their customers.

### ***3.3 Social Dysfunctions and Responsibilities***

It is very erroneous to believe that tourism can provide only benefits to an area, in the sense that it increases local employment and the income for the local community, thus contributing to its development, a view that greek tourism households seem to have always adopted. This however is only one side of the coin. The growth of tourism may well cause social dysfunctions, a very common phenomenon in the case of modern Greece. Actually, it has in practice caused up to now several negative effects on the social environment of almost every area, since it affected and still does affect:

- The area’s social structure, since the production relationships are altered and become “tourism oriented”, while phenomena of intense urbanization are also observed, mainly in the case of massive tourism, affecting negatively the spirit and culture of the area.
- The composition of employment for the area’s work force, since a lot of the old professions are abandoned.
- The local population’s social relationships which change or weaken.
- The population’s morals and customs, since the inhabitants are continuously moving away from their homeland’s traditions or are led to commercialization clearly aiming at financial benefits, as their new lifestyle is based on uncontrolled consumerism.
- The structured local environment, since, in order to be able to satisfy the continuously increasing tourist needs they need new accommodation, entertainment and recreation facilities, as well as other infrastructure like roads, ports, airports, alternative tourism infrastructure etc., whose high and costly demands-investments the local communities seem to find it difficult to meet on their own.

Indeed, the process of raising the awareness of all the involved bodies about the negative impacts triggered by tourism on the places- regions of destination, is so insufficient that, in the case of Greece, the sense of “carrying capacity”, which was mentioned in the first few pages of the present paper, is of very little importance.

Consequently, most destinations act haughtily against their carrying capacity concerning the temporary “assimilation” and “tolerance” towards the often extravagant volume of tourist presence that can actually be sustained. On the contrary, for these destinations, the excessive presence and its underlying economic benefits is assessed as much more important than the potential negative consequences of any kind.

For this reason, significant dysfunctions and responsibilities on the part of the local societies have been brought out, which gave rise to the following consequences:

- Changes in the value and behavior systems of their members, so that the local identity is threatened.
- Changes in the structure of the local community, in family relationships, in the collective traditional lifestyles, in events-ceremonies, even in the field of ethics.
- Forced commercialization, standardization and adjustment to the multiple tourist demands.
- Approaching tourists on the basis of old-fashioned views and mentalities that regard them as means for easy and quick gain of wealth.
- Gradual growth of a mistaken mentality related to the decline in respect towards the tourist, a meretricious hosting mood and attitude, etc.
- Continuous corruption of the local territorial units of tourist reception, due to the environmental, aesthetic, and noise pollution, an over-compilation of reception structures, the deficient quality of public services and health facilities, the insufficient complimentary infrastructure, etc.

Finally, the oversupply of tourist lodgings of relatively low quality in comparison with the proportionally very high prices can also be characterized as a significant responsibility of the local community, as it contributed to the outflow of a great number of customers-tourists, of a mainly high income scale, to other international tourist destinations and therefore to the deprivation of these areas of a more extended tourist seasonality.

## 4 Conclusion

Within a globalized, intensely competitive, constantly evolving but also demanding tourist market, the greek tourist product has remained trite and saturated over time. The responsibilities and omissions are intertemporal and multifaceted. In order of merit, the state, the tourism entrepreneurs and finally the local community are attributed their greater part. The absence of a complete and firm framework for tourism development, the lack of vision and long-term strategy, the short-sighted concepts about easy gain of wealth, over-taxation and the lack of trust on the part of those taking art in the country’s tourist events, are considered to be the key points for the whole quality lag of greek tourism.

The reasoned specification and record of the ever-lasting omissions and responsibilities of the involved in tourist events parties, aims that the present study urge the involved parties towards mutual and sincere cooperation and action, so that the ailments and errors of the past are eliminated, in order for greek tourism to be soon able to stand proudly next to what the other competing neighboring countries provide and of course manage to stand out internationally. Besides, this country is expecting a lot from tourism and it primarily expects the reversal of the year-long recessionary climate and why not, its future growth, through focused interventions and interventions of a multiplier effect, in sectors displaying a maximum added value for the country, such as primarily Tourism.

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# Individual Budget Travels as a Form of Leisure Among the Polish Citizens

J. Zawadka and J. Pietrzak-Zawadka

**Abstract** The purpose of the paper is to present individual budget travels as a new and increasingly popular way of spending free time. The conducted research has allowed to identify the reasons for choosing budget travelling, the preferred regions for this type of trips, as well as the factors that determine the destination and way of spending time during such journeys. Also the knowledge about the accommodation facilities used and the ways of meeting the nutritional needs during budget travels, as well as the most popular modes of transportation to the destination and in its surroundings, was obtained. Moreover the types of persons accompanying the respondents during the budget trips were identified. The research also allowed to find out barriers that hinder or obstruct more frequent budget travelling, as well as the difficult elements of organization and implementation of such trips. The research was conducted in 2016 with a method of diagnostic survey, using the questionnaire technique. The research sample consisted of 214 people living in Poland and travelling on a budget.

**Keywords** Tourism · Budget travels · Preferences and tourist behavior

**JEL Classification** L83 · Z32

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## 1 Introduction

Budget travelling is a relatively new form of tourism, which popularity has grown in recent years among a large number of tourists. Many of them desire a deeper experiences, want to understand better the visited regions, local residents and their different cultures, thus they give up travel packages offered by tour operators and decide to explore the world “on their own”. However, this way of travelling is not just a mere sightseeing. Budget travels have a much broader meaning and include unique, full of unusual experiences lifestyle, which often connects with many austerities, but also gives the supporters of this type of travels a lot of satisfaction and unique emotions and feelings.

Budget travels are a relatively young phenomenon in Poland, which is reflected in a small number of scientific papers on them. Only few Polish authors have undertaken research to better understand this form of tourism and its participants. Moreover this task is hindered by the fact that budget travelling is a complex and heterogeneous phenomenon, mainly due to the changing needs, goals and motives of tourists. Apart from minimizing the costs of trips, modern tourists pay more and more attention to the emotions, experiences and feelings connected with travelling. Furthermore budget travelling phenomenon differentiates the great freedom of choice of modes of transportation, ways of accommodation or satisfying the nutritional needs. All of this makes budget travels a complex, but very interesting subject of research. The growing popularity of this type of tourism and the growing number of supporters also indicate the relevance of the problem and the need to identify it by undertaking appropriate research in this area.

## 2 Terminology Problems Related to Budget Travelling and Its Relation to Other Forms of Tourism in the Literature on the Subject

Clear and precise definition of budget travels is not a simple task. The problem is already in defining the “low budget” term, as this is very subjective and will significantly stand for something else for a student on a scholarship and a manager in an international corporation. Therefore low budget should be seen as a relative concept. According to Ł. Kędzierski (tourist blogger), budget travel must not always be identified by the possible lowest financial contribution, as low budget rather means acceptable value for money. The blog’s author says: “I do not like overpaying for something that has no added value. When I travel, I do not like to give up the pleasure. In the end it’s my holiday, the time I want to spend in the best way” (Kędzierski, 2012).

Another problem is in the unreasonable use in many studies on tourism such concepts as low budget tourism, low cost tourism, backpacking and tramping interchangeably. Therefore it is necessary to briefly discuss these concepts here.

Tourist tramping can be defined as a form of so-called cheap travelling, individually or in groups of several people. Tourists in this type of travels prepare trips by themselves, with use of cheap accommodation and often hitchhiking. Popular modes of transportation are also motorbikes and bicycles. Tramping requires participants to adapt to the local conditions of the natural and social environment and allows for greater freedom of travelling. Due to the nature of this type of trips, participants are usually young people (Kurek, Mika, & Pitrus, 2007).

A reference to the low costs of tramping can also be found in another definition, where the term is described as an attractive form of adventure tourism (Mokras-Grabowska, 2015), which is cheaper than standard trips due to the fact that many activities during journeys are performed by the travelers. Tramping travels have an element of adventure and sometimes considerable and long-term physical activity, therefore participants in such events should be characterized by physical fitness, good health and mental immunity. Crucial element is also the group's internal organization, reflected in the ability of its members to cooperate with each other, as well as with a pilot or a guide. Participants in tramping trips should be prepared for the possibility of various inconveniences, like traffic delays, sudden changes in accommodation, bad weather conditions or the necessity of travelling with different modes of transportation ([www.e-gory.info](http://www.e-gory.info)).

One of the most familiar and popular forms of tramping is backpacking. As noted by Jabłonkowska (2014), in foreign literature in the 1990s it has been pointed out that backpackers are single travelers, mostly young people, who, during travel lasting several months or even years, visit at least few countries, but avoid popular trails and tourist destinations. Their journeys do not generate big expenses, as they reduce the daily costs associated with transport, accommodation or dining. The characteristic elements of these trips were the self-reliance and self-sufficiency of tourists, the lack of support from travel agencies and the freedom in setting the trip's route (Barr, 2001; Hampton, 1998; Pearce, 1990). Further research on this form of tourism has led to limitation to only a few, basic determinants. It was considered that backpackers' movement is not homogeneous (Cohen, 2011; Richards & Wilson, 2004; Sørensen, 2003) and backpacker was defined as a person who travels into geographically different spaces to experience their natural and cultural diversity. However, minimizing the costs of the expedition through the use of cheap accommodation, eating in budget local bars or using local transport is still perceived as a crucial element. Emphasis should be also placed on the independence of planning and preparation of the expedition (Binder, 2004; Larsen, Ogaard, & Brun, 2011). Regions and countries most interesting for backpackers are: India, South East Asia (mainly Thailand), Australia and New Zealand, North Africa (Morocco, Algeria), the United States of America, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Peru and Europe. Attractive expeditions are, e.g., land travel from Europe to East Asia (Kurek et al., 2007). In Polish literature on the subject backpacking issues were mainly analyzed by Jabłonkowska (2013). On the basis of the collected data and analyzes, she defined the backpacker as a traveler who "travels for longer period (without time limits), uses various modes of transportation, travels on low budget (cheap transport, accommodation, food) to—and that seems to be the most important for the Polish aspect of

backpacking—experience (not recognize particularly) new places and cultures. He travels independently and individually to countries rarely visited by mass tourists, and his all luggage is his backpack” (Jabłonkowska, 2014, p. 38).

Finally, next concept is individual budget tourism (also often named as a low cost tourism), which includes tourist trips undertaken by individuals or small groups and carried out with low financial resources. The term “individual” in this case means the self-organization of the journey (without the intermediaries like travel agencies), as well as the small number of people forming groups for such trips. It should be stressed here the existence of a semantic difference between the terms “budget” and “low cost”. Budget travel must be cheap *ex ante* (from the beginning, at the stage of its conceptualization)—it is planned and implemented with small financial resources (tourists have a low budget). Low cost travel instead turns out to be cheap *ex post*, what means after it has been held, when the expenditures were summed up (Kozłowski, Brzykca, & Rudnicki, 2016). In that case incurring small expenses may result not only from the meticulous implementation of the pre-determined plan (which assumed the use of only cheapest facilities and equipment), but also various types of coincidences, unforeseen events, exceptional occasions occurring during the journey or pricing conditions, specific for the particular country or region. Therefore it should be noted that low cost travel is a broader concept than budget travel. However, due to the fact that both terms refer to the similar phenomenon and both stress the same economic effect, they were used in the article interchangeably.

In addition to the obvious fact that budget tourism is in opposition to all travel events organized by tour operators, it should also be stressed that it does not have much in common with low-cost mass tourism. However, significant similarities to individual budget tourism can be found in the previously discussed backpacking, in which a strong emphasis is placed on the low cost, independent organization and individual character of the trip. In this case the main difference is the way of travelling, which does not take into account the use of own vehicles.

### **3 Purpose of the Study and Research Methods**

The purpose of the paper is to present budget travels as a new and increasingly popular way of spending free time. The article presents tourists’ decisive motives and expectations in relation to budget travels, preferred journey destinations, ways of accommodation, meals and transport, as well as methods of organizing trips. Also the difficulties encountered by travelers during their expeditions have been discussed. The research was conducted in 2016 with a method of diagnostic survey, using the questionnaire technique. The research sample consisted of 214 people living in Poland and travelling on a budget. The survey was made using social network sites and travel blogs, where the link to the questionnaire was posted.



## 4 Budget Travels in the Light of the Study—Results and Discussion

The study involved 214 people who have some experience in individual budget travels. Most of them were young people between 18 and 30 years (59%). A significant group among them were students. 33% of the surveyed were respondents aged 31–50 years, while people aged 50 and over were rest 8%. Among the respondents were slightly more women (57%). City inhabitants accounted for 92% of the research sample.

The respondents’ financial status was various. Most of them (54%) rated it as good, while 12% as very good. Only 5% of the surveyed considered it as bad.

Contrary to appearances, the respondents’ financial constraints were not the main motive for participation in budget tourism. Almost 80% of the surveyed have declared that the most important element for them was possibility of self-organizing the trips, with no restrictions imposed by the programs of events offered by travel agencies. However, the economic aspect of this type of trips was also strongly emphasized, what was evidenced by nearly 70% of indications. Details on this subject are presented in Fig. 1.

For the respondents also important was to have access to places, which cognizance is not possible during a trip with tour operator. This demonstrates the



**Fig. 1** Reasons for choosing a budget travel by respondents [%]. (\*Respondents could choose more than one answer. *Source* own research)

insight of the travelers of this type of tourism, what was also confirmed in numerous indications about the opportunity to get familiar with the local community and its culture.

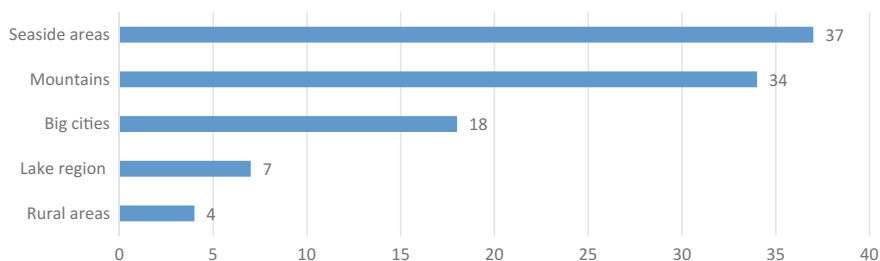
Most of the respondents carried out their budget travels in Poland. Foreign travels were declared by about one third of respondents. The types of preferred destinations and regions are presented in the Fig. 2.

As a destination of their budget travels the respondents mostly chose coastal and mountain areas. This may be due to the considerable natural and landscape attractiveness of these places, as well as the wish of the pleasure from enjoying the beach and the water during summer vacations. Slightly less popular were large cities, which mainly give the opportunity to cognize the anthropogenic values.

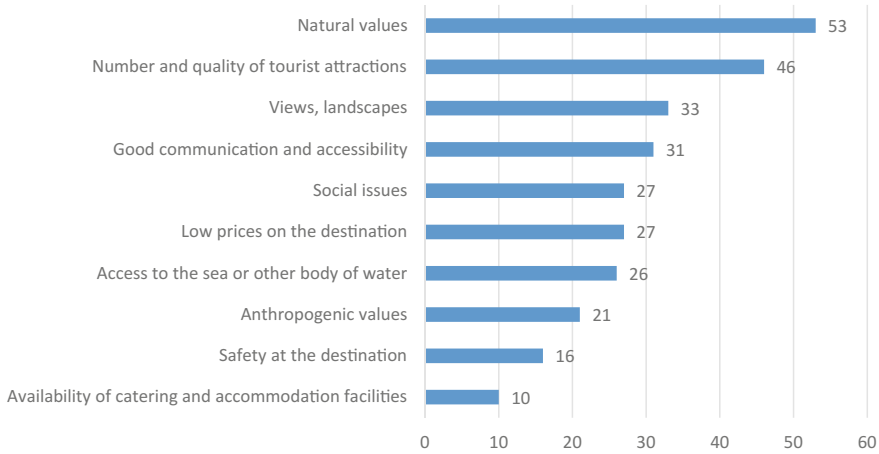
Quite diverse were the countries and regions that the respondents would like to visit in the future. Dominant were Spain and Portugal, the United States of America, the Balkans, Scandinavia, Italy, Croatia and Georgia. Also appeared (but definitely less often) slightly more unusual and exotic directions, like Armenia, Kazakhstan, Albania, Galapagos, Maldives or New Zealand.

The main determinants in choosing the destination of the trip turned out to be the natural values and the number and quality of tourist attractions in the particular place. For a large group of the surveyed important were views and landscapes, which later are preserved on many photographs and remembered long after the journey. Also good communication and easy access to the region was considered important. Interestingly, the anthropogenic values were not of great importance for the respondents, as is shown in Fig. 3.

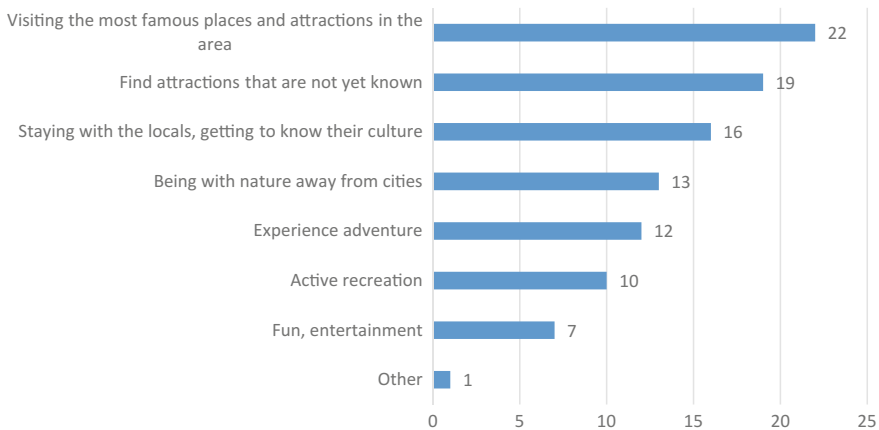
A small number of indications about safety at the destination may be surprising. This proves the conviction of the respondents that this type of travels does not carry a higher risk. The least attention was paid to the availability of catering and accommodation infrastructure. The reason of that may be in self-sufficiency in this regard of many of the surveyed, thanks to the possession of a tent and adequate stock of food (which significantly reduces travel costs). This may be also an explanation of the fact that the respondents rarely pointed out the financial affordability of the visited places as a factor determining the direction of their journey.



**Fig. 2** Regions preferred by the respondents for the implementation of budget travel [%]. (Source own research)



**Fig. 3** Factors determining the choice of a destination for the realization of budget trip among the respondents [%]. (\*Respondents could choose more than one answer. *Source* own research)



**Fig. 4** Preferred among the respondents ways of spending time during budget trips [%]. (*Source* own research)

The way of spending time during the trip was various and dependent on the preferences and needs of the respondents. The most important in their opinion types of activities undertaken during budget trips are presented in Fig. 4. The most often answer was sightseeing the most famous places and attractions in the visited region. Interestingly, for many of the respondents crucial was the opportunity to find places and attractions that are still undiscovered. Therefore it can be concluded that a large part of the surveyed do not like to follow popular and well-defined paths and prefer to avoid the crowds of tourists, who often negatively affect the atmosphere of the visited place.

The smallest significance for the surveyed tourists had fun and entertainment, which would indicate that they rather preferred to spend time of their journey on getting acquainted with the values, meeting local communities, learning about their cultures, traditions and customs.

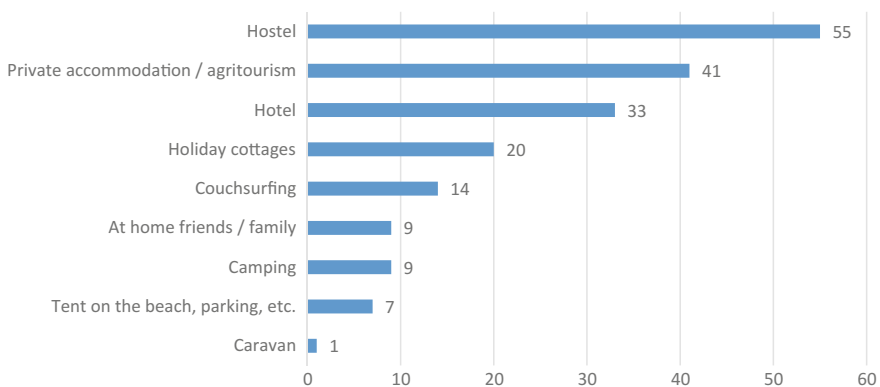
The types of accommodation facilities used were quite different among the respondents (Fig. 5). Mostly hostels were selected. The surveyed stressed the possibility of meeting many interesting people during stay in these places. Many of the respondents also used private rooms and agritourism farms. People deciding to stay in hotels chose mainly lower standard (thus cheaper) facilities.

A specific and increasingly popular way to organize accommodation becomes couchsurfing, which was used by 14% of the respondents. It is based on the free use of accommodation in the flats or homes of the members of the social network named Couchsurfing.org.

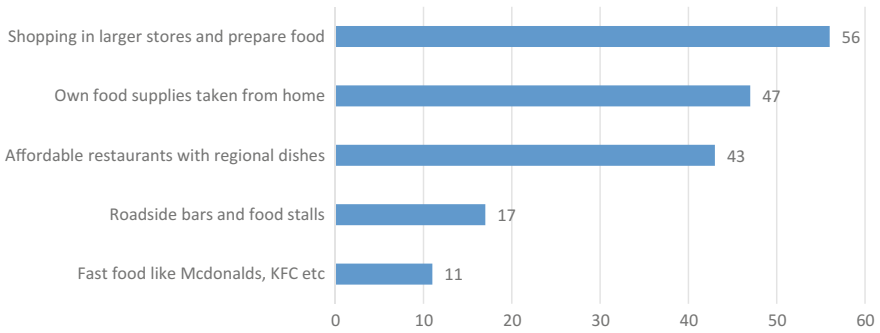
One of the most important elements of every trip is the food issue. The respondents used many options in this area, as is shown in Fig. 6. The most popular solution was self-preparation of the meals from the products purchased at local stores. Also products taken from home were used very often.

Quite popular were the reasonably priced restaurants, where tourists may try some characteristic regional dishes. Cuisine is an important element of every culture and a manifestation of certain traditions and customs, what makes tourists very interested in this element of the journey. The respondents were not interested in eating in fast-food chains, which offer is very similar even in different parts of the world, or in wayside bars and food stalls, where the quality of meals, especially the freshness of the products used to prepare dishes, often leaves a lot to be desired.

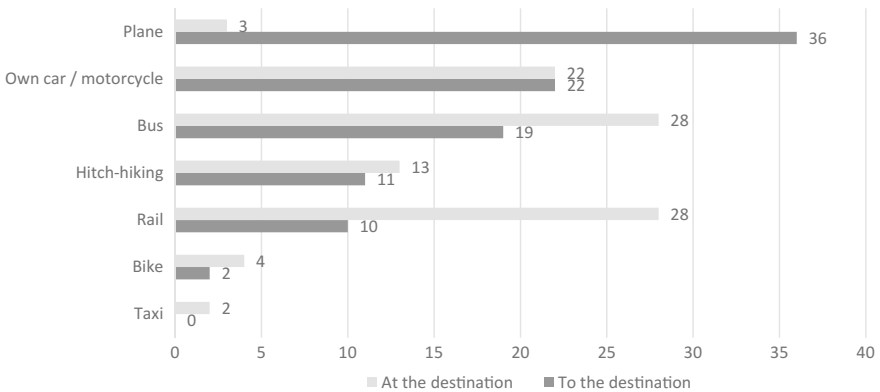
The most commonly chosen among the respondents mode of transportation to the destination was an airplane, which allows them to travel to another continent in a short time. Many of the surveyed also chose their own vehicles (usually car),



**Fig. 5** Used by respondents accommodations during budget travel [%]. (\*Respondents could choose more than one answer. *Source* own research)



**Fig. 6** Used by the respondents ways of realization nutritional needs during budget travel [%]. (\*Respondents could choose more than one answer. *Source* own research)



**Fig. 7** The most commonly used means of transport to the destination and at the destination [%]. (*Source* own research)

which provide travelers mobility and independence. Details on this subject are presented in Fig. 7.

During the stay at the destination most tourists decided to use the rail and bus transport, which allows relatively cheap travelling to different places and tourist attractions. Frequently chosen mode of transportation was also an own car/motorbike, which makes possible reaching less popular destinations or those not connected with public transport. However, none of the respondents used the car rented for the time of travel, what was probably due to the price of such service.

The vast majority of respondents (66%) preferred travelling in the company of other people. This were mainly group of friends or partner (Fig. 8). Very few decided to travel with newly met people. They preferred to travel with companions with whom they have good contact, feel comfortable and confident. Travelling with newly met people is associated with some risk, as not always you find a person who

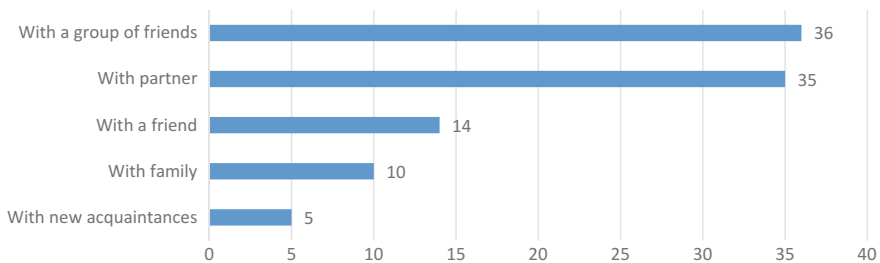
has the same idea or point of view on the journey, what can cause conflicts and spoil the atmosphere during the trip.

Nearly a quarter of the respondents did not have precise requirements for travel companions—those people were travelling both individually or in group. Only 10% of the surveyed travelled alone. The reason of that for 46% of this group was the lack of friends willing to travel on budget. However, a significant percentage (31%) of the individual travelers made such decision because of their desire for independence. They did not want anyone to limit their freedom of choice.

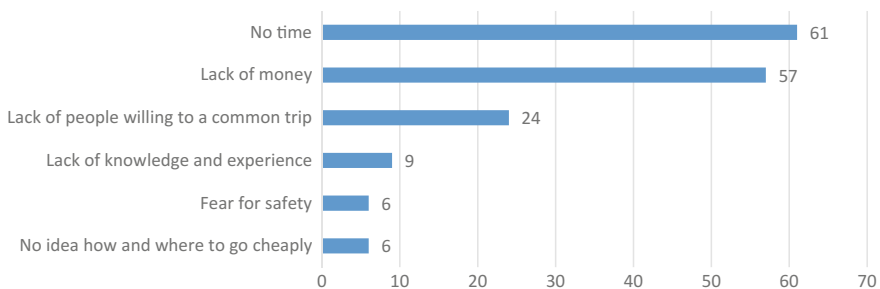
The duration of the respondents’ budget travels was quite varied. However, most trips (49% of indications) of this type did not exceed 1 week. For two-week trips has decided 36% of the respondents, while for lasting approximately 1-month only 9%.

One of the objectives of the study was to identify barriers that hinder or obstruct more frequent budget travelling. Due to the respondents the most important factors here were the lack of time and money (Fig. 9).

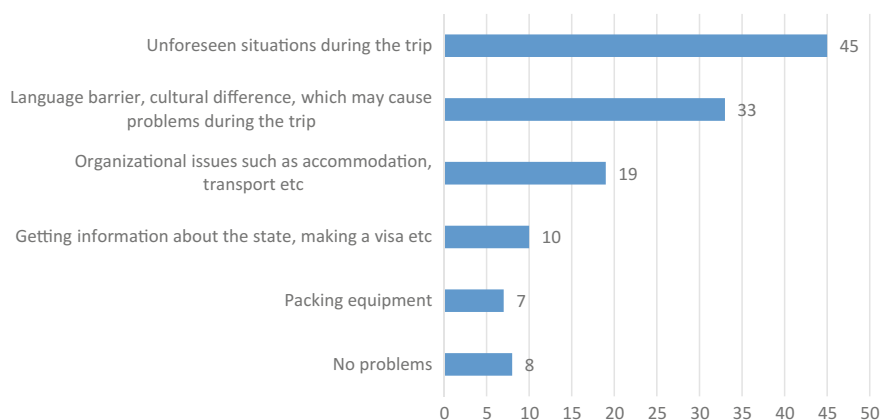
Due to the fact that majority of the respondents preferred trips of this type in the company of other people, quite often indicated problem was the lack of people willing to share a trip. At the same time fear of personal security and lack of idea for journey was of marginal importance here.



**Fig. 8** Persons accompanying respondents during budget trips [%]. (Source own research)



**Fig. 9** Barriers hindering or restricting more frequent budget trips [%] \*Respondents could choose more than one answer. (Source own research)



**Fig. 10** Elements of organization and implementation of the trip, with which the respondents had difficulties [%] \*Respondents could choose more than one answer. (Source own research)

The respondents were also asked to indicate the elements of the organization and the realization of the trip, which brought them some difficulties. Vast majority of the surveyed declared that they encountered problems mainly during the trip and their appearance was due to the emergence of unforeseen situations that complicated the journey (Fig. 10).

The language barrier or cultural difference of the visited place was also remarkably significant. This is due to the fact that budget travelers often go to regions and places rarely visited by mass tourists, where local people hardly speak foreign languages and are more closely tied to (often restrictive in opinion of visitors) traditions and customs, unusual for other countries or regions.

## 5 Conclusion

The conducted research made possible to formulate several conclusions:

1. Mostly relatively young people are interested in budget travels.
2. Budget travels are not only caused by the financial status of tourists— $2/3$  of the respondents defined their own financial situation as good and very good.
3. The most important reason for undertaking budget travels by the respondents was the possibility of self-organization of journey and the lack of restrictions imposed by the program of events offered by travel agencies.
4. Trips were usually held in the company of other people, like friends or partners of the respondents.
5. The preferred destinations were coastal and mountain areas.

6. The respondents, when choosing the direction of their trips, were primarily interested in the natural values and the number and quality of tourist attractions in the destination. Views and landscapes were also important.
7. The preferences of the respondents regarding the ways of spending time in visited places were different. The most frequently mentioned, however, were: sightseeing the most famous places and attractions in the visited region, finding unknown places and attractions that no one had heard before, as well as learning about the inhabitants and their culture.
8. The most popular accommodation facilities were hostels, as well as private rooms and agritourism farms. Meals were mostly prepared independently from products purchased in local stores or taken from home.
9. The respondents reached the destination usually by plane or their own car. At the destination, however, they used rail, buses or own cars again.
10. The barriers that hinder or obstruct more frequent budget travelling by the respondents were primarily the lack of time and money. Proceed with the conclusion of your paper. You may specify advantages, restrictions and potential applications. You should name the segment as required but without changing its format.

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## 6 Implementation and Limitations

Information gained through the research has contributed to broadening the knowledge about relatively new, but dynamically growing and having more numerous supporters form of tourism. The obtained results also allow characterizing the preferences, behaviors and expectations of tourists travelling on a budget.

The research sample due to its size and the method of selection (only the inhabitants of Poland) is not a representative one, therefore the obtained results cannot be used to describe the global phenomenon of budget tourism.

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# Greece as a Sports Tourism Destination

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**Abstract** The award of the organization of the Olympic Games 2004 in the city of Athens was considered by many to be a great opportunity to address the far as possible many of the wrongs in tourism starting from Athens, tourism, which had irreparably damaged for many years. The tourist image of the wider Athens area, which, as is known, shouldered the brunt of the host and hospitality of both athletes and gymnasts, who were part in the Olympic Games in 2004, and those came to Athens to watch them, did not differ far from that of mainland Greece. Athens, as it was known, has always been an attraction for various types of tourists, the multitude of tourist and the cultural of lures. Nevertheless, however, was not before the Olympics able to offer high quality level of hospitality services to visitors and especially those who for whatever reasons they want to remain in Athens for periods in excess of normal. From Igoumenakis (Tourism. Interbooks, Athens, 2005) we understand that the Olympic games of Athens 2004 leverages the city branding, thus incorporating more tourists, but at the same time the city authorities must try hard in order to attract not only the interest of athletes but to capitalize the benefits of the game in order to attract the interest of tourists and to maintain the positive brand image created from the Olympic games. Wurzburger (Creative

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tourism: A global conversation: How to provide unique creative experiences for travelers worldwide, Sunstone Press, Santa Fe, 2009) argues that the notion of tourism has changed during the past years. While during the past decades tourism has relied in the concept of mass tourism, where cities developed massive concrete facilities without taking into consideration neither the quality of living for their citizens nor the service quality provided to tourists. Under mass tourist large areas in Greece, Spain and elsewhere were transformed from tranquil communities into overcrowded areas where the environment was damaged while on many cases mass tourism was accompanied with negative effects on social values and on some cases it even led on increase on crime rates. Nevertheless, mass tourism had one advantage that few could challenge it; it created jobs and brought welfare for rural and island areas which often were characterized from underdevelopment and poverty (Cooper in *Worldwide destinations: The geography of travel and tourism*, Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann, Italy, 2005). Wurzburger (*Creative tourism: A global conversation: How to provide unique creative experiences for travelers worldwide*, Sunstone Press, Santa Fe, 2009) notes that this has changed during the past ten years; the need to create sustainable destinations but also competition from new markets that focus on particular market segments has changed the notion of tourist industry. The aim of the project is to examine the potentials of sport tourism in Greece. Almost 15 years after the Olympic games of Athens, Greece has lost a good chance to develop as a sports tourism destination. Through this literature review that will be made, it would be that Greece has several potentials however, till now it has not been able to capitalize the existing opportunities. Therefore, there is a need to work more on this.

**Keywords** Alternative tourism · Sports tourism · Tourism destination  
Greece

**JEL Classification** Z10 · Z32 · L83 · M10

## 1 Introduction

Tourism is characterized as a specialized and rapidly growing sector of the global economy, and that is directly linked to social and cultural changes in modern societies. The relatively recent development of tourism and the inability to define the meaning of the original, as opposed to concepts that were more acceptable was the problem for the conceptual definition of tourism as a social phenomenon.

One of the many social aspects of tourism that needs analysis is the role of tourist during the trip and how culture affects the environment.

As is known to Greece for many tourists for many years is a popular destination and travel due to the climate, natural beauties, but mainly because of culture. In Greece the foreign tourism as an economic and social phenomenon made its appearance from the seventies onwards. But degraded and unmanaged bid often

characterizes some tourist destinations in Greece causes strong pressure on local communities, the residential and natural environment and the cultural.

Due to the contact of tourists with local residents and often made some changes such as changes in the culture of the destination due to the presence of tourists. It is very typical example of closed societies insular tourism development in tourism has led to conflict between the young people who came into daily contact with tourists and older who do not socialize with tourists and kept closed and conservative physiognomy. Young people have become carriers of positive or negative changes while the elder one would not change anything in the local communities. At the same time however there were alterations cultural natures such as language or culture.

One of the most popular forms of tourism is sports tourism. Greece has been involved in this form of tourist activity, for example with the Olympic Games in 2004. However, there is a need to evaluate how Greece will cope with this in the future. The economic crisis has resulted to a stand-still on sport tourism. Hence, the aim of this paper is to create the necessary background so to move on with a future research on Greece as a tourist destination for sport tourism. This is a literature review, which means that it will rely upon the collection and analysis of related papers and reports. The expected results will indicate that there is a need to further research on this field so to evaluate how sport tourism can develop in the upcoming years.

## **2 Literature Review**

### ***2.1 Components of Tourism***

Considering that tourism is a composite of activities, services and industries that deliver a travel experience, it is important to identify and categorize its components. The quality and quantity of these determine tourism's success in any area. Various categories of components of tourism are presented in the literature but the same basic types of components are always included: These elements were found by books of foreign literature from English-speaking author.

#### **Natural Attractions and Environment**

- **Climate:** In our days a warm, sunny, dry climate is typically considered desirable by most tourist, especially those from cold winter areas, and particularly when associated with other attractions such as beach, marine, and mountain areas that provide opportunities for recreation activities (Weaver & Lawton, 2002).
- **Scenic Beauty:** The overall natural scenic beauty of an area may be a major motivation to visit there, especially if conservation measures have been applied

to maintain the cleanliness and natural character of the environment (Inskeep, 1991).

- Beaches and Marine areas: Beaches are associated marine areas for sunbathing, swimming, boating, wind and board surfing, water skiing and other water recreation activities are major attractions in many places in the world (Inskeep, 1991).
- Flora and Fauna: Unusual and interesting flora and fauna can be very important attractions, especially when combined with scenic landscapes (Weaver & Lawton, 2002).
- Mountains: Mountains illustrate the subjective and changing nature of tourism resources. Mountains probably rank second only to beaches as the most popular topographic venues for tourism activity (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2003).
- Health tourism: Usually, but not always, related to the natural environment are various types of health tourism. Spas for example, are based on hot mineral waters (Inskeep, 1991).
- Winter sports: Snow and winter sports tourism is an important component of the world tourism industry and is a day element for a better quality of life in many countries (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2003).

#### The Built Environment (Created by humans)

- Accommodations (hotels, apartments, timesharing)
- Technology is one of the most recent, and still increasingly influential, dimensions of the built environment that is shaping the nature of both tourism products and travel experiences
- Information. The success of destination is determined by its ability to assemble, interpret, and utilize information in an effective manner (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2003)
- Transportation (Air, road, railway, ship and boat)—Special Types of Attractions (Theme parks, shopping, meeting, conference and convention)
- Sport tourism: Today vast numbers of people participate in or watch sports and almost everyone aspires to a holiday.

Though the connections between sport and tourism have long been established, the relationship is now gaining global significance. The modern Olympic Games are the most prestigious of all sporting events (Standerek & De Knop, 1999).

#### Cultural Attractions

- Archaeological, Historical, and Cultural Sites.
- Distinctive Cultural Patterns, and life-styles that are unusual and, in some cases, unique to one place can be of much interest to many tourists.
- Interesting Urban areas
- Museums and Other Cultural facilities
- Cultural festival.

## Economic Impact of Tourism

Tourism is a powerful economic force providing employment, foreign exchange, income and tax revenue. The generators of economic impact for a city or a country are visitors, their expenditures and the multiplier effect. The economic impact of tourism spending is a function of the numbers of domestic and international visitors and their expenditures. Because of the economic importance of tourism, the World Tourism Organization (WTO) maintains statistics by region and country on tourism arrivals and both tourism expenditures and receipts. Tourist destinations are becoming increasingly competitive as more and more destinations look at tourism to become the new economic generator replacing declining activity in agriculture, mining, and manufacturing (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2003).

World tourism grew between 2000 and 2012 by 29.4%. Moreover, in spite of the economic crisis of the last years, we can see in the table below that world tourism grew almost 2% between 2007 and 2008. In 2000 Europe and America were the main tourist-receiving regions. But, we can observe that since then other regions are growing at a faster pace. As a result their respective shares in the world total show a declining tendency. Tourism development also has a significant impact on employment. The World Travel & Tourism Council estimates that in 2009 employment in the travel and tourism economy was 219.810.000 jobs or 7.6% of total employment, which is 1 in every 13.2 jobs. By 2019, this should grow to 275.688.000 jobs, 8.4% of total employment or 1 in every 11.8 jobs. Tourism provides both direct and indirect employment. Firms such as hotels, restaurants, airlines, cruise lines, and resorts provide direct employment because their employees are in contact with tourists and provide the tourist experience. Employees of firms providing goods and services to the direct employment firms, such as aircraft manufacturers, construction firms, and restaurant suppliers, create indirect employment (IOBE, 2015).

In this section, we presented the main elements of tourism and the economic importance of tourism. In order for all these elements to be effectively connected and have a positive impact upon the tourism, Government intervention has a fundamental role to play.

## ***2.2 The Role of Government Involvement in Tourism***

Government involvement is very essential, especially in developing countries, where government intervention is required to achieve material objectives because of the absence of a developed and innovative private sector. Private sector involvement in tourism is likely to be initiated by opportunities for profitable investment and priorities are likely to be related to financial and economic considerations. There are many conflicts and problems relating to the development of tourism which can only be resolved by government (Huybers, 2007).

A critical difference between tourism and many other agents of development is that of inseparability, in that tourism is consumed at the place of production, thus involving itself with the host community, and requiring some co-modification and sharing of traditions, value systems and culture. Since the tourism industry does not control all those factors that make up the attractiveness of a destination and the impact on the host population can be considerable, it is necessary for the options concerning the development of tourism to be considered at the highest level of government and the appropriate public administrative framework put in place. As a rule the greater the importance of tourism to a country's economy the greater the involvement of the public sector is (Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert, & Manhill, 2005).

Below are some examples of government's role in tourism development.

### Types of Involvement

#### Managerial Involvement

In this case, government not only sets tourism objectives, but also introduces necessary organizational and legislative support to attain the objectives.

For example, government can discriminate in favor of foreign nationals seeking employment in tourism; could introduce specific tourism investment incentives legislation and it could negotiate bilateral air agreements with the specific interests of tourist traffic in mind.

#### Passive Involvement

A government might enact legislation relating to the employment of foreign nationals within the country. Moreover, a government introduces legislation offering investment incentives or negotiates a bilateral air services agreement.

Another form of passive involvement is when government does not deliberately inhibit the development of tourism, but neither does it actively encourage it.

**Developmental:** Developmental involvement is seen when government or its agencies undertake an operational role in the tourist sector. In developing countries, government usually undertakes this role because of the inability or unwillingness of the private sector to become involved in tourism.

The essence of active involvement by government in tourism is an action of series of actions which discriminate in favor of the tourism sector. It is pertinent to note that the nature and extent of this involvement will reflect not only the stage of development of a country, but also the political philosophy of its government (Huybers, 2007).

#### Administrative Framework

There are considerable variations in the structure of public administration of tourism, which in turn depend on the size of the tourist industry and the importance the government attaches to the various reasons advanced for public sector involvement in tourism. In most cases, where tourism is a significant element of economic activity, it is common practice to have a Ministry of Tourism. This is

particularly true of island economies, which frequently form some of the world's most attractive tourist destinations.

The position of a National Tourism Organization (NTO) within this framework may be inside or outside the ministry. In the latter case, the NTO becomes a government agency or semi-governmental body. It usually has a separate constitution, enacted by law, and a board of directors appointed from outside government which, in theory, gives independence from the political system. However, the link is maintained through the NTO being the executive arm of government policy as agreed by the ministry and public money providing the major source of funds for most NTOs (Cooper et al., 2005).

### 2.3 *Tourism in Greece*

In this chapter we present the importance of tourism to the Greek economy, the structural problems and the weaknesses it faces as well as its competitiveness. Moreover, we analyze the current situation of Greece as a destination. Using the two successive tourism models, we analyzed, Barcelona and Turkey that achieved to lengthen their tourism season by differentiating their tourist product, we aim to propose future directions, objectives and tasks.

#### Basic tourism infrastructure

The Greek tourism product is an amalgam of natural, cultural and heritage attractions spread throughout the country, as well as a wide variety of services offered and moreover, 15,000 miles of coastline; 2500 islands; an average of 300 sunny days annually. The Greek civilization of more than 3500 years also provides plentiful cultural heritage throughout the country. Some 25,000 registered and protected monuments and archaeological sites, numerous museums and about 500 characteristic traditional settlements' offer a unique blend of tourist attractions.

In spite of the fact that during the last decade several substantial infrastructure developments were made for the 2004 Olympics, such as the new Athens International Airport, a suburban rail system for the capital and major motorways linking the south of the mainland to the north and east to west, the Greek infrastructure is incapable of supporting the tourism superstructure growth of the last decades; telecommunications, transportation, police and health services, water supply, and sewage systems are under extreme pressure in the summer peak months to satisfy the demand density (Trivellas, Kakos, Vasiliadis, & Belias, 2015).

The Greek tourism product is distributed to the international market predominantly through European tour operators, which organize package holidays and include resorts in their programs. Although Greece offers unique nature, culture and heritage, suffers from a lack of differentiation of the tourism product as well as competitive disadvantages in marketing and planning. Greece's tourism industry has traditionally been dominated by summer holidaymakers seeking sun, sea and sand. This has resulted in a highly seasonal industry, focused primarily on the islands.



## ***2.4 The Contribution of Tourism to the Greek Economy***

The Greek economy is often criticized for failing to develop strong industrial sectors and to establish suitable distribution channels for exporting agriculture. Tourism is a major contributor to the balance of payments, while it is one of the few activities which would enable Greece to achieve competitive advantages through the redistribution of labor within Europe. Thus it is a vital motivator of the Greek economy reducing the deficit of the balance of payments, boosting employment, generating income, and contributing to regional development. Tourism is a major export and contributor to Gross Domestic Product (GDP). According to the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), tourism contribution globally to GDP is estimated at 7, 3%. However, since travel & tourism touches all sectors of the economy, its indirect impact is even greater. In 2000, in Greece, tourism receipts were 10.061.2 millions €, equivalent to 15.93% of total GDP, while in 2014 were 11.635.9 millions equivalent to 16.28% of total GDP, increased by 15.6%. Tourism exports and services in 2012 were 11.8 bn or 29.1% of total exports. The capital investments in 2012 was 6.4 bn € or 14.3 of total investment and the capital expenditures at the same year was 2.4 bn € or an 8.0 share (IOBE, 2015).

## ***2.5 Sport Tourism***

Sport is the field in which competitive activities are based on which people are employed during their recreation by promoting their health, practicing and improving their performance. Athletic Recreation Tourism consists of those tourists who travel to enjoy their holidays while improving their physical condition. These tourists follow specific programs. In sports tourism, it should be added that sport is distinguished between assets and liabilities, namely, the physical participation of man in a sports activity and the observation of sports activities (Aphinos, 1998).

Tourism is the temporary movement of people away from their place of residence, which implies the acquisition of new experiences beyond their everyday life. Athletic tourism is the tourist activity of people who are motivated to participate in specific sports activities and trainings as well as to watch recreational games (Vogiatzaki, Harachousou, & Kampitsis, 2001).

Sport is a particular activity in the tourism industry and tourism is a fundamental feature that governs sport. Over the last decade research has been undertaken which has highlighted the importance of sports tourism and its characteristics have been defined. Athletes do domestic or international travel and are often referred to as tourists for statistical and technical reasons. This suggests that sports and tourism are sometimes interrelated. The World Tourism Organization in the conference with the International Olympic Committee held in February 2001 recognized that sport and tourism are linked. In the same year it was determined that sport contributes to

GDP of industrialized nations by more than 2% and tourism respectively by more than 6% (Aphinos, 1998).

Linking sport and tourism has the effect of understanding the different cultures and lifestyles of different cultures, as well as contributing to promoting and maintaining peace and social cohesion among people. Tourism and sport are closely related concepts both theoretically and practically, as sport tourism can be defined in a number of ways. Most of its definitions are defined by the society in which they are formulated (Belias, Kyriakou, Vassiliadis, Koutsellos, & Varsanis, 2015).

Today many government executives in the world have proposed sports tourism strategies that have varying degrees of success. In the academic sphere, many studies have been done on sport tourism since 1990. Athletic tourism is a phenomenon that is modern and its roots are historical. The principles of sport tourism are located in ancient Greece at the time of the city-state where the Greeks traveled far to participate in major sporting events and especially at the Olympic Games. Herodotus in his work reports that there was athletic tourism. The first form of tourism appears to be athletic tourism (Belias et al., 2015).

## ***2.6 Forms of Sport Tourism***

Athletic tourists are those tourists who travel to watch athletic matches as spectators while staying at least one night at the destination where the match takes place by combining the sporting event with their holidays while there are groups of athletes traveling to participate in sports games. In this case, the athletes extend the stay at the venue for more than one night in addition to their sporting obligations (Belias, Kyriakou, Koustellos, Varsanis, & Trivellas, 2016; Belias, Trivellas, Koustellos, Serdaris, Varsanis, & Grigoriou, 2016).

Sports athlete is the person who professionally or amateuristically engages in sports and needs expensive equipment while attending athletic competitions systematically and choosing to travel, giving weight to the quality of the service provided and observing his/her physical condition. The athlete has a good economic status, a high level of education and age of up to 45 years. In addition, the sports tourist is willing to travel long distances to find what he wants and this form of tourism tends to be a form of tourism that is considered to be devoted. 1/3 of sports tourists are graduates of Universities and many of them hold postgraduate degrees (Aphinos, 1998).

As regards the difference between the athlete and the other tourists who may stay in the same hotel, the fact that the athlete is systematically engaged in sports activities and uses his athletic equipment while consuming the sporting services provided by the hotel. Athletic Recreation Tourism is a huge market in Greece and is growing with a very significant number. At the same time, there is training tourism, which consists of the professional and amateur groups that participate in special programs of preparation and rehabilitation while staying in accommodation equipped with gyms, spa and clinics supervised by technical staff (Belias, Kyriakou, Vassiliadis, Koustellos, Varsanis, 2015).

Coaching tourism is a category of tourism that has not yet developed significantly in our country but is expected to have a lot of growth in the future. In general, athletic tourism is a business that is considered to be highly profitable and can provide several billion in one country, while providing opportunities for growth to all those involved in conducting major sporting events. It occupies a key position with regard to the country's organizational strategy for attracting sporting events such as the Olympic Games. There are countries like Australia that have spent over \$ 2 billion to organize Olympic Games and in the years to come they have won a very large number of tourists who have visited the country. Indeed, organizing events of this magnitude has led the country to more infrastructure improvements, such as its transport system and its airports (IOBE, 2015).

Athletic tourism can attract many people as it is a costly process and offers a unique experience not only to the spectator of the events but also to everyone involved. The direct benefit to a venue that organizes matches can quickly be seen and in most cases its cash while the indirect benefit, which is the biggest one, looks after years as more tourists can visit the area. Athletic tourism is a tool that, if used properly by a country, can bring great profits, create jobs and contribute to the cultural culture of the country. The economy of cities and areas where sporting events are organized shows that these areas are of particular interest to sporting events and organizers often seek to hold events with official supporters to make them successful. In many countries, 25% of their income comes from sports tourism (Trivellas, Kakos, Vasiliadis, & Belias, 2015; Belias, Charouli, Kyriakou, Sdrolias, Velissariou, Kakkos et al., 2017).

### 3 Methodology

The methodology used in the present paper is the critical review of the literature. The authors would like to make the necessary reference over if Greece is a tourist destination for sport tourism so to make suggestions over how a future research may head to. It is important to mention that this is just the first step of process to create the necessary background for future papers on this field. For this reason the authors have collected a variety of references, mostly recent references, so to prepare their paper.

The sources of relevant literature investigation derived from popular online bibliographic databases, such as Science Direct, Emerald, EBSCO host and scientific search engines such as Google Scholar and Scirus. General search engines such as Google have also been examined.

The types of bibliographic sources included in the research are articles published on scientific journals, books, conference proceedings, company papers and studies, white papers, online sites and online journals. The selection criteria of these literature sources were based on the relevance to the topic of the paper and this research is not exhaustive.

## 4 Results

The potential in Greece for the development of sport tourism seems to be enough. At the same time, many organizations have contributed to the development of sport tourism (<http://www.jstar.gr/>, <http://www.geda.gr/>, <http://www.sport-tourism.com/>). Our country holds one of the highest positions in the preferences of tourists among the member states of the European Union, and in combination with its nature and monuments, it is a pole of attraction for tourists. Consequently, the conditions exist and what is needed is their exploitation, since Greece has plenty of mountainous volumes, innumerable beaches, mild climate, but also a unique cultural heritage (Katerinopoulou, 2002).

In Greece, active sports tourism is a growing activity. Its services are divided into 3 categories: (a) activities related to the sea, such as sailing, diving, kayaking and yachting; (b) outdoor activities such as climbing, skiing, Hiking, rafting, kayaking in lakes and rivers, and (c) physical activities such as tennis, golf and much more. The first organized outdoor recreation program in Greece took place in the late 1980s, with activities mainly rafting, hiking and kayaking. At that time, the marketing of these programs was very limited, but efforts to attract the interest of foreign tourists to active holidays were also limited. Since 1990 and thereafter the sports tourism industry has been even more active. New private organizations have grown on the market and some of them have followed the principles of franchising. As a result of socio-economic development and lifestyle development, the market has grown significantly. Participation in outdoor activities was projected as a modern lifestyle and as an alternative holiday for all. For modern people, traditional leisure and leisure activities are now a thing of the past. The new “technology”, long-time use of PCs and TVs, which leads to sedentary life and removes it from any activity, shapes the profile of a modern tourist, who aims at “recreational tourism”, which provides not only his But also the opportunity to manage the stress of everyday life, to regulate its weight, to improve its mood, to resist the aging process and to create social relations Belias, Charouli, Kyriakou, Sdrolias, Velissariou, Kakkos et al., (2017).

It is argued that tourists try to escape from the alienating sequences of their everyday lives by seeking authenticity in other places and times. In the 21st century, the sport tourism industry still finds new solutions. Private organizations set higher and higher professional goals for local and foreign tourists and emphasize the development of a tourism network. The choices of the Internet as the main mean of communication and the effective use of other communication channels to attract foreign tourists continue to be challenging for businesses in Greece in the competitive tourist environment (Kouthouris & Alexandris, 2005).

The takeover of the 2004 Olympic and Paralympic Games by Athens was a very important event for Greece, with multiple economic and social influences. Their successful organization has put Greece as a developed country that has the potential to take on and successfully carry out difficult ventures, such as the preparation and conduct of the largest sports event in the world. With the organization of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, in the two-month period from August to September 2004, Athens and Greece gathered everyday world interest through the international press, electronic media and the internet (IOBE, 2015).

The success of an organization in the unhindered conduct of many athletic and not only events does not automatically translate into a significant positive effect on the economy. Besides, according to the experience of recent events, the cost and the benefits of the event are influenced by many parameters, both during the preparation and during the Olympic Heritage period, making it possible to achieve a significant positive impact on the economy which is a very complex task (IOBE, 2015).

On the expenditure side, gross cost is affected by the degree of preparedness of the host city in infrastructure, the degree of involvement of the private sector in investment, and the choice of competent authorities between permanent and temporary establishments, an option stemming from intentions. For the permanent upgrading of the infrastructure of the host city (Kyriakou, Belias, Trivellas, Koustelios, & Varsanis, 2016; Goeldner & Ritchie, 2003). For example, the organization of the Olympic Games in Atlanta in 1996 is characterized by very low gross cost of preparation and exploitation, as there were already needed infrastructures. Another example is the organization of London in 2012, where several projects were carried out that significantly upgraded the East London area, while extensive use was made of temporary facilities, resulting in a significant reduction in the gross cost of use after the Games. Finally, both in the 1992 Barcelona and Sydney 2000 conferences, significant investments were made in permanent facilities to achieve a more permanent benefit for residents and visitors alike (Kartakoullis, 2000).

## 5 Conclusion

Greece is a country that has built its reputation as a well known summer destination. However, it has tried to expand also on other forms of tourist such as sustainable tourism and winter tourism. One notion of tourist activity is the case of sport tourism. This paper has examined the case of Greece as a sport tourist destination. Indeed, Greece has the related infrastructure and experience on sport events, while the Olympic Games had a positive impact in Greek tourism (IOBE, 2015). However, there is a need for further research into this field. The outcome of this is that there is need for further research into this field. A proposed research will include a mixed method approach which will include qualitative and quantitative research where the researchers will evaluate whether Greece can develop as a tourist destination.

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# Rural Residents' Tourist Activity in the Context of Socio-economic Changes in Poland

Agata Balińska

**Abstract** The article focuses on rural residents' tourist activity (participation in tourism). As statistics show, the rate of rural residents' participation in tourism is lower than the national average. The article uses secondary data (desk research method) and the results of own empirical study based on a sample of rural population (survey method). The study showed a significant variation in the determinants of tourism demand and indicated potential demand for tourism services in the study sample.

**Keywords** Rural residents · Changes in rural areas · Tourist activity  
Tourism demand

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## 1 Introduction

The juxtaposition of the terms ‘tourism’ and ‘rural areas’ is usually associated with the use of rural areas for tourism purposes or activation of rural areas through tourism. The studies on rural residents’ participation in tourism are extremely rare, as is the perception of rural areas as both potential and actual source of tourism demand (Balińska, 2014; Górka, 2010; Łaciak, 2004). The widely available statistical data does not analyse tourist activity in relation to the place of residence. Even scientific literature fails to address this issue. The scarcity of research in this area probably results from the conviction that rural population, due to the character of work in agriculture and tight finances, is not interested in travel. Tourism is an interdisciplinary phenomenon embracing economic, social and spatial aspects. Krzysztof Przeclawski claims (Przeclawski, 1997) that it is also a manifestation of cultural transformations, and even more broadly—social transformations. Changes in the structure of rural population and, consequently, in the structure of household income support the thesis that the population living in rural areas, including the agricultural population, can create and often creates tourism demand. The objective of this study is to investigate the scale and drivers of rural residents’ participation in tourism.

Research problems have been formulated in the form of the following questions:

1. What is the structure of tourism trips taken by rural residents?
2. What stimulants and inhibitors affect tourism demand of rural residents?

In order to achieve the paper’s objective and obtain answers to the research questions the study used a desk research method involving the analyses of statistical reports and databases of the Central Statistical Office of Poland (GUS) and the Institute of Tourism [Instytut Turystyki]. Additionally, the study used a survey method: the empirical research involved a sample of households in three purposively selected villages. The research sample was selected by random stratified sampling in the rural commune of Bielawa [gmina Bielawa] in Łódzkie province [województwo łódzkie] and included 200 households. The choice of the commune was purposive and resulted mainly from the fact that agricultural production in its area is very diverse. The survey study was conducted in the second half of 2015.

## 2 Determinants of Tourism Demand

Tourism demand is usually defined as the volume of tourism products that people are willing to buy at a given time and price. As Teresa Skalska (Dziedzic & Skalska, 2012, p. 11) argues, there is a need to distinguish between the demand for travel to a destination and the demand for specific tourism connected products and services (accommodation, food, sports or photo equipment). This distinction is



important when analyzing the determinants of tourism demand. For the purpose of this analysis it has been assumed that tourism demand is the demand for tourism products (trips) at a certain time and at a specified price.

An interesting category of demand is 'potential demand', which is a derivative of tourism related needs. Stanisław Wodejko argues that even though potential demand does not actually exist on the market, it should not be ignored, moreover, 'this is unacceptable in rational management, especially in the context of consumer market and marketing orientation' (Wodejko, 1997, p. 49). The main instrument for converting potential demand into effective demand is income. In addition to income tourism demand is driven by many other factors. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) distinguishes more than 130 tourism drivers, which makes it difficult to categorize them and leads to arbitrary classifications (Niezgoda, 2012a, b, p. 12). The UNWTO divides the tourism drivers into three groups:

1. Economic factors: general economic conditions, income, price;
2. Socio-psychological factors: demographic, industrial, urban, cultural, motivational, leisure;
3. Supply related factors: tourism policy, transport, accommodation venues, tour operators.

The group of tourism demand drivers most frequently analysed in scientific publications include the following factors: economic, demographic, geographical, legal, political, socio-cultural and psychological (Guzman-Parra, Quintana-García, Benavides-Velasco, & Vila-Oblitas, 2015, pp. 123–128; Mansfeld & Ya'acoub, 1995, pp. 459–470; Middleton, 1996, p. 38; Molinillo & Japutra, 2016, pp. 1–9; Niezgoda, 2012a, b, p. 34; Pabel, Prideaux, & Thompson, 2017, pp. 142–151; Queiroz, Guerreiro, & Ventura, 2014, pp. 1119–1135).

An interesting classification of tourism drivers, taking into account the concepts of many authors, has been proposed by Niemczyk and Seweryn (2012, p. 93). They divided the tourism determinants into the following categories:

1. Supply drivers: tourism product, tourism policy, tourism providers
2. Demand drivers:
  - (a) subjective: needs, motives, emotions, attitudes, lifestyle, personality, risk awareness, physical characteristics of the individual (physical fitness, body built),
  - (b) objective: geographic, demographic, socio-cultural, technological, macroeconomic (economic situation, exchange rates, inflation, globalization, integration processes), microeconomic (income, loans, savings, prices).

Tourism services providers are primarily tour operators and accommodation providers, who use extensive marketing activities to create and intensify demand for their own services. Nowadays, more and more tourists use the internet to acquire information about tourism trips, destinations and accommodation. Press, catalogues, radio, outdoor advertising have become promotion channels of secondary

importance. The widespread use of the internet is particularly important when tourists are recruited from outside large urban centres and have no direct contact with travel agents or other forms of promotion.

Regardless of the classification, the factors in question may be of a stimulating or inhibitory character. In the latter case they are called barriers or inhibitors to the development of tourism. In the remainder section of the paper, the author discusses to the role of selected determinants in accordance with the division proposed by Agata Niemczyk and Renata Seweryn. Other methods of classification mentioned in the text were to show the complexity and ambiguity of the typology of tourism demand determinants.

### 3 Tourism Demand in Rural Areas

Rural areas account for 93.4% of Poland and are home to around 40% of the population. According to the Central Statistical Office of Poland [GUS], the share of rural population will gradually increase to reach 44.6% by 2050 ([stat.gov.pl](http://stat.gov.pl)—retrieved 24.03.2017). This does not mean that there will be an increase in employment in agriculture. Other rural functions including providing services and housing will expand.

The village as a place of work and living for a considerable part of society is the object of interest of representatives of various disciplines. Numerous publications examine the transformation of Polish countryside and list the changes taking place in rural areas, (Potencjał ..., 2013, pp. 26–33; Wilkin & Nurzynska, 2012, pp. 15–117, [stat.gov.pl](http://stat.gov.pl)—retrieved 24.03.2017):

- Deagrarianization—about 60% of the rural population has no connection with agricultural production or agricultural land use. Employment in agriculture tends to decrease, although the present rate—12.8% is still quite high compared to other EU countries;
- Change in the structure of farms—medium size farms (10.6 ha) prevail;
- Despite an increase in average agricultural income due to subsidies granted to farmers after accession to the EU (in years 2004 and 2010, farmers' income doubled compared to the period before accession and subsidies accounted for 50% of farmers' income), the economically viable farms are significantly larger than the national average;
- Demographics—some indicators are similar to urban: birth rate, the age at which women choose to give birth or life expectancy but in rural areas the risk of poverty and social exclusion is higher than in the city (despite stronger social ties), and lower number children participate in pre-school education;
- Improved level of education of rural residents, (although the proportion of people with tertiary education is three times lower than in urban areas), and greater care for the protection of the environment;

- Villages, especially those located near big cities, have become an attractive place of residence for people working in these cities. As noted by participants of the Public Debate, 'The village is no longer an inferior world but in many ways it becomes an attractive world. As much as 50% of rural youth and 13% of urban youth declare that they are willing to live in the country' (Potencjał ..., 2013, p. 12).

The determinants of tourism demand correspond to a large extent to the above-mentioned changes taking place in rural areas in Poland. In the author's opinion, the main drivers of tourism demand are tourist needs, which include cognitive, health and religious needs (rather than classical leisure needs—seeking peace and quiet in contact with nature). An important role in social life, including the enhancement of tourism demand, is played by the internet (one in five tourists buys tourism connected services online) Unfortunately the internet accessibility in the country is growing at a slower pace than in cities. Only 68.5% of rural residents have a computer with access to the internet, while in the city the rate is 74.8% (Budgets ..., 2015, p. 52). Rural inhabitants who work outside home are often lucky to have access to the internet at work. However, the fact that internet access is available does not mean it is used (only 40% of farmers actually use the internet). Often the main obstacle is not only the lack of computers but also insufficient knowledge about how to use them (Inglot-Brzęk, 2011, pp. 374–385). The internet plays a crucial role in stimulating tourism demand. On the one hand, it stimulates tourist needs and provides information on how they could be met, and on the other hand, the possibility of booking online reduces the distance between a travel agent and a customer.

Undoubtedly, tour operators also work to boost tourism demand. The benefits of using the services of tour operators are numerous and they are widely analyzed in scientific literature (Guzmán, Moreno, & Tejada, 2008, pp. 187–202; Kachniewska, 2011, pp. 239–258; Konieczna-Domańska, 2008). First of all, the traveller does not have to be bothered with planning the trip or bear the risk of unsuccessful integration of individual tourism products into a package. However, in Poland, customers' interest in tour operator's services is rather limited. The share of tour operators in the organization of domestic trips was 2.5% in 2015, and 25.5% in foreign trips (including full package service 20%) (Charakterystyka ..., 2015, pp. 5–12).

Historical experience, as argued by Anszperger (2012, p. 17), indicates that tourist activity of an individual is highly dependent on their socioeconomic status. As Wiesław Alejziak points out, in highly developed countries leisure is an important element of consumption and an indicator of modernity and social well-being. In developing countries participation in tourism it is considered one of the best development drivers because it can stimulate economic, social and cultural development (Alejziak, 2007, p. 60). The well-being and quality of life of rural population has been the subject of numerous studies. Unfortunately, the issue of rural residents' participation in tourism has not been investigated, (Garip, 2008,

pp. 591–617; Murawska, 2012, pp. 169–180; Pavlovsky & Kobylansky, 1997, pp. 5–152).

Apart from the deagrarianization process mentioned above, one of the main factors contributing to the development of tourism is the potential consumers' financial status. In 2015, a disposable income amounted to about 206 Euros (1106 PLN) per person in a rural household and about 368 Euro (1566 PLN) in cities (Sytuacja ..., 2015, p. 10). The average monthly expenditure per capita on consumer goods and services in 2015 was around 288 Euro (1225 PLN) in cities and around 208 Euros (883 PLN) in rural areas, while the average disposable income of farmers was about 1058 Euro (4496 PLN), with the country average of 797 Euro (3385 PLN) (Sytuacja ..., 2015, p. 10).

With regard to the research area particular attention should be devoted to two items in the structure of these expenses: restaurants/hotels and recreation/culture. The amount of these expenses in total per person in 2015 was respectively: 10.7 Euros (45.4 PLN) and 17.3 Euros (73.5 PLN), an in farmers' budgets—respectively 3.4 Euros (14.6 PLN) and 8.8 Euros (37.2 PLN) (Budżety ..., 2016, p. 116).

The rural residents' participation in tourism for several years has been stimulated by initiatives financed by Village Council Funds (Fundusz ..., 2014, <http://siecobywatelska.pl>—retrieved 15.03.2014). The Funds were introduced in 2009 and serve to improve the quality of life. According to article 1, Section 3 of the Village Council Fund Act (Ustawa o Funduszu Sołeczkim) 'funding from Village Council Fund is allocated to the implementation of projects which are coherent with the of the commune's scope of tasks, improve the living conditions of the inhabitants and are consistent with the development strategy of the commune' (Ustawa ..., 2009). In some villages these resources were spent on tourism trips, often to nearby cities to attend cultural events.<sup>1</sup> Such allocation of resources from the Village Council Fund was questioned by the Regional Chambers of Audit [Regionalne Izby Obrachunkowe] who argued that such trips do not improve the quality of life, and if they do, it does not apply to all members of the local community but merely the participants of these trips (<http://funduszesoleckie.pl>, retrieved 02.05.2017). This interpretation seems surprising and certainly does not support tourism demand in rural areas.

One of the drivers of tourism demand is families' access to the means of transport. A car has become an accessible and popular means of transport,<sup>2</sup> which is frequently used for trips. In 2015 a car was used by 73.3% of participants on long-term trips, 75.3% of people on short-term breaks and 34.7% of those going abroad.

Also the religiousness of rural residents is a significant driver of tourism demand as it translates into participation in organized or individual pilgrimages to places of

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<sup>1</sup>The funding for carrying out the tasks amounted to: 43,823 thousand PLN in 2010, 51,172 thousand PLN in 2011 and 58,341 thousand PLN in 2012.

<http://mac.gov.pl/projekty/fundusz-solecki-nowelizacja/opis-projektu>—retrieved 06.03.2017.

<sup>2</sup>According to the PZPM report, in 2010, 17.2 million passenger cars were registered in Poland. [http://www.kpmg.com/PL/pl/IssuesAndInsights/ArticlesPublications/Documents/mot\\_2.pdf](http://www.kpmg.com/PL/pl/IssuesAndInsights/ArticlesPublications/Documents/mot_2.pdf).

religious worship. These types of trips are often organized by travel agencies (in the Central Registry of Tour Operators and Travel Agents [Centralny Rejestr Organizatorów i Pośredników Turystycznych] there are several Catholic travel agencies). However, this is usually true only about urban environments. In rural areas, because of the distance from travel agents and tight finances of potential pilgrims, the role of the initiator and organizer is often taken by the local priest. The same happens in case of camps for children and youth.<sup>3</sup>

According to the research methodology of the World Tourism Organization visits to family and friends are classified as tourism trips, therefore the migration of rural residents (mostly young people) to cities or abroad should be considered a driver of tourism development. The data from the Central Statistical Office of Poland shows that UK is the most popular destination for immigration (30% of Polish emigrants). The main reasons for the emigration of the rural population include: job seeking (77.1%, compared to 70.4% in the city), family issues (15.2%) and education (3.6%) (Migracje ..., 2013, pp. 51–54). Family members settling down in cities or abroad contribute to the growing number of trips taken in order to visit them. For example, the number of Poles travelling to the UK increased from 0.3 million in 2005 (Krajowe ..., 2008, p. 4) to 0.8 million in 2015 (Charakterystyka ... 2015, p. 18). One in four persons travelling to the UK in 2013 declared that their purpose was to visit relatives and friends.

Another factor influencing tourist activity is age. The most active tourists are young people up to 29 years of age. This is also true about rural residents and has been confirmed in the study by Górka (2010, pp. 91–102). According to her research, also gender is a determinant of the tourist activity of the rural population. Women are more active than men, and are more interested in educational and religious trips than men.

The above-mentioned factors determining tourism demand show how complex and sensitive market category we are dealing with. Many determinants of tourism demand are universal. There are also those characteristic of rural residents, which in the author's opinion makes research in this area more interesting.

#### **4 Rural Residents' Participation in Tourism—Statistical Data**

The conducted analysis of available sources shows that statistical data on tourist activity of rural residents is scarce. In statistical studies, this social group is rarely isolated, which creates research discontinuity. The recent research results show that respondents from the youngest age groups participate in tourism more often than is the national average for rural residents (see Table 1).

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<sup>3</sup>This practice is infringes the law regarding organization of tourism trips and is referred to in the trade press as unfair competition.

**Table 1** Polish residents and Polish rural residents making private tourism trips in 2015 by age, education and employment status

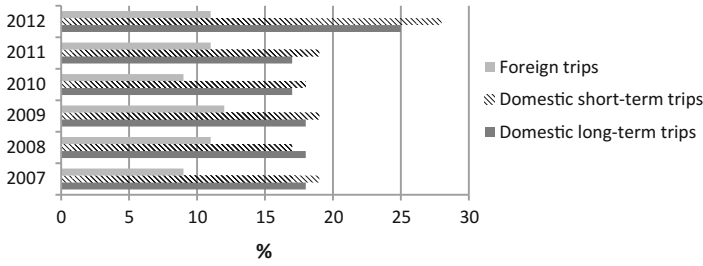
	% of Polish residents taking tourism trips	% of Polish rural residents taking tourism trips
<b>Age</b>		
15–19	8.6	11.3
20–24	9.4	11.0
25–44	40.3	37.6
45–64	29.0	28.9
65>	12.8	11.1
<b>Education</b>		
Tertiary	28.8	17.8
Upper-secondary and post-secondary	37.5	34.9
Vocational	19.9	26.5
Lower secondary	6.1	8.9
Primary and below	7.7	12.0
<b>Employment status</b>		
Employed	59.9	58.3
Unemployed	5.0	5.6
Pupil/student	12.7	14.3
Others (not working)	22.5	21.8

Source Turystyka (2015) and GUS Warszawa (2016)

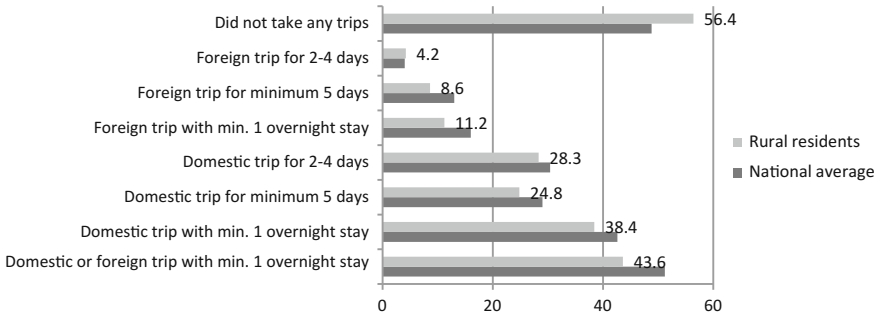
Certain disparities with respect to the national average can be seen primarily in the case of people with higher education and vocational background. The latest available data presenting the destinations and purposes of trips is unfortunately from 2012. Assuming that they were not fundamentally changed, the data from the years 2007–2012 has been presented in Figs. 1, 2 and 3.

Tourism activity of rural residents remained on a similar level from 2007 to 2011. About 17–19% of rural residents took long and short term domestic trips. A significant increase was recorded in 2012 when 28% of rural residents took short-term breaks while 25% made longer trips. The number of foreign trips remained significantly lower throughout the whole period (see Fig. 1). The analysis of more detailed research results shows that in almost every category the rate of rural residents' participation in tourism is lower than the national average.

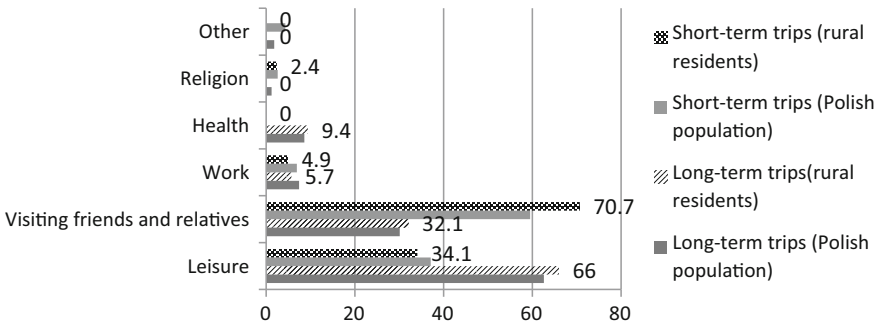
The proportion of residents who do not make tourism trips is unfortunately greater in the rural population than in the population of Poland. The reasons for not taking leisure trips are not analyzed in relation to their place of residence. It is worth mentioning, however, that only 5% of the respondents (sample representative of the inhabitants of Poland) declared that it was necessary for them to stay at home and watch the farm while due to the random quota sampling the share of the rural population in the sample was 38%.



**Fig. 1** Polish rural residents' participation in tourism in years 2007–2012. *Source* Łaciak (2013)



**Fig. 2** Polish rural residents' participation in tourism by trip destination and length contrasted with national average. *Source* see Fig. 1



**Fig. 3** Purposes of trips taken by Polish rural residents contrasted with Polish population by trip length. *Source* as in Fig. 1

Rural residents' purposes to make a trip do not differ significantly from the national average. The differences have been recorded with regard to most common purpose of short-term trips. Seven out of ten surveyed rural residents most often took trips to visit relatives and friends, while the national average is six out of ten respondents.

## 5 Results of Own Empirical Research Study

The research study using the survey technique was conducted in the rural commune of Bielawy located in central Poland (Łowicz County, Łódzkie Province). The commune has about 5000 inhabitants and covers an area of 164 km<sup>2</sup>, of which 75% is agricultural land. The number of agricultural holdings is almost 1.6 thousand; the average farm size is 7 ha (3 ha smaller than the national average).

The research objective was to investigate the tourist activity of the inhabitants of this commune. The study used random stratified sampling so the selected sample is representative of the population of the inhabitants of Bielawy commune.

More than half of the respondents (56.5%) were women, people with basic vocational education (50.5%) and farmers (49.5%). Detailed data on the study sample is presented in Table 2.

The vast majority of the respondents, (87% of the surveyed women and 80% of men), declared that they had made tourism trips. The most popular trips lasted from a few days to a week (48% of respondents) or they were weekend breaks (27%). Longer trips were taken occasionally, i.e. 1–2 weeks (19%) and longer than 2 weeks (6%). For both sexes they were mostly domestic trips (74% of women, 71% of men). Trips to European countries were definitely less popular (17% of women, 23% of men) and foreign trips to non-European countries were very rare (9% of women, 6% of men). The majority of respondents travelled once per year (80% of women, 69% of men), 17% of women and 17% of men declared to travel 2 times a year and only 3% of women and 14% of men made trips 3 times a year. The

**Table 2** Variables describing the sample in%

	Gender	
	Women (N = 113)	Men (N = 87)
<b>Age</b>		
18–30	20	24
31–50	30	30
51–64	39	39
65 and over	11	7
<b>Education</b>		
Tertiary	18	17
Secondary	35	29
Vocational	47	54
<b>Employment status</b>		
Pupil/student	25	17
Employed	15	7
Unemployed	7	6
Farmer	42	57
Retired/receiving disability benefit	11	13

Source own research



trips were most often taken in May (21% of respondents), October (18%) and September (17%). Only 7% of the respondents took trips in July, a typical holiday month, and no one travelled in August. This can be explained by the character of work in the country involving greater engagement in the summer months.

The way of spending free time during leisure trips varied. Most respondents declared sightseeing (37%), walks (18%), meetings with friends (17%), sports (17%) and passive leisure (11%). Regardless of sex, the amount of tourism expenditure per family member per day was no more than 25 Euros (62% of respondents), 33% of the respondents declared 25–47 Euros and 15% spent 47 Euros. The structure of the expenditure was related to the place of accommodation and purchase of food.

Most often during their trips the respondents stayed in pensions, and far less often in farmhouses (Table 3). This is because agritourism is unattractive to people who live in villages in detached houses, have gardens and plenty of open space around the house. Food was most often bought in a package with accommodation. Self-catering like eating out in fast food places or preparing own meals from products bought in local shops or markets was not very popular.

Only 26% of respondents used their own vehicle as a means of transport, 34% travelled by coach, 20% by plane and 20% by train. This is connected to the way the trips were organized, which also deviates from the national average and looks as follows: 30% of respondents organized the trip by themselves, 29%—with family help, 22%—used travel agency, 10%—Rural Women's Circles, 5%—school and for 4% it was workplace. Nearly half of respondents (45%) planned their trip 2–3 months in advance, 21% half a year earlier, 20%—a month earlier and only 14%—last minute.

**Table 3** Frequency of accommodation and food services use by type of provider as declared by the respondents who are active tourists

Type of service	Provider	Frequency			
		Always	Often	Rarely	Never
Accommodation	Hotel	17	38	30	14
	Motel	7	24	46	22
	Pension	30	40	22	8
	Guesthouse	14	39	29	18
	Friends'/relatives' house	15	34	29	21
	Camping cabin	8	18	25	49
	Farmhouse	7	11	18	64
Food purchase	Fast food restaurants	4	10	37	49
	Local markets	6	12	34	48
	Local shops	7	12	27	54
	Food in a package with accommodation	29	31	23	17
	Restaurants	13	38	29	2

Source own research. N = 168

**Table 4** Motivating and demotivating factors for making trips as assessed by the respondents on the scale 1–5: 1-no influence, 5-strong influence

Factor category	Factors	Assessment (% of responds)					Average assessment
		1	2	3	4	5	
Motivating	Need to rest	2	2	11	13	72	4.5
	Word of mouth	14	3	13	24	43	3.7
	Fashion	34	21	23	6	16	2.5
	Price	2	4	5	13	76	4.6
	Advertisement	19	22	21	24	14	2.9
	Work	25	13	27	17	18	2.9
	Sports	12	5	7	23	53	4.0
	Entertainment	6	6	2	25	43	3.4
	Visiting friends/ relatives	8	14	21	31	26	3.5
	Health improvement	7	15	24	24	30	3.6
	Religious celebrations	24	20	23	18	15	2.8
Demotivating	Insufficient finances	3	7	11	6	73	4.4
	Lack of free time	5	8	7	16	64	4.3
	Lack of suitable offer	29	7	13	9	42	3.3
	Lack of company	37	26	15	14	8	2.2

Source own research

The main reason for respondents to take a trip was attractive price and the need to rest (Table 4). The main barrier was tight finances. Rural communities are often characterized by strong social ties; hence the lack of company was rarely a barrier to travel. The attention should be drawn to ‘lack of suitable offer’. Although the average rating of this category is relatively low, the distribution of grades indicates that for a large group of respondents (42%) this is an important factor. It suggests that tourism providers should recognize the needs of rural tourists and address them accordingly, especially as rural residents declare that they do not follow fashion or advertising.

## 6 Conclusions

The changes in the Polish rural areas, especially the increase in the level of education, enhanced income and diversification out of agriculture affect the structure of consumption behaviour. At present the participation of rural residents in tourism is lower than the national average rate. Wiesław Alejziak argues that: ‘the level and character of tourist activity are more indicators of social diversity than its causes’ (Alejziak, 2007, p. 62). The analysis of selected tourism demand drivers shows that, in addition to the determinants of general nature such as financial status or amount

of free time, the country population is influenced by factors typical of rural areas. What is more, even universal factors like e.g. tourist needs seem to vary between rural residents and urban inhabitants.

The changes taking place in Polish rural areas make it possible to assume that tourist activity of rural residents will be increasing. This also applies to the population employed in agriculture. Consequently there will be a growing demand for travel packages offered by tour operators, provided they are tailored to the specific requirements of rural customers. Therefore this area requires further research. The empirical study presented in this paper was meant to be a research experiment aimed at verifying the validity of research in this field. Although the obtained results do not form the basis for the formulation of nationwide generalizations, they provide guidance for further research. The study found that there is a real demand for tourism services in rural areas and, interestingly, that the respondents frequently bought holiday packages from travel agents. Undoubtedly, the tourism demand in rural areas is inhibited by obvious factors such as the character of work, tight finances, mentality, value system or environmentally friendly place of residence but it is also affected by insufficient access to tourism offer correlated with the physical distance from travel agencies and poorer than in cities access to Internet.

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# Hosted Buyers Program (H.B.P.)— Tourism Development and the City TIF-HELEXPO H.B.P. for the Period 2014–2016

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and Ioannis Frangopoulos**

**Abstract** In their effort to confront the intensely competitive international ambiance, International Trade Fair Organizers organize hospitality programs for foreign trade visitors in the framework of their field exhibitions, in order to add value to the services offered to their exhibitors by differentiating themselves from their competitors. In the context of these programs, the Exhibition Organizers invite and host selected Foreign Trade Visitors who constitute potential Buyers of the products/services represented in every field exhibition. The invited trade visitors (hereof “Hosted Buyers”) book pre-arranged business appointments (b2b meetings) with the Exhibitors with the aim to reach business agreements/transactions with the exhibitors, thus enhancing the export activities of the enterprises. TIF-HELEXPO has been organizing such Hosted Buyers Programs for the past two decades, in order to make its Trade Fairs and Exhibitions more competitive on an international level. Since 2014, these Hosted Buyers programs have indeed been reinforced and re-designed in a more coordinated and systematic way for all of the Trade fairs and exhibitions of TIF-HELEXPO. It should indicatively be mentioned that during the period 2014–2016, more than 1.700 foreign trade visitors from all over the world have been hosted by TIF-HELEXPO, while more than 17.000 b2b meetings have been conducted and important business agreements between greek and foreign companies have been signed. With the experience gained through the implementation of these Hosted Buyers Programs it has become obvious that the hosting of Foreign Trade Visitors has a great impact on the touristic development of the host city, Thessaloniki, in addition to its undisputed business results. The present report is an attempt to investigate the contribution of the specific Hosted Buyers Programs to the touristic development of the city of Thessaloniki and to reach conclusions which will contribute to the maximization of the touristic contribution of these

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programs. For the assessment of the contribution of the programs in tourism, primary research was carried out with the use of questionnaires which were sent to all the Trade Visitors who were hosted in Thessaloniki during the period 2014–2016, in the framework of the Hosted Buyers Programs of TIF-HELEXPO.

**Keywords** Trade fairs · Hosted buyers program · Tourism · Thessaloniki

## 1 Introduction—Methodology

Trade fairs have a long history which is integrally linked to the evolution and progress of societies. The evolution and spread of the exhibition phenomenon, beyond its purely commercial dimension, which is beyond question, has made trade fairs a powerful product in the global tourism market. In fact, the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions) sector has become one of the most rapidly growing sectors of the tourism industry globally.

In the context of the intense competition among trade fairs, organisers endeavour to make their events competitive on the international scene, not restricting themselves to regulating issues that strictly concern organisation, but also providing additional services to exhibitors. One such service, which is adopted by all competitive international trade fairs and determines the extent of success of an event, is the attraction of specialised visitors through the implementation of Hosted Buyers Programmes. These programmes involve finding suitable professionals from the sector, attracting them, hosting them (coverage of travel and accommodation expenses) and booking pre-arranged B2B meetings with exhibitors.

These programmes do not only have a substantial commercial dimension, but they also have a very important tourism dimension, as the satisfaction of hosted buyers with their experience of participating in the trade fair and the destination hosting it in general may lead to repeat visits and promotion of tourism.

This paper examines precisely this collateral tourism dimension of exhibition activity and, more specifically, Hosted Buyers Programmes. Methodologically, this paper is structured along two axes: the examination is firstly conducted by reviewing the international literature on the subject and secondly by focusing on the case study of Thessaloniki.

The city of Thessaloniki has a substantial exhibition tradition, with a 90-year-old history of international exhibitions and general trade fairs. In fact, in order to meet modern business needs, TIF-HELEXPO has been implementing a Hosted Buyers Programme for all its exhibitions for approximately two decades. In the context of this programme, TIF-HELEXPO invites and hosts selected Hosted Buyers who are potential purchasers of the products/services of the sector represented at each trade fair; these Hosted Buyers book pre-arranged B2B meetings with Exhibitors in order to achieve business agreements and thus promote the exporting activity of the Exhibitor's enterprises. In recent years, in particular (from 2014 onwards), the TIF-HELEXPO Hosted Buyers Programme has become more organised and

systematic, covering all the trade fairs organised by the company. The tourism dimension of this programme is explored by analysing the results of primary research conducted with the use of questionnaires answered by Hosted Buyers who participated in the programme in recent years (2014–2016).

Consequently, the central working hypothesis concerns the exploration of the tourism dimension of the Hosted Buyers Programme of TIF-HELEXPO for the period 2014–2016, which may not be its central axis, but has a significant tourism contribution. Thus, hosted buyers attending trade fairs may be visiting Thessaloniki for commercial purposes, but become acquainted with the city, thus creating tourism prospects for the city.

## 2 Review of the Literature

Today, exhibitions hold a powerful and traditional position as a product on the global tourism market (Kokkosis, Tsartas, & Griba, 2011), while the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions) sector in general is one of the most rapidly growing sectors of the tourism industry at the global level (Campiranon & Arcodia, 2007). More specifically, the exhibition sector has been found to make an exceptional contribution and offer tremendous prospects to tourism destinations (Wu & Zhang, 2013). The contribution of exhibitions and other related professional events to tourism has particularly attracted the interest of both researchers and tourism policy-makers at the global level (Lee, Song, & Mjelde, 2008).

Organizers of trade fairs no longer restrict themselves to regulating issues that concern the exhibition venue, but also provide additional services to exhibitors. A key competency they undertake is to attract specialized visitors with whom exhibitors wish to come into contact. Thus, organizing meetings between exhibitors and visitors hosted by the organizers through Hosted Buyers Programs has become an essential competency of organizers (Han & Verma, 2014). Furthermore, networking and interaction opportunities are often cited as the most important benefits reaped by participants in trade fairs (Hultsman, 2001). Consequently, networking opportunities are a great incentive for participation in trade fairs, which is one of the main reasons for the increase in the number of Hosted Buyers Programs (Han & Verma, 2014), particularly in Europe. Additionally, Cecil and Sperstad (2015) identify the main reasons for the increase in the number of Hosted Buyers Programs as the increase in the participation of exhibitors and the decrease in the cost of participation for hosted buyers.

Although hosted buyers are mainly interested in the content of the exhibition and the quality and quantity of the exhibits displayed, they are also interested in the place where the exhibition is being held as a tourism destination with socio-cultural importance and appeal, as this affects their overall experience (Lee & Lee, 2014). Visitor satisfaction with their overall experience of participation in an exhibition is of paramount importance for the success of an exhibition destination, as this determines their intention to re-visit the destination. Moreover, satisfied visitors can



disseminate their positive impressions (word of mouth) to potential tourists, thus contributing towards improving the perception of the place where the exhibition was held as a tourism destination (Zhang, Qu, & Ma, 2010). Consequently, exhibitions may encourage visitors to re-visit the destination, as a successful exhibition results in visitor satisfaction and creates the basis for repeat visits (City of Edmonton, 2010; Swarbrooke & Horner, 2001). By hosting such events, cities can be promoted to a number of different potential tourist markets (Richards & Wilson, 2004).

However, it should be taken into account that participants in Hosted Buyers Programs are, in their majority, experienced and demanding consumers of exhibition tourism (Seebaluck, Naidoo, & Ramseook Munhurrin, 2015). For this reason, exhibitions must be innovative in order to offer participants better services, provide them with the information necessary for their work (contacts, meetings, information, etc.) and facilitate their access to the tourism resources of the destination (Rubalcaba-Bermejo & Cuadrado-Roura, 1995).

Although Hosted Buyers Programs have been implemented, at least in Europe, for many years, there is limited research data available. The only relevant research found was that by Cecil and Sperstad (2015), who studied the effectiveness of Hosted Buyers Programs from the perspective of visitors, aiming at examining the satisfaction of their expectations and needs. More specifically, the researchers conducted qualitative research through interviews with participants in Hosted Buyers Programs. The research results clearly show that benefits for hosted buyers derive from the decrease in the travel cost and mainly from their involvement with exhibitors who wish to enter into partnerships. However, one disadvantage of the hospitality program noted by visitors was the strict and overloaded schedule of meetings, which did not allow them to enjoy the leisure time they would have liked. Consequently, visitors wish to participate in activities beyond the business events included in the hospitality program. This last finding is particularly interesting for our research, as hosted buyer's leisure time is crucially important for them to become acquainted with the city hosting the exhibition.

However, the tourism dimension of Hosted Buyers Programs has not been examined to date. There has been general research on the subject with regards to hosted buyers and exhibitors; for example, Jin, Weber, and Bauer (2013) examine the characteristics of the exhibition destination that are appealing specifically for exhibitors. These include the general environment of the destination in terms of entertainment and leisure activities available. This characteristic includes a tourism dimension, as exhibition participants can evaluate a destination by participating in entertainment and leisure activities. However, this dimension was not examined in the research in question.

Hankinson (2005) studied brand images of destinations from the perspective of tourists visiting a destination for business meetings, incentive events, conferences and exhibitions, and examined their relationship with perceived quality and commercial criteria for selection a business destination. The analysis carried out resulted in three key factors that play a crucial role for the brand image of a destination: the overall attractiveness of the destination, the functionality (more facilities, professional tourism infrastructure, accessibility, etc.), and the ambience (events beyond

the reason for the visit, variety of activities, tourism areas, destination identity, etc.). While all three factors were correlated with perceived quality, the commercial criteria for the selection of a business destination were found to be dominated by a destination's functional rather than its ambience attributes.

Similarly, Jin, Weber, and Bauer (2010) studied the factors that influence and motivate exhibitors and visitors to participate in trade fairs, which included certain important factors related to tourism. According to the results, visitors and exhibitors have similar views concerning most of the factors that may influence their decision to participate in a trade fair. Professionalism, services and the organizer's reputation were the top three criteria that both groups considered to be of paramount importance. As regards the destination's factors in particular, safety and a positive image of the city were considered particularly important factors for the visitor's decision to participate in an exhibition. Additionally, both groups report factors relating to the entertainment capabilities of the destination (climate, high-quality accommodation, sights, tours and entertainment/night-life), as well as cost. The importance of a destination in the decision of visitors to participate in a trade fair is also stressed in the study by Rittichainuwat and Mair (2012). More specifically, the researchers found that the host destination of an exhibition is the second most important factor—following the factor of special offers—influencing the decision of visitors to participate in an exhibition. Consequently, visitors attach great importance to the destination where the exhibition is being held.

Moreover, although the approach by Boo, Koh, and Jones (2008) focuses on the case of convention tourism, it is still of particular interest, as it confirms the hypothesis that the attractiveness of a destination is linked to the behavior of visitors during their stay. The research results showed that different groups of people with diverse behaviors, during their visit, evaluate cities hosting convention tourism in a different manner. Therefore, according to Boo et al. (2008), visitor behavior is an important factor determining the appeal of a destination.

### **3 The Hosted Buyers Programme of TIF-HELEXPO for the Period 2014–2016**

As noted in the introduction, TIF-HELEXPO has been implementing a Hosted Buyers Program for all its exhibitions for approximately two decades. However, in recent years (and, more specifically, from 2014 onwards), the Hosted Buyers Program of TIF-HELEXPO has become more organized and systematic, covering all the trade fairs organized by the company.

During the 2014–2016 three-year period, a total of 1176 hosted buyers were hosted at 23 different exhibitions organized by TIF-HELEXPO (Table 1), attending over 17,000 pre-arranged B2B meetings with exhibitors (each hosted buyer attending an average of 15 meetings).

**Table 1** Allocation of the Hosted Buyers per field exhibition during the period 2014–2016

Exhibition		Sector	Hosted buyers
2014	Agrotica	Agriculture-animal breeding	26
	Infacoma—Energytech	Construction-energy	19
	Hellenic jewellery	Jewellery	26
	Detrop boutique	Food-beverage	33
	Kosmima	Jewellery	32
	Philoxenia	Tourism	64
	Hotelia	Tourism	16
2015	Zootechnia	Agriculture-animal breeding	28
	Infacoma—Energytech	Construction-energy	31
	Detrop—Oenos 2015	Food-beverage	152
	Freskon 2015	Fresh fruits and vegetables	152
	Hellenic jewellery	Jewellery	35
	Kosmima	Jewellery	19
	Philoxenia	Tourism	108
	Hotelia	Tourism	9
2016	Agrotica	Agriculture-animal breeding	33
	Infacoma—Energytech	Construction-energy	22
	Detrop—Artozyna	Food-beverage	105
	Hellenic jewellery	Jewellery	14
	Freskon	Fresh fruits and vegetables	117
	Kosmima	Jewellery	14
	Hotelia	Tourism	12
	Philoxenia	Tourism	109
Total			1.176

Source TIF-HELEXPO SA

The buyers hosted during this period came from 54 different countries<sup>1</sup> that geographically cover almost all parts of the globe. More specifically, the majority (Fig. 1) of hosted buyers for the period under examination came from Cyprus (13.5%), followed by Russia (11.8%), Romania (7.4%), Germany (6.8%), the Netherlands (5.8%) and Lebanon (4.7%).

As regards the sectoral structure of the hosted buyers hosted at TIF-HELEXPO exhibitions during the period under examination, they cover all competitive sectors of the Greek economy. More specifically, 27% of hosted buyers are active in the

<sup>1</sup>Egypt, Albania, Algeria, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia—Herzegovina, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Denmark, Switzerland, Estonia, UAE, USA, Ireland, India, Jordan, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Canada, Qatar, China, Kuwait, Croatia, Cyprus, Costa Rica, Latvia, Belarus, Lebanon, Libya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Great Britain, Moldova, Norway, South Africa, Netherlands, Hungary, Ukraine, FYROM, Poland, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Slovenia, Sweden, Turkey, Czech Republic, Tunisia, Hong Kong.

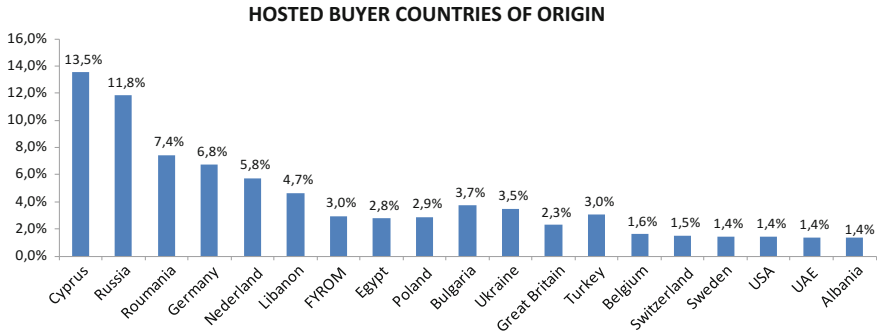


Fig. 1 Countries of original of the Hosted Buyers (2014–2016). Source TIF-HELEXPO SA

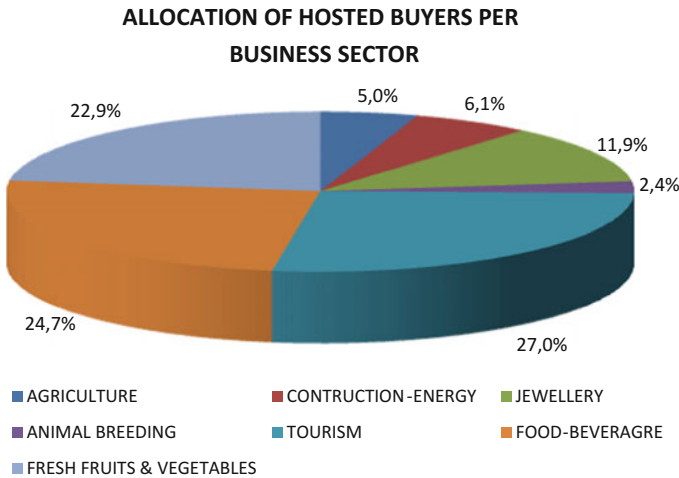


Fig. 2 Countries of original of the Hosted Buyers (2014–2016). Source TIF-HELEXPO SA

tourism sector, 24.7% in the food & beverage sector, 22.9% in the fresh fruit & vegetable sector, and 11.9% in the jewellery sector (Fig. 2).

The results of the program during these three years at a commercial level are particularly important, since important business agreements were concluded between exhibitors and Hosted Buyers during the pre-arranged meetings. As a result of the Hosted Buyers Program implemented by TIF-HELEXPO, the company’s exhibitions become more powerful and international, while the country’s exports and, as a result, the Greek economy were boosted. Apart from purely business results, though, the Hosted Buyers Program makes a substantial contribution to the tourism growth of the city. This study aims at exploring this very contribution.

## 4 Primary Research

### 4.1 *Research Framework—Identity*

Following our central working hypothesis, which, as previously noted, concerns the exploration of the tourism dimension of the Hosted Buyers Program implemented by TIF-HELEXPO, we conducted primary research on program participants over the 2014–2016 period (1176 hosted buyers).

The research was conducted using a questionnaire specifically prepared for the needs of this paper. Our questionnaire consisted of twenty questions in total, divided into four sections as follows:

- the first section included questions concerning the personal information of respondents and the enterprises they represent
- the second section included questions concerning the actual participation of the respondents in the Hosted Buyers Program
- the third section included questions concerning the respondent's visit to the city of Thessaloniki and to the exhibition
- the fourth section included questions concerning the respondent's stops and views on the city of Thessaloniki, mainly as a tourism destination.

The questions included in the questionnaires were mainly closed-ended questions of all types (dichotomous, multiple choice, Likert scale, etc.) in order to collect quantitative information. However, certain open-ended questions were also included, where respondents answered freely, in order to collect qualitative information as well.

The questionnaires were completed electronically, as e-mail messages were sent to our research population; where necessary, clarifications were provided electronically. The duration of our research was three months, as it was conducted during the period July–September 2016.

### 4.2 *Sample Description*

During our research, 187 questionnaires were collected in total. Our sample covers 15.9% of the research population. At this point, it should be noted that questionnaires were not sent to the Hosted Buyers who attended exhibitions held during the whole 2nd half of 2016, as they had not yet visited Thessaloniki by the time the research ended. Thus, the actual population coverage percentage is slightly higher (18.0%).

Our sample is deemed sufficiently representative of the population, as it is in line with the general characteristics of the visitors hosted in Thessaloniki during the period under examination. More specifically, 67.9% of our sample are women and 32.1% are men. In terms of age, our sample is distributed over all age groups, with

the higher percentages found in the middle-aged and senior age groups. More specifically, 36.8% of respondents are 36–50 years old, 30.1% are 51–65 years old, 19.6% are 25–35 years old, 12.0% are under 25 years old and 1.4% are over 65 years of age.

As regards the countries of origin of the respondents, they cover almost all the countries of the population (Fig. 3). More specifically, the majority of respondents, i.e. 9.6%, came from Russia, followed by Romania with 8.0%, the Netherlands with 7.5%, Cyprus with 5.3%, Germany and Lebanon with 4.8%. In terms of the geographical structure of our sample, which for the most part follows the corresponding geographical structure of our research population, it appears that the countries in question are the main economic partners of Greece, as well as the main target-countries for Greek enterprises.

At this point, it should be noted that a large percentage of the respondents, namely 13.9%, who work in the above-mentioned countries are of Greek descent.

Our research participants were mainly owners or high-ranking executives of the enterprises they represent. This, of course, is a selection criterion for Hosted Buyers; in other words, the business representatives chosen are those with the right to conclude commercial agreements on account of the enterprise, so that their participation in the exhibition can have direct results (conclusion of commercial agreements-transactions). More specifically, 44.6% of our research participants are owners-presidents of the enterprises they represent, 21.5% are directors, 16.1% are heads of purchase departments, 10.2% are scientific staff members, 4.3% are CEOs and 3.2% are BoD members.

As regards the sectoral structure of the enterprises represented in our sample, these are in line with the corresponding sectoral structure of our research population. More specifically, 38.5% of the enterprises represented in our sample are active in the food & beverage sector, 31.0% in the tourism sector, 15.0% in the agriculture-livestock sector, 4.8% in the construction sector and 2.7% in the logistics-packaging sector.

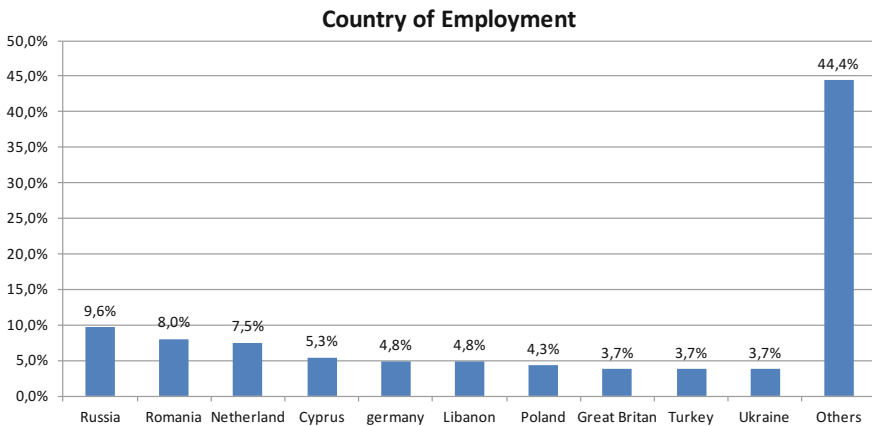


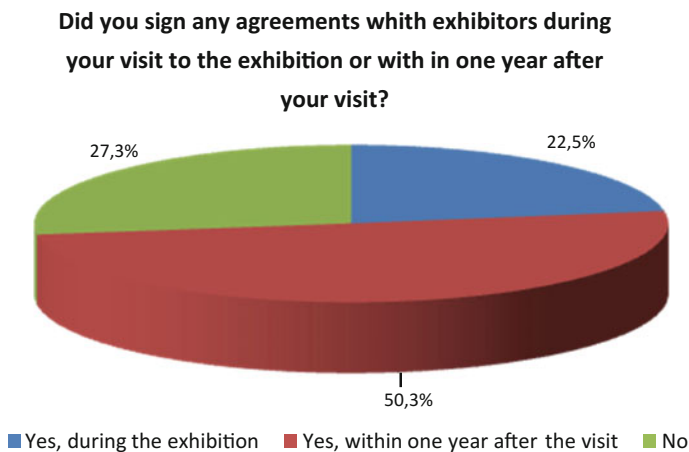
Fig. 3 Country of employment of the respondents

The size of the enterprises represented in our sample is reflected in their annual turnover. Thus, the majority of the enterprises in our sample, are quite large and have a substantial turnover. More specifically, 34.2% of the enterprises have a turnover of EUR 1–5 million, 33.2% a turnover of up to EUR 1 million, 13.9% a turnover of EUR 20–30 million, 11.2% a turnover of EUR 5–10 million and 7.5% a turnover of EUR 10–20 million.

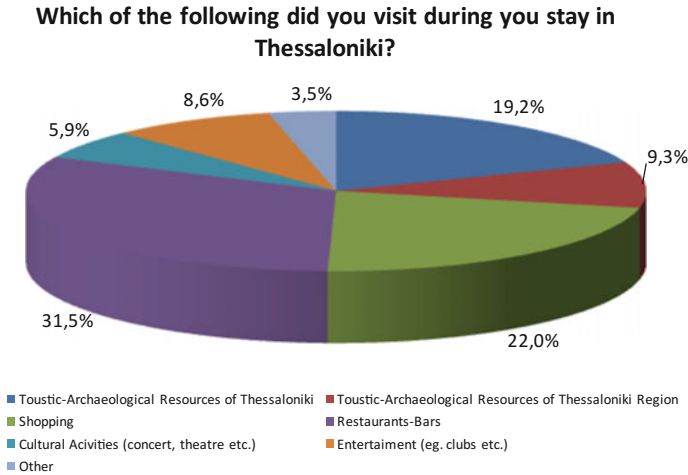
### 4.3 Research Results

Initially, the results of our research concerning the Hosted Buyers Programme and their participation in the programme are analysed. Most respondents graded their participation in the HELEXPO exhibition as positive. More specifically, 47.6% graded their visit to the exhibition as good, 37.4% as very good, and just 1.1% gave a negative grade. The evaluation of the B2B meetings held during the exhibition is similar, with 43.3% of respondents grading them as positive and 39.6% as very positive. In this case, the percentage of respondents giving the meetings a negative grade is slightly increased (4.3%).

In the context of these meetings (see Fig. 4), 50.3% of respondents stated that during the period after the exhibition they concluded commercial agreements with the enterprises they met at the exhibition which they attended, 22.5% stated that they concluded commercial agreements during the exhibition, while only 27.3% stated that they did not conclude any agreements with any of the individuals they met at the exhibition. These responses clearly show the significant result of the Hosted Buyers Programme at the commercial level, as it promoted commercial agreements and, to a certain extent, exports as well.



**Fig. 4** Agreements completed during the visit to the exhibition



**Fig. 5** Activities carried out by the Hosted Buyers during their participation in a H.B.P. of Helexpo in Thessaloniki

Subsequently, the results of our research concerning the visit of the participants in the Hosted Buyers Programme of TIF-HELEXPO are analysed (see Fig. 5). During their participation in the exhibition organised by HELEXPO and their stay in Thessaloniki, hosted buyers carry out various additional activities not directly related to the exhibition, but related more to tourism and entertainment. More specifically, 31.5% of the research participants stated that during their visit to Thessaloniki they visited the city’s restaurants and bars, 22.0% stated that they made purchases at the city’s stores, 19.2% stated that they visited the city’s tourism resources and 9.3% stated that they visited the broader region’s tourism resources.

Furthermore, the participants in our research gave a very positive grade to the city of Thessaloniki as a tourism destination. More specifically, 47.7% graded Thessaloniki as a very good tourism destination, 37.1% as good, 8.1% as average, while only 7.1% gave a negative response (Fig. 6).

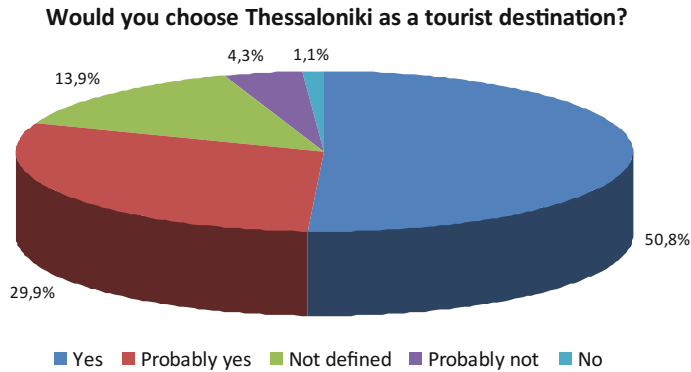
From the responses given to the above questions by our research participants, it becomes clear that the Hosted Buyers Program of HELEXPO does not only have a purely economic and commercial impact on the enterprises participating in exhibitions, but also a substantial tourism impact for the city of Thessaloniki and the broader region.

Finally, the results of our research concerning the views and perceptions of research participants regarding the city of Thessaloniki, as shaped during their recent visit to Thessaloniki in the context of the TIF-HELEXPO Hosted Buyers Program, are analyzed. The overwhelming majority of our research participants stated that they would choose Thessaloniki as a tourism destination (Fig. 7). More specifically, 50.8% of respondents stated that they would choose Thessaloniki as a tourism destination, 29.9% stated that they would probably choose it, while 13.9%





**Fig. 6** Evaluation of Thessaloniki as a tourism destination



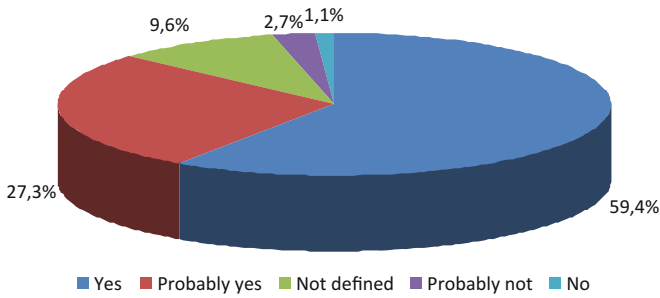
**Fig. 7** Choosing Thessaloniki as a tourism destination

expressed no opinion (“do not know”). On the contrary, just 5.4% of respondents gave a negative response to the prospect of choosing Thessaloniki as a tourism destination.

Our research participants appeared more positive when it came to recommending Thessaloniki as a tourism destination to friends and relatives. More specifically, 59.4% of the respondents stated that they would recommend Thessaloniki as a tourism destination to their circle of friends and relatives, 27.3% that they would probably recommend it and 9.6% expressed no opinion, while only 3.8% gave a negative response (Fig. 8).

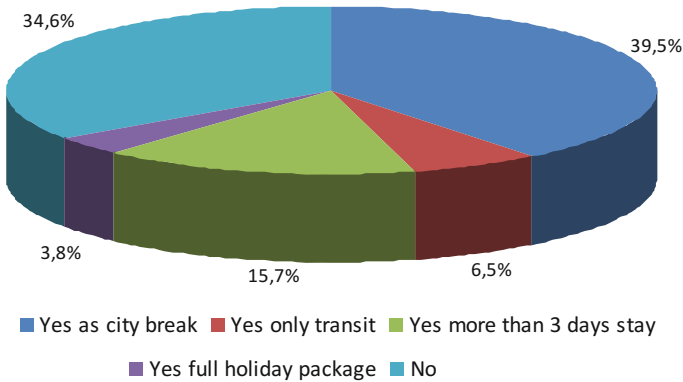
Furthermore, of the respondents who participated in our research, 65.4% visited Thessaloniki as tourists after their participation in the Hosted Buyers Programme of HELEXPO, as compared to 34.6% who did not visit Thessaloniki again. Of the respondents who visited Thessaloniki as tourists, 39.5% visited the city for a city break, 15.7% stayed in the city for over 3 days, 6.5% only passed through Thessaloniki and 3.8% stayed with a full vacation package (Fig. 9).

**Would you propose Thessaloniki as tourist destination to your friends and relatives?**



**Fig. 8** Proposing/suggesting Thessaloniki as a tourism destination

**After your participation in the Hosted Buyers Programme of HELEXPO did you visit Thessaloniki as a tourist alone or with friends/family?**



**Fig. 9** Repeat of the visit to Thessaloniki as a tourist after the end of the Hosted Buyers Program

From the responses given to the above questions by our research participants, it emerges that the Hosted Buyers Program of HELEXPO not only has a measurable impact on tourism in the city of Thessaloniki, but it also has a qualitative tourism impact, as it creates tourism prospects for the city and the broader region, making Thessaloniki known as a tourism destination.

## 5 Conclusions

On the basis of the central working hypothesis, which concerns the exploration of the tourism dimension of the Hosted Buyers Program implemented by TIF-HELEXPO, we underlined the substantial contribution of the program to tourism for the city and the broader region. As previously noted, boosting tourism is not the main objective of the program, which is to enhance the extroversion of enterprises and their growth in general. Nevertheless, hosted buyers attending trade fairs may be visiting Thessaloniki for commercial purposes, but they also become acquainted with the city, thus creating tourism prospects for the city.

Initially, having studied the international literature, we can see that trade fairs generally make a substantial contribution to tourism in the areas hosting them. This contribution is an indirect result of the exhibition activity, which may not be its main objective, but by attracting a large number of visitors, it boosts tourism.

Subsequently, this paper focused on the case study of Thessaloniki, where the history of the fair is integrally linked with that of the city. More specifically, over its 90 year history, Thessaloniki International Fair continuously engaged in substantial interaction with the city at numerous levels, including tourism. In this context, in order to be competitive at the international level and to meet the modern needs of enterprises, TIF-HELEXPO implements organized Hosted Buyers Programs at its exhibitions.

In order to examine the contribution of this program to tourism, we conducted primary research on the hosted buyers who visited Thessaloniki and TIF-HELEXPO exhibitions over the 2014–2016 period. Through this research, the conclusion that emerged was that the Hosted Buyers Program does not only have a purely economic and commercial impact on the enterprises participating in exhibitions, but it also has a substantial touristic impact on the city of Thessaloniki and the broader region. A secondary finding of our research was that the program has a qualitative impact on tourism that is not directly measurable, as it takes place at the level of dynamism and prospects for boosting tourism.

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# The Innovative Tourism Enterprises Assessment Capability

Leszek Koziol

**Abstract** The aim of this paper is to present the concept of the innovative capability evaluation system of an enterprise in a standardised formula and to present the results of empirical research. The basic problem presented in the paper is the recognition and evaluation of the innovative capability of the researched companies. A set of the innovative capability key determinants which constitute the basis for assessing this capability was extracted during two-phase own research. In the case discussed in the paper, 13 evaluation criteria with appropriate weights and scales of assessment were adopted and then the evaluation model of the innovative capability of a tourist enterprise was presented. In the empirical part of the paper we verified the concept of innovative capability. We also presented the results of empirical research on the innovative capability of hotels. In conclusion, a sequence of actions aimed at levelling the gaps of innovation potential, as well as stimulating the process of innovation in the studied hotels were added. This is an explanatory study based on a sample of 6 Polish hotels belonging to medium—sized enterprises. In the participating companies their financial situation and competitiveness were estimated.

**Keywords** Innovation · Tourism · Assessment capability

## 1 Introduction

The development of man and society is always based on ideas. They constitute the fundamental premise of the development of economy and society as a whole. The implementation of innovative ideas for production and services dynamises the economic growth, creates jobs, develops proper relations and conditions of work, thus building a just society.

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In its complexity innovation is differently understood and defined. Referring to J. A. Schumpeter's thesis, an interesting concept of innovation was presented by M.C. Hall and A.M. Williams, understanding it as a relational activity within the innovativeness system. On the other hand, innovativeness system can be defined as systematising and locating the actors, namely firms and other organisations, which co-participate in the generation, diffusion and application of novelties (new knowledge) and bringing economic profits in the production process.

The paper assumes that innovation is any, in principle beneficial, creative and original change in various areas of an organisation's activity, bringing in novelty and progress in comparison with the existing state, assessed positively in the light of the criteria of effectiveness of a given organisation.

It should be noted that such a formulation of the essence of enterprise innovativeness is based on the interdisciplinary and multidimensional approach considering cause and effect relations of the influence of various phenomena and processes on the development of innovation in the short and long term. Positively evaluated performance of a firm is the point of reference, a dimension of innovation. Research into an organisation's innovativeness system requires a new view of this issue, namely, expanding the area of analysis by the problems of innovativeness understood as a potential of innovativeness on the one hand, and the issues of innovative capability, i.e. invention and diffusion of innovation on the other hand.

A detailed analysis of the determinants of enterprise innovation potential is the subject of numerous studies. A comprehensive concept of innovation potential factors was proposed by D. Samson who distinguished: strategy, leadership, changes, customer orientation, pro-innovation innovative culture, knowledge alliances, quality of processes, learning, HR innovative orientation (Gloet & Samson, 2013). On the other hand, Tidd, Bessant, and Pavitt (2002) concentrated on inter-organisational stimulators of innovation processes, in the most important ones including: visionary leadership, an appropriate organisational structure, recruitment, willingness to involve in the innovation process, the ability to conduct team work and readiness to learn and adapt new solutions. According to Żołnierski (2005, p. 65), innovation potential is determined by internal innovation potential and access to external sources of innovation. The internal innovation potential consists of: the staff (its knowledge and experience, skills and qualifications, as well as the way of managing available resources, information management), research and development (isolated R&D units, conducted by R&D, contract works, etc.), and technology (computers and ICT technology, machines and equipment, as well as the level of the modernity of machines and equipment). External sources of innovation include primarily universities and research and development units, as well as competitive firms or recipients/suppliers. The problem of distinguishing into internal innovation potential and external sources of innovation is of secondary importance. Both groups of factors are important. They constitute the innovation potential of an enterprise, and at the end of the day they create a synergy effect in the form of innovative capability and innovation.

Researchers investigating these problems point out that dynamism and variety are significant premises of the development of the innovation potential of a company. Dynamism is related to changes, opportunities and uncertainty—key notions for innovative activity. Innovative generation of wealth is not possible without the differentiation of factors, functions and decisions, applications and subjective assessments of phenomena and processes.

Ultimately, the effectiveness of an enterprise in terms of the creation of innovations is determined by the mentioned resources worked out in the past (innovation potential), as well as appropriate ways, skills and abilities of their current usage. The innovations—and it must be emphasised—have to be coherent with an organisation's strategy and originate from it.

In this way an organisation expresses the readiness to introduce innovation and defines methods of implementing innovation. In other words, innovative capability is an ability to apply the act of the creativity of new ideas, inventions, which results in innovation, the dissemination (diffusion) of which brings benefits to the enterprise (Innowacje i wiedza, 2006).

To end this short presentation of the problem of innovative capability, it is worth emphasising the main significance of knowledge in its creation. The innovative capability of a company is primarily knowledge collected by the firm during organisational learning, knowledge in respect of deliberate creation, enabling the effective use of innovation potential (resources) for its innovative activity, knowledge embraced into patterns and economic pragmatics being the major causative factor of progress and beneficial changes.

In the light of the above remarks we can formulate the principle of logical sequence of organisational learning processes in the aspect of achieving the state of high innovative capability and high innovativeness. Organisational learning is a process with the participation of information and knowledge, it leads to a change in the knowledge resources and may lead to a change in human behaviour, it can create innovative capabilities of an organisation, leading to the achievement of the state of high innovativeness.

Raising the formal point concerning the subject of the research, it should be pointed out that the notions of innovation potential and innovative capability are often treated as synonyms in the literature of the subject. The authors of the paper have a different view of this issue and believe that the effectiveness of a company with regard to innovation performance is determined by the resources worked out in the past, that is innovation potential, as well as appropriate ways, skills and abilities to use them on a current basis, namely, innovative capability. Hiliami, Ramayah, Mustapha, and Pavanchlik (2010, p. 557) explain that it is an ability to create something new or the introduction of significant changes, acting in such a way which uses the potential.

The problems of the evaluation of innovative capability, and more broadly, the innovation potential of an enterprise for many years has been the subject of theoretical deliberations and practical applications already described in abundant and extensive literature (Europejskie Innowacje Społeczne, 2014; Maqsood & Finegan, 2009; Davson, Young, Tu, & Chongyi, 2014; Löfgren, 2004; Pramentier &

Mangematin, 2014; Baruk, 2013; Hansen & Brikinshow, 2007, Koziol & Karaś, 2013; Gloet & Samson, 2013; Arend & Bromiley, 2009; Waiyawuththanapoom, Isckia, & Danesghar, 2013).

The works of the mentioned authors present the results of in-depth analyses of the conditionings of innovation processes which enable to specify principles and instruments of controlling and even managing these processes. The studies concentrated mainly on the recognition and hierarchisation of factors influencing innovativeness and on determining the sequence of actions using these factors in innovative processes, thus for the aware stimulation of innovativeness of enterprises.

Innovativeness factors being the subject of research arise from a broader, external context and the internal one, namely the qualities of the organisation and its resources. The studied qualities of an organisation when confronted with innovation will favour it or hamper it, they can, as it has been found out, increase or limit the innovative capability.

A considerably smaller number of researchers in their works focus on the presentation of the methods of assessing the innovative capability of a firm. The presented assessment questionnaires or self-assessment matrixes consider the effects of the innovative activities of an enterprise, an industry or a country (outputs in innovation), whereas other measurement tools concentrate on the identification of innovativeness determinants, may turn out to be useful for the evaluation of innovativeness factors both in the micro-economic and macro-economic scale (inputs to innovation) (Tidd & Bessant 2013; Łunerski & Stadnicka, 2007; Galvez, Camargo, Rodriques, & Morris, 2008; NESTA, 2009; Carney & Ryan, 2010; Roper et al., 2008; Rose, Shipp, Lal, & Stone, 2009; What are Innovation Audits? 2011).

Due to the limited framework of the paper, a detailed overview of the methods of the measurement of innovativeness was not conducted, but it was limited to giving their general characteristics.

The majority of the methods of evaluating innovative capability, as presented in the literature, are constructed from highly aggregated criteria without giving their operationalisation, i.e. establishing measures and indicators reflecting the essence of a studied quality, defining their functionality and significance, giving measures of the level of the intensification of the qualities, categorisation of the studied entities, as well as the model description and its proper presentation, or indicating conclusions and recommendations. We can show a lot of other still poorly solved problems of the assessment of innovative capability of enterprises, which cannot be explained here.

The innovative capability of firms refers to the ability to make through them significant modifications and improvements of the existing technologies and create new ones (Romjin & Albaladejo, 2000; INSEAD, 2007), it is perceived as the basis for the creation values from innovativeness (Hurmelinna-Laukkanen, Sainio, & Jauhiainen, 2008, pp. 278–289), and even as a driving force of the economic growth. Innovative capability is an ability to create and apply the act of the creativity of new ideas, inventions, which results in innovation whose dissemination (diffusion) brings benefits to an enterprise (Lawson & Samson, 2001).



Therefore, we can say that the limitedness/narrowing of the innovative capability means for an enterprise stagnation, manifested in remaining in the state of inertia and the lack of motivation for its further development and therefore ensuring competitive advantage to itself in the longer term. That is why, it is justified to say that the possibility of assessing its innovative capability is in the interest of an enterprise. If an organisation can estimate the level of the use/development of individual elements of innovative capability, further pro-developmental activities may become more aware and focused on the fuller use of these elements. It also means the possibility of planned building of innovation potential.

Innovative capacity can be seen in the forms of partial (which correspond to the determinants of this ability), it can also be included in aggregate form for the company or the industry.

## **2 The Theses of the Concept and Stages of the Research Procedure**

The aim of this is paper to present the concept of innovative capability evaluation system of a company in a standard formula and to present the results of empirical research. The basic problem presented in the paper is the recognition and evaluation of the innovative capability of the studied enterprises.

The following theses were adopted in the presented concept:

Innovative capability is a function and at the same time a criterion of the evaluation of the innovativeness system of an enterprise, as well as the projection of a possibility to dynamise and control innovative activity.

Innovative capability may be discussed in partial forms (with which determinants of this capability correspond), and it may be also presented in the aggregate form for an enterprise or the whole industry.

Innovative capability is conditioned by external factors (e.g. the intensification of competitiveness) on which we have a limited influence, and most of all by internal factors; as the subject of the research internal factors of innovative capability were adopted, and the innovative activity of an enterprise is the reference.

The practical aim of the research is the recognition of the innovative capability gap which is the difference between the level of innovative capability desired and possessed by a firm. During the measurement of the competence gap it is determined what the discrepancy state between the mentioned value is. The levelling of the gap contributes to the transformation of a traditional organisation into an innovative one.

The following research methods were applied to accomplish the aims of the paper and verify the theses: the analysis of the literature, the analysis of the factors of influence, the questionnaire method, expert studies, case study. The assumptions of the proposed concept of the evaluation of innovative capability of tourism enterprises to some extent refer to the mentioned OSLO Manual Framework

Method and to innoCERT Innovation Assessment in which the output indicators and input indicators approach is considered to examine innovation. The methodology of assessing the innovative capability of an enterprise. The choice of the assessment criteria. The set of the determinants of innovative capability, being the basis of the system of assessing this capability, was isolated during two-phase own research. In the first of them, out of numerous variables of the environment and the organisation's resources, by means of the analysis of the factors of influence, those were identified which may influence innovativeness, constitute its innovation potential. In the process of their identification, several sources of information were used, e.g. statistical data, special reports, some predecessor's research findings and the opinions on the predecessor's research and experts' opinions, the opinions of management staff and specialists of the studied enterprises were used. The collected remarks and statements were the basis for the choice of 33 determinants of enterprise innovation potential (see: Table 1).

In the second phase of the research, the significance and functionality of the factors influencing enterprise innovative capability were analysed. Those whose significant cause and effect relationships with innovativeness existed in the past and will exist in the future were isolated. In order to assess the innovative capability of firms, a survey was conducted in which 316 business entities of the Małopolska region participated. Of them, 12 companies operating in the tourism industry were isolated. The survey was conducted in the years 2013–2015 (Koziol, Wojtovicz, & Karaś, 2017).

In the discussed case, the fundamental, key determinants of the development of the innovative development of an enterprise are the assessment criteria (see: Table 2).

The starting point, the basis of this concept is the process of improving and shaping competences of the workforce and organisational knowledge in terms of creativeness and innovativeness. In order to enhance organisational knowledge, innovative firms use high-tech information techniques (IT in particular), as well as contemporary methods of management and organisation of work, external cooperation concerning knowledge and innovation of protecting information and knowledge resources. Without proper communication in an organisation, its various resources remain either completely useless or they are used insufficiently, and the pragmatics of knowledge management, its effectiveness is problematic, disputable. Without network communication, it is simply impossible to function in science, in management practice. Likewise, without substantial development of relational capital and cooperation with stakeholders, the idea of knowledge and innovation management would be extremely difficult.

The process, evoking a change in the behaviours of the mentioned entities (employees, organisation and external stakeholders) already now, and even more in the future, will turn out to be a permanent element of the effectiveness and competitiveness of an enterprise.

**Table 1** Determinants of the development of the innovation potential of enterprises

Determinants	Components	Indications of enterprises (in %)	
		In tourism	Total
Competences of managers and workforce	Level of education	8	42
	Expenditures on training	58	83
	Duration of training	67	20
	Foreign language command	92	22
	Ability to use high-tech technologies	58	47
Modernity of infrastructure	Arrangement, structure of IT system	24	27
	Types of IT systems and their use	58	90
	The firm employs its own IT specialists	37	47
	Systems supporting training and improvement of employees' competences	20	27
	The use of e-learning	28	32
	Video conferences	–	7
	Teleconferences	–	8
	Information flow systems	–	34
Organisation of work	Knowledge management is the strategic factor of the accomplishment of the mission	16	22
	Persons responsible for knowledge management are employed	–	19
	Engagement of top management	48	51
	ICT systems are used for the dissemination of knowledge	8	47
	Exchange of knowledge among workers takes place via informal contacts	8	38
	The presence of R&D department	–	24
External cooperation concerning cooperation	Cooperation with customers	100	55
	Cooperation with suppliers and business partners	100	45
	Creating joint databases with business partners	42	30
	Acquiring knowledge from competitors	56	48
	Scientific institutions	16	7
	Universities as a source of knowledge	–	16
	Fairs, exhibitions	37	38
	Seminars and scientific conferences	16	40
	Research and development units	–	5
Technology transfer centres	–	4	

(continued)

**Table 1** (continued)

Determinants	Components	Indications of enterprises (in %)	
		In tourism	Total
Protection of information resources and securing knowledge	Access to the firm's information	8	30
	Legal forms of protection	33	48
	Outsourcing, securing databases	8	17
	In the internal network IT systems of communication are used and databases exist	42	80

Source own study (for more, see: Koziół, Wojtowicz, & Karaś, 2017)

**Table 2** The list of criteria of the assessment of innovative capability of enterprises

Symbol	Criterion	Weight
A	Foreign language command	3
B	Duration of training	3
C	Operating modern technologies used in the organisation	3
D	Types of IT systems and their use	2
E	Structure of IT system	2
F	Use of e-learning	3
G	Infrastructure supporting internal communication process	2
H	Forms of the organisation of work	3
I	Culture of innovativeness	3
K	Cooperation with other entities	3
L	Sources of knowledge	3
M	Protecting information and knowledge	1
N	Protecting values from innovation and knowledge	2

Source own study

### 3 Establishing the Weights of the Assessment Criteria

The multitude of the distinguished assessment criteria inclines to weighing them due to their significance for the accomplishment of the aims of the analysis. In the presented solution, 3 levels of assessment, as well as the principle of the linear formula of the accrual of key points of the assessment from 1 to 3 (Table 3) were adopted.

The weights were established by means of the expert opinion method.

**Table 3** Preferential arrangement of the assessment criteria

Symbols of qualification levels	Ranges
A	3
B	2
C	1

Source own study

## 4 The Measurement of Innovative Capability

The measurement of innovative capability has the character of verifying assessment, consisting in the comparison of the actual state and the adopted pattern. Assessment patterns enable to define the level of intensity of the qualities constituting the assessment criteria. The description of the quality intensity level is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4** The system of the assessment of the innovative capability of a tourism enterprise

Innovative capability category	Criteria	Assessment of innovative capability	
		Score	Specification
1	2	3	4
Competences of managers and workforce	Foreign language command	1	The percentage of employees speaking foreign languages does not exceed 10% of all employees
		2	The percentage of employees speaking foreign languages is from 10 to 50% of all employees
		3	The percentage of employees speaking foreign languages exceeds 50% of all employees
	Duration of training	1	The number of the days of training per 1 employee during a year does not exceed 5 days
		2	The number of the days of training per 1 employee during a year is from 5 to 10 days
		3	The number of trainings per 1 employee during a year exceeds 10 days
	Ability to operate modern IT technologies used in the organisation	1	The percentage of employees to 10% of all employees
		2	The percentage of employees within the range from 10 to 50% of all employees
		3	The percentage of employees exceeds 50% of all employees

(continued)

**Table 4** (continued)

Innovative capability category	Criteria	Assessment of innovative capability	
		Score	Specification
1	2	3	4
Modernity of infrastructure	Types of IT systems and their use	1	Lack of systems supporting knowledge and innovation management
		2	In the enterprise there are systems of acquiring, collecting and processing information useful for the development of innovative capability
		3	Expert systems of generating ideas and supporting team work
	Structure of IT system	1	Dispersed
		3	Mixed
		3	Integrated
	Use of e-learning	1	The enterprise does not use e-learning
		2	The enterprise sometimes uses e-learning
		3	The enterprise uses e-learning on an ongoing basis
Organisation of work	Infrastructure supporting the internal communication process	1	Lack of IT system supporting internal communication process
		2	In the firm there is internal IT network supporting communication
		3	In the internal network IT systems of communication are applied and there are databases
	Forms of the organisation of work	1	No team forms of the organisation of work and team problem solving are applied
		2	There is team work, employee participation, quality programme
		3	The methods of supporting team work are used, e.g., case study, brainstorming, fairs of ideas, expert networks, systems of supporting intellectual property development
	Culture of innovation	1	No elements and manifestations (artefacts) of innovative culture
		2	Artefacts of innovative culture, low staff liquidity, rewarding and motivating for innovativeness, subjectivity and team work

(continued)

**Table 4** (continued)

Innovative capability category	Criteria	Assessment of innovative capability	
		Score	Specification
1	2	3	4
		3	There is a concept of functional innovative culture implemented gradually, audits of culture are performed periodically
External cooperation concerning innovation	Cooperation with other entities	1	The enterprise maintains contact in terms of contacts with customers, suppliers, business partners
		2	The enterprise cooperates with customers, suppliers, business partners and competitors
		3	The enterprise concludes “knowledge alliances” and creates joint databases with selected stakeholders
	Sources of knowledge	1	Lack of formalised system of acquiring information and knowledge
		2	There is a system of collecting internal and external information, the enterprise participates in exhibitions, fairs, seminars, conferences, etc.
		3	The enterprise acquires knowledge from universities, scientific institutions, industrial R&D units and others
Protection of information resources and securing knowledge	Protection of information and knowledge	1	It observes applicable provisions of law with respect to securing information resources
		2	It uses appropriate clauses and other internal standards of information and knowledge protection
		3	The enterprise has internally coherent system of data protection and implements the protection policy
	Protection of values from innovation and knowledge	1	Lack of actions concerning retaining value from innovation and knowledge
		2	There are mechanisms of retaining profit from innovation in the form of legal and industrial regulations (e.g. trademark,

(continued)

**Table 4** (continued)

Innovative capability category	Criteria	Assessment of innovative capability	
		Score	Specification
1	2	3	4
			business secret, confidentiality procedure, employment contract)
		3	There are coherent instruments of mutually complementary principles and methods, included in the strategy of retaining value from innovation and knowledge

Source own study

The measurement of enterprise innovative capability can be presented in the aggregate form. The aggregate evaluation consists in combining individual assessment criteria into one whole. The overall indicator of enterprise innovative capability can be calculated based on the following formula:

Where:

OZI—value of innovative capability (functionality) index

A ... N—symbol of criteria

## 5 Categorisation of an Enterprise

The basis for the categorisation of an enterprise is the result of the aggregate score of its innovative capability. The adopted hierarchical ranges of the OZI index are shown in Table 5. In Table 5 the model of a tourism enterprise innovative capability is presented.

Uselessness is the state of fulfilling the function, that is innovative capability (OZI), not contributing to the development of innovative activity. The useful state is such a level of fulfilling the function which is greater than or equal to the sufficient level of fulfilling the innovative capability function adopted conventionally. The

**Table 5** Hierarchical ranges of the innovative capability index

Category	Score	
A	2.50–3.00	Model value
B	2.00–2.49	State of high usefulness
C	1.50–1.99	Useful state
D	1.00–1.49	Useless state

Source own study



state of high usefulness, goodness is the proper quality of the innovative capability function. Model value is the ideal level of the fulfilment of the innovative capability function.

## 6 The Evaluation of the Innovative Capability of Tourism Enterprises—A Case Study

The aim of the analysis presented in this part of the paper is the verification of the concept of the enterprise innovative capability assessment and the presentation of the results of empirical research. During the conducted research works, cooperation was established with three hotels, four travel agencies, whose management boards agreed to make appropriate data available. The results of analytical works are presented in Table 6 in which there is the characteristics of the studied enterprises; innovative activity—Table 7, the assessment of enterprise innovative capability in Table 8 (Table 9).

In the group of the studied hotels, two of them, the Cristal Park Hotel and the Dunajec Hotel, according to the adopted criteria, belong to B group of enterprises, characterised by a high, good functionality level. The identified competence gaps concern in particular: the use of IT systems, the use of e-learning, low level of pro-innovation organisational culture and the protection of information and knowledge resources (see: Fig. 1).

The aggregate score of the innovative capability of the Tarnovia Hotel is distinguished by a low level of functionality and can be defined as useless state. The list of the indicated competence gaps is much longer in comparison with the aforementioned hotels. In addition, there is a gap in the following areas: the command of foreign languages and cooperation with external entities.

In the group of the studied travel agencies, in the light of the adopted criteria, the highest aggregate score of innovative capability was obtained by Itaka Travel Agency (category A), Arkadia Travel Agency achieved the level of high usefulness

**Table 6** General characteristics of the studied enterprises

Specification	Hotels			Travel agencies			
	Cristal Park	Hotel Tarnovia	Hotel Dunajec	Rubikon	Barbara Travel	Itaka	Arkadia
Workforce	51–100	11–50	11–50	<10	<10	<10	<10
Revenues (in PLN)	20–50 mln	1–10 mln	1–10 mln	<1 mln	1–10 mln	<1 mln	<1 mln
Range of activities	Regional	Regional	International	International	Regional	Regional	International
Assessment of financial standing	Very good	Good	Good	Average	Good	Good	Good

Source own study

**Table 7** Innovative activity of the studied firms

Specification	Hotels			Travel Agencies			
	Cristal Park	Tamovia Hotel	Dunajec Hotel	Rubikon	Barbara Travel	Itaka	Arkadia
Number of innovations introduced in the last 3 years	1	1	2	2	2	20	2
Types of introduced innovations: product, process, organisational, marketing	Product	Product	Organisational marketing	Marketing	Organisational	Product Process Organisational Marketing	Product marketing
Is there any relation between the level of innovative activity and effects achieved in the short and long term, considering productivity? Yes/No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Do you assess innovative projects in the pre-implementation phase? Yes/No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
What methods do you use to assess innovative projects?	Generated profit			Volume of profit after introducing changes, customers' opinions on the services offered	Generated profit, customer satisfaction level	Generated profit, customer satisfaction level	Generated profit, customer satisfaction level

Source own study

**Table 8** Assessment of the innovative capability of the studied firms

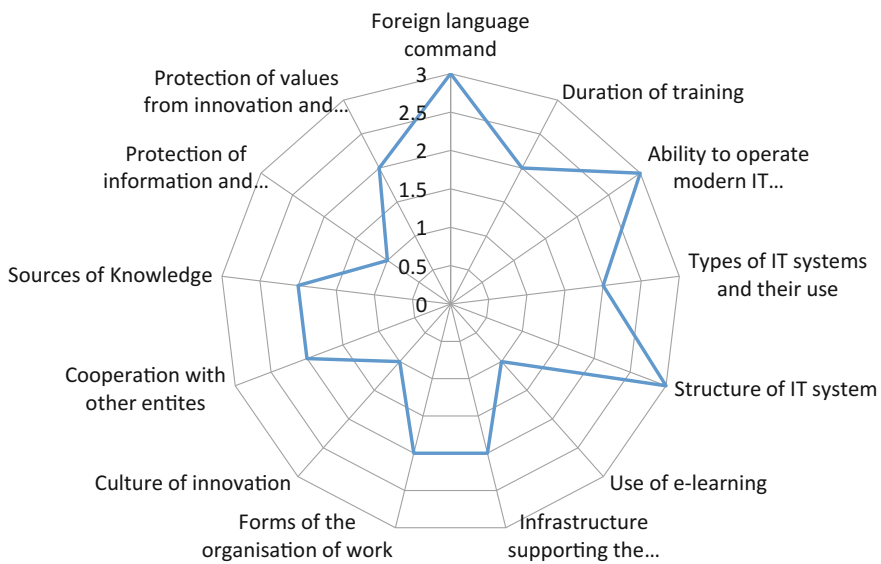
Criterion	Weight	Hotels		Travel agencies				
		Tamovia	Dunajec	Cristal Park	Rubikon Travel Agency	Barbara Travel	Itaka Travel Agency	Arkadia Travel Agency
Foreign language command	3	1	3	3	2	3	3	3
Duration of training	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	2
Ability to operate modern IT technologies used in the organisation	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
Types of IT systems and their use	2	1	1	2	1	2	2	2
Structure of IT system	2	2	2	3	2	3	3	2
Use of e-learning	3	1	2	1	1	2	3	3
Infrastructure supporting the internal communication process	2	2	3	2	2	2	3	1
Forms of the organisation of work	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	3
Culture of innovation	3	1	2	1	2	2	2	2
Cooperation with other entities	3	1	2	2	1	1	1	1
Sources of knowledge	3	2	2	2	2	1	2	2
Protection of information and knowledge	1	1	2	1	3	1	3	3
Protection of values from innovation and knowledge	2	1	2	2	1	1	3	2

Source own study

**Table 9** Aggregate score of enterprise innovative capability

Specification	Hotels			Travel Agencies			
	Cristal Park	Tarnovia	Dunajec	Rubikon Travel Agency	Barbara Travel	Itaka Travel Agency	Arkadia Travel Agency
General indicator of innovative capability	2.03	1.47	2.19	1.81	1.88	2.50	2.22
Categorisation of enterprise	B	D	B	C	C	A	B

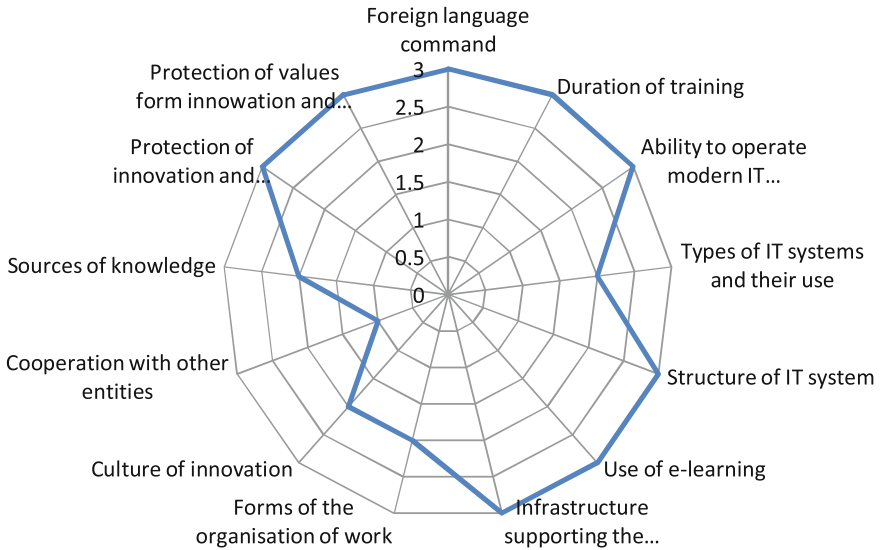
Source own study



**Fig. 1** Graphic presentation of the aggregate innovative capability of the Cristal Park Hotel (an example). Source own study

(category B), the others, namely Barbara Travel Agency and Rubikon Travel Agency are within category C limits - useful state. Competence gaps in the analysed Travel Agencies (categories B and C) are similar to those which were observed in the Hotels group. An exception is Itaka Travel Agency in which cooperation with external entities is the least developed area, the other innovative capability determinants achieved the model level or the level of high usefulness (see: Fig. 2).

The presented method of the assessment of the innovative capability of enterprises and their innovativeness is also useful in establishing competitive and strategic position of firms of a given industry.



**Fig. 2** Graphic presentation of the aggregate score of the innovative capability of Itaka Travel Agency (an example). *Source* own study

## 7 Final Remarks and Conclusions

What conclusions can be drawn from the conducted analyses? The most important is the one which emphasises the essence and indicates the significance of innovative capability in the innovation system of an enterprise. The starting point, the basis of this concept is the process of improving and shaping competences of employees and knowledge accumulated by a firm in the organisational learning process, and the skills and abilities enable the effective and permanent use of innovation potential (resources) for its innovative activity. The process, evoking a change in the behaviours of the mentioned entities (employees, organisations and external stakeholders) already now and even more in the future will turn out to be a permanent element of the effectiveness and competitiveness of an enterprise.

It should be emphasised that the innovative capability of an enterprise and the effectiveness of its innovative activity is determined by numerous factors at the same time, mainly of non-material character. This economic category in the area of innovativeness, if innovative capability can be defined in this way, is relatively coherent, homogeneous, universal, particularly in the sector of enterprises. In comparison with the considerably varied innovation potential which conditions, indirectly influences innovativeness in various sectors of economy and in different types of firms in various way—innovative capability is a homogenous multi-component system.

The concept of tourist enterprise innovative capability was presented, whose crucial determinants and at the same time the criteria of the assessment of this capability development are competences of managers and employees in respect of innovation, knowledge resources in the organisation, as well as the cooperation with customers and business partners in the area of knowledge. Other studied determinants, such as: the organisation of work, team work and pro-innovation organisational culture, the use of IT infrastructure and the protection of information and knowledge resources also influence the innovative capability as moderators (regulatory variables) or as mediators (intervening variables).

The use of this assessment method in the enterprise practice, or, to be more exact, the information collected by means of it, can be the basis for the modeling of the innovative capability of an enterprise, and the recognition of the managerial pragmatics of a firm within that scope.

The concept may be particularly useful for enterprises originating from the SME sector. However, it has a lot of limitations. The presented innovative capability model does not include external factors, e.g. market or institutional ones, which also influence innovative capability. It also does not consider barriers to the development of innovativeness, thus, determinants counterproductive for innovativeness. However, it seems that the described methodology of innovative capability assessment is a successful attempt of the search for the entrepreneurial and innovative grounds for improving the productivity of an organisation based on knowledge and dynamic innovative capabilities.

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# Tourists' Precautions in an Unsafe Destination: The Case of Agadir, Morocco

Nisrine Cherkani and Pedro Quelhas Brito

**Abstract** Tourist behavior has always been a central issue in the tourism discourse. Research in this area has long focused on destination choices, especially those destinations which still attract visitors despite of their security circumstances. Most of the tourists who choose traveling to a less safe destination are looking for new adventures, thus unique holidays. However, with that need of experiencing new sensations, and having a non-standard experiences, tourists cannot deny the fact of being attentive and taking precautions while traveling to an unsafe destination. The purpose of this research relies on defining what kind of precautions the tourists take while traveling to a destination which can threaten their safety, and in which way those precautions contribute to increase the tourist satisfaction.

**Keywords** Tourist behavior · Destination choices · Safety · Precautions

## 1 Introduction

Tourism industry aims to protect travelers and requires customers not to live in fear even though safety and security issues can affect vacancies and the industry itself.

Today's tourists still continue to seek places according to how well prepared and stable they are in order to receive them but despite that tendency, there's a rising minority of travelers who is looking for more than that in a traveling experience while risking to be extra prudent.

As Pizam and Mansefeld (2006) argue, the key to a favorable and satisfying development of tourism is the set of the three basic principles called peace,

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safety and security, which are the necessities that become even more accentuated when travelling on trips abroad than in resident life.

Furthermore, since nowadays people are more often confronted with safety and security in every situation of life, these factors are best embodied in all the travelers who despite feeling afraid when going to a place commonly established as being less safe chose to ignore some internal anxiety in order to move beyond typical sights, attractions and the destination itself. This contradiction inspires tourists to feel displaced in an amusing way as they step out of the old same circuits and dive beyond the positive or negative reputation a destination can have. A chase for personal achievement comes from engaging in unforgettable and inspiring activities while living new adventures and unique, authentic holidays but it is in one's best interest to reduce every single factor that might have an effect on the given safety.

Since travel and tourism industry is among the largest and fastest growing industries in the world, it is not easy to maintain these principles (Floyd and Pennington 2004), thereby tourists cannot deny the fact that being attentive and taking precautions while traveling to an unsafe destination is becoming more and more important especially when willing to live non-standard experiences.

WTO/United Nations' definition of tourism (1993) comprises "the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes". Accordingly, tourism experiences are a microcosm of real life experiences, therefore all aspects of travel should be regarded with proportionate attention.

In fact, when risk meets a destination to be perceived as less safe, the potential travelers can pursue their travel plans, change the chosen destination, modify their travel behavior, or acquire additional information if they decide to continue with their travel plans (Chandler 1991; Englander 1991; Norton 1987).

For all these reasons, this paper aims to identify what kind of precautions tourists take while traveling to a destination which can threaten their safety and in which way those precautions contribute to increase the tourist satisfaction.

## 2 Methodology

Safety and security are vital when providing quality experiences in tourism. To incorporate principles of safety and security is becoming an overriding objective of tourism destinations. Thus, the guideline of this paper is to know what kind of precautions the tourists took while being in Morocco.

The study we conducted was inductive by nature, in which we used a qualitative and quantitative approach (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2003). The qualitative research was in form of a literature review (part of which was provided above), and the interviews with leisure tourists was the quantitative approach for the research.

The target was leisure tourists who were visiting Agadir in March 2017. We conducted 24 interviews using a list of seven direct and indirect questions which formed our guidelines survey. The interviews were made through face-to-face

interaction, which required the involvement of 24 Master students from the National School of Business and Management in Agadir. The answers were recorded and transcribed to ensure reliability (Eisenhardt, 1989). The choice on this type of survey offered us the advantage of gathering plentiful information which can later provide critical insights for the research.

The heterogeneity of the tourist Market in Morocco was the reason why we distributed the guidelines in two languages: French and English. All the final answers were retranslated into English to assure accuracy of meaning.

I. Study findings:

One of the most contentious points in the study was to know the socioeconomic/psychographic characteristics of the tourists who are visiting Morocco. The participants were also asked about their perception on safety while being in Morocco and the taken precautions while booking the trip (Table 2).

As an overall view about the sample, the ages were ranged from 18 to 69 in (Table 1), as well as the tourist's country of permanent residence.

As stated by Table 1, our target was international tourists. The sample was Constituted by 9 nationalities, although the most represented nationality is the French. French tourists represent 50%, followed by English tourists 16.66%.

According to the same table Morocco is mostly receiving young people between 30 and 39 years old and tourists lords between 50 and 59 years of age.

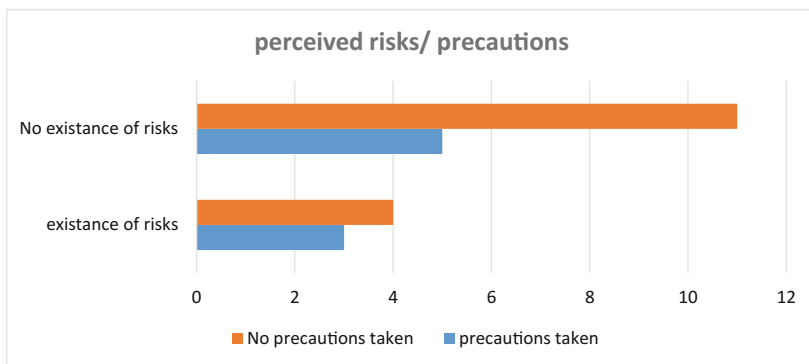
**Table 1** Age distribution, country of residence (N = 24)

Tourist age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18–29	4	16.66
30–39	7	29.16
40–49	5	20.83
50–59	5	20.83
60–69	2	8.33
Total	24	100.0
<i>Country of residence</i>		
French	12	50.0
American	1	4.16
Belgian	1	4.16
English	4	16.66
Deuch	1	4.16
Italian	1	4.16
Polish	1	4.16
Romain	1	4.16
Swedish	2	8.33
Total	24	100.0

**Table 2** The precautions taken by tourists while booking the trip

Type of precaution by tourists who didn't perceived any risks in Morocco	Type of precaution by tourists who perceived risks in Morocco
Don't follow people in street	Avoid Ramadan period
Search guides	First aid equipment
Secure things	Read several blogs
Check weather	Watch several vlogs
Check trip adviser reviews	Avoid holding luxurious things
Check prices before buying	Avoid faraway places
	Remaining vigilance

A. Precautions taken



According to graph above, the tourists' answers were divided into 4 categories:

- The first category: no risks, no precautions taken.
- The second category: no risks, precautions taken.
- The third category: existed risk, no precautions taken while traveling.
- The fourth category: existed risks, precautions taken.

The second and the fourth categories confirmed that taking precautions while traveling to Morocco is as important as spending a great time discovering the destination. The main precautions taken by the tourists are: avoiding holding luxurious things, check prices before buying and to remain vigilant while having a promenade.

From that table we can resume that the tourists' precautions are divided in three major categories—before traveling, upon departure and during travel and at the destination site.

## ***2.1 Before Traveling***

- In the pre-planning stage, through newspapers, magazines, television, brochures and catalogs, videos, travel reports and travel books;
- In the concrete planning or purchase phase through communication either with the travel agent, transportation company, automobile club, or other suppliers at the time of sale;
- In the phase immediately before departure in the form of travel documents.

## ***2.2 Upon Departure and During Travel***

- At the check-in desk at departure terminals;
- On the airplane, train or bus, through literature or videos.

## ***2.3 At the Destination***

- On arrival, at the terminal information/welcome desk;
- Between the terminal and the final destination (by tourist guides/travel escorts);
- At the final destination (usually a hotel).

## **3 Conclusion**

Safety and security have long since been major aspects in every situation in people's lives and are therefore not just a recent and isolated discussion theme and issue within the sector of tourism. Both belong in all basic needs in all spheres of human activity.

Worldwide threats and dangers are becoming more frequent and people are becoming more aware of the necessity of a safe destination. This can be confirmed by this study as tourism services and safety are the criteria of utmost importance, as proved by the first hypothesis within this study. Foreign tourists are being educated in the spirit of touristic safety when choosing a particular destination.

As mentioned by Pizam and Mansfeld, it does not matter what kind of security incidents tourists are confronted with, it always negatively affects all tourism stakeholders. The possibility of being more likely to have personal safety and

property threatened abroad can affect a country's image for safe tourism but at the same time it can be an advantage since it can attract different segments of international tourism. The industry has long focused on perceptions of safety and security in the context but consumer awareness and personal security measures allows people to move beyond destination marketing and to travel beyond any given borders in order to meet our world.

## 4 Limitations

Two limitations that need to be taken into consideration have occurred within this study.

The first one regarding the data occurred—although quite a lot of data cases were collected, the vast majority of people were between 40 and 59 years of age, therefore the greater part of the data sample applies to the senior population.

Another limitation regarding the number of the respondents—some data could not be proven due to the small sample size. Furthermore some of the findings represented within the data analysis did not seem to be very reliable and therefore the analysis was restricted.

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