

INTENTIONS TO BOYCOTT “UNETHICAL” HOTELS: A CONJOINT ANALYSIS

Irene Tilikidou

Alexander Technological Institute of Thessaloniki

Antonia Delistavrou

Alexander Technological Institute of Thessaloniki

Christos Sarmaniotis

Alexander Technological Institute of Thessaloniki

Presents examination of consumers' intentions to boycott a hotel due to certain unethical business practices. The orthogonal design of Conjoint Analysis formulated 10 types of hotels based on 4 attributes: environmental damage, unethical labour conditions, price and ownership. The results indicated that almost all respondents declared their intentions to boycott those hotels, which have been accused of both environmental damage and unethical labour practises. Customers, who declared the higher intentions to boycott those hotels, accused solely for environmental damage, are above 34 years of age, employees and retired persons. These customers are influenced by their past boycotting experience and by their intentions to boycott brands “guilty” of financial support to wars and unfair profiting. Customers, who declared the higher intentions to boycott the hotels, accused solely for unfair labour practices, are also above 34 years of age. They would boycott their favourable brands if they were accused for exploitation of workforce.

Keywords: *Ethical Consumption, Ethical Tourism, Hotel Boycotts*

JEL Classification: L83, M1, O1

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is undeniably a major economic force and one of the most increasing sectors in the global economy (W.T.O., 2001; Weeden, 2002; Goodwin and Francis, 2003; Lansing and De Vries, 2007). Large numbers of people are being transported internationally bringing with them billions of Euros or dollars. On the other hand, tourists undeniably put too much



stress on the physical and human environment of the destination countries. In this sense, tourism has long been seen as an unsustainable sector in its development and practice (Weeden, 2002; Manaktola and Jauhari, 2007; Han *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, we can very often find accusations and denouncements in the internet that concern unethical business practices of specific hotels or hotel chains. Information like this is sometimes followed by calls for boycotts. This type of action has usually nothing to do with travelling aversive directives about a certain country due to causes related to international politics. In fact, this action is a type of consumer behaviour that might be included into the “negative ethical consumption” topic of research. These ethical denouncements almost never find promotion through the mass media channels. These types of action are usually organized by NGOs or consumers’ associations or ecological groups. They mostly reveal exceptional or even cruel damages of the physical and the human environment taking part at a certain place. Examples of these unethical hotel practices might be destruction of shores and woods, dangerous management of hazardous waste, overconsumption of water and energy, children labour or (more than the usual) exploitation of workers, refugees etc.

At the same time, there are practitioners (Goodwin and Francis, 2003) and academics (Weeden, 2002), who have argued that there is a niche market, which seeks for holidays providing more than just two sunny weeks in some luxurious premises. This niche market of potential hotel customers, would like to use their accommodation choices in order to “punish” unethical practices and “reward” ethical business. Sustainable tourism has been suggested as a positive alternative to the negative or even destructive impact of mass tourism (Weeden, 2002, Han *et al.*, 2009). There has been some research evidence that ethical issues are parts of the decision making criteria (Creyer and Ross, 1997; Weeden, 2002; Han *et al.*, 2010). Also that there is a definite consumers’ segment, which puts pressure for corporate social responsibility (Goodwin and Francis, 2003) and that consumers in this segment would reward an ethical firm through their willingness to pay more for ethical products (Mintel, 1999).

Precise examination of ethical consumer behaviour with reference to tourism is at a relatively early stage by all means (Cleverdon and Kalisch, 2000; Tallontire *et al.*, 2001; Ritchie *et al.*, 2005, p. 189; Han *et al.*, 2010). Also, the possibility of boycotting a hotel due to unethical practices has never been under investigation so far. Therefore, the aim of this research study was twofold: firstly to examine consumers’ intentions to boycott hotels that have been accused for certain unethical practices and secondly

to explore some of the factors that might be found able to influence this kind of negative ethical behaviour.

ETHICAL CONSUMPTION

Negative ethical behaviour is a type of ethical consumption. Ethical consumerism, in general, refers to a kind of consumer behaviour, which is affected by ethical criteria. Ethical is the consumption that takes into account the societal norms or, in other words, “what is good for the society” (Smith, 1990). In an effort to categorise all possible activities included in the ethical consumption concept, Tallontire *et al.* (2001) proposed three types of ethical consumerism namely positive, negative and consumer action. The latter form has been named “discursive” by Michelletti *et al.* (2005).

The *positive type* concerns the choice of ethical products or service such as eco-efficient products and organics (Crane, 2001) and/or fair trade products (Delistavrou and Tilikidou, 2012). The *negative type* concerns the boycotting or consumers’ remit from particular products, certain firms or groups of firms; more generally it means actions of denial, rejection or exit from a certain market. This type includes the refusal of buying products produced by business that challenge consumer ethics regarding the environmental destruction, the exploitation of workers or local producers in the underdeveloped countries, child labour, animal rights etc (Klein *et al.*, 2003; Kozinets and Handelman, 2004). The *discursive type* refers to a channel of communication among consumers, to the formulation of public opinion through a framework of social debate, as well as to a number of continuously transforming cultural activities, which are based mainly on computer and network innovations (Tallontire *et al.*, 2001; Michelletti *et al.*, 2005).

There had been some claims that worldwide organized boycotts would have been increasing (Friedman, 1999). Later, a few studies were implemented which focused exclusively on the negative type of ethical consumption (boycotting) with regards to products or services. Some individual variables have been found able to motivate compliance to boycotts. For example, *perception of boycott success*, *cost of boycotting*, *social pressure* (Sen *et al.*, 2001; Klein *et al.*, 2003), *social image of boycotters*, *moral self-expression*, *self-realization*, *express uniqueness* (Kozinets and Handelman, 2004), *self-enhancement* (Klein *et al.*, 2003), *freedom from guilt* (Klein *et al.*, 2003; Kozinets and Handelman, 2004), *target’s egregiousness* (Klein *et al.*, 2001; Klein *et al.* 2003).

ETHICAL TOURISM

It has been claimed that tourism might get evolved into a successful example of a customers' trend towards more ethical consumption patterns (Goodwin and Francis, 2003). Ethical tourism is now an established term having its roots within the sustainable tourism development (Tallontire *et al.*, 2001; Weeden, 2002; Lansing and De Vries, 2007). According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO) sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development and to the necessity of a suitable balance between these three dimensions to guarantee a long term sustainability of global tourism (WTO, 2001 and 2012). Further, the stakeholder theory recognises that both tourism enterprises and tourists should take their own share of responsibility towards formulating and rewarding (respectively) an ethical hotel strategy (Robson and Robson, 1996). Of course, sustainable tourism and its claims have received their own share of criticism. Arguments have been made that sustainable tourism is not in fact a truthful effort, but just another marketing ploy (Lansing and De Vries, 2007).

Although it is rather difficult to distinguish clearly between sustainable tourism and ethical tourism, it has been advocated that ethical tourism is a concept that goes beyond the three principles of sustainability (Weeden, 2002). Ethical tourism should include consideration and responsibility not only towards the physical environment, but also towards the human environment and the cultural heritage of the destination countries (Lansing and De Vries, 2007). Therefore an "ethical hotel" is a broader term than a "green hotel". A green hotel is the hotel that takes measures to harm the environment less or even more to protect the physical environment by efficient use of energy, water and other materials (Green Hotels Association, 2005). An ethical hotel strategy includes environmental protection along with honest pricing, fair treatment of the locally owned firms, fair treatment and wages for all employees, honest promotion techniques etc (Tallontire *et al.*, 2001; Weeden, 2002; Lansing and De Vries, 2007).

With regard to previous data concerning ethical touristic choices, Jaffe (1993) found that customers are not willing to pay more just to fund green hotel policies. Watkins (1994) found that the 54% of consumers in USA declared to be "environmentally minded travellers", who would prefer to stay in green hotels. Han *et al.* (2009) found that female customers of older age, who have favourable attitudes towards eco-friendly behaviours and positive images of green hotels, were more willing to stay at a green hotel, to recommend it and to pay more for it. A

year later, Han *et al.* (2010) employed a refined TPB model and found that attitudes, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control positively affected intentions to stay at a green hotel, while intentions did not statistically differ between eco-friendly or eco-indifferent customers. Obviously, the research on ethical tourism so far has been concentrated exclusively on the positive type of ethical consumption. The relevant findings have not yet provided a detailed description of ethical tourists. The other types of ethical consumption (negative and discursive) have never been incorporated in any research effort with reference to tourism.

Michelletti *et al.* (2005) assumed that ethical consumers might be informed citizens, who possess the means and the skills to search for and share information about products and services they are interested in. This suggestion needs to be empirically tested in order to understand whether consumers would reject an unethical hotel and take the trouble to search for a more ethical solution for their holidays. Rejecting an unethical hotel is in fact a type of boycotting, an example of negative ethical consumption.

ASSUMPTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

According to the literature review, it was assumed that “unethical” is the hotel, which has been accused for significant environmental damage (air and water pollution, energy over-consumption, waste disposal etc) and unfair labour practices (uninsured, unpaid labour, illegal layoffs etc). It was also assumed that a) past boycotting experience might affect customers’ intentions to boycott hotels and b) respondents’ negative ethical consumption (intentions to boycott products or brands) might be connected with their intentions to boycott hotels.

The general objective of this research study was to examine customers’ intentions to boycott (reject) unethical hotels. Also, to find out whether the above presented assumptions should be accepted; whether past boycotting experiences or intentions to boycott products or brands are able to influence the respondents’ intentions to boycott unethical hotels. As in any marketing research, an effort was made to explore the demographic profile of hotels’ future boycotters.

METHODOLOGY

A structured questionnaire was administered to 600 households of Thessaloniki, Greece urban area and provided 540 usable questionnaires during April-May 2012. The sampling method was a combination of the two-stage area sampling and the systematic sampling (Tull and Hawkins, 1993, p. 544; Zikmund 1991, p. 471). One respondent, above 18 years of age, from one household was interviewed by teams of two trained marketing senior students.

Conjoint analysis was utilized to examine which hotel/s might be boycotted (rejected) by future customers due to its/their unethical attributes. This type of research approach is somehow opposite to the usual one, which would have tried to find the mostly preferable hotel/s. This approach (rejection, not preference) might hopefully minimize the social desirability effect (Robinson, 1991, p. 47), which usually leads to an overestimation of preferences towards products and services that are “good for the society” (Tilikidou, 2007).

The survey was built upon a scenario, which was being explained in brief to the respondents by the interviewers. The respondents were asked to hypothesize that they intended to get a holiday package of 7 days during next summer in a Greek island. Surfing through internet resulted in offers for 10 different hotels at the same island for the same time period. Further searching revealed that denouncements have been made by consumers’ associations with regard to unethical practices of some of the hotels. The attributes of each hotel were presented to the respondents in 10 cards. The respondents were firstly asked to rate each one of the 10 hotels. Attractiveness was measured on a scale from 0=*Not at all attractive* to 10=*Very much attractive*. Then, they were also asked if they would boycott (reject) each one of the hotels. Boycotting was measured on a YES/NO basis in order to obtain a ranking measurement too.

The attributes that were put into the analysis were: a) if any denouncement for environmental damage has been located (Yes/No), b) if any denouncement for unethical labour practices has been located (Yes/No), c) which is the ownership of the hotel (local entrepreneur / multinational chain) and d) what is the price for a double room for 7 days (400/550/700 Euros). It is apparent that the first two attributes are ethically oriented criteria according to the above presented review of the literature; price was added, as it is quite unexceptionably the most important decision making criterion. The orthogonal design provided 10 combinations of hotels, which are presented in Table 2.

The questionnaire also included the variable Previous Boycott Participation measured in a YES/NO basis. Then the respondents were asked about the Number of Previous Boycotts they had participated in and the relevant variable was measured on a ratio basis from 0 to 5. In another question the respondents were kindly asked to state how possible would have been to boycott their favourable brands (of any product or service) in case these companies were accused for one or more unethical practices. The relevant variable measured intentions of Negative Ethical Consumption on a 5-point possibility scale from 0=Not at all to 4=Very much and contained nine (9) items.

Finally, five demographic variables were also included in the questionnaire (Gender, Age, Education, Income and Occupation) all measured on the EL.STAT. scales.

RESULTS

Conjoint analysis was conducted through SPSS. Pearson's r and Kendall's tau were found significant ($p < 0.005$). The part - worth scores (utilities) indicate the influence of each factor level on respondents' preference for a particular combination. It is observed (Table 1) that Environmental Damage was found to be the most important factor (36.730% average importance) followed by Unfair Labour Practices (30.501%) and Price (24.864%), while Ownership was found to be the by far less important attribute (7.905%).

The descriptive statistics (Table 2), with regard to the hotels' ratings, indicated that the less attractive was the Hotel D (Mean = 1.18), which at the price of 700 Euros, belongs to a local entrepreneur and has been accused of both environmental damages and unethical labour practices. It was followed by the Hotel J (Mean=1.50), which at the price of 550 Euros, belongs to a multinational chain and has also been accused of both environmental damages and unethical labour practices. These results were certainly expected, as both the hotels D and J have been accused about unethical practices towards the physical and the human environment. However, the Hotel D is additionally more expensive than the Hotel J, while the ownership does not count in the decision making process. As expected, the ranking results indicated that the Hotels J and D were the first to get rejected by the 96.7% and 96.5% of the respondents respectively.

Table 1: Conjoint Analysis Utilities

Utilities			
		Utility Estimate	Std. Error
<i>Environmental Damage</i>	Yes	-1.463	0.583
	No	1.463	0.583
<i>Unfair Labour Practices</i>	Yes	-1.215	0.583
	No	1.215	0.583
<i>Price</i>	400€/week	1.073	0.777
	550€/week	-0.908	0.911
	700€/week	-0.165	0.911
<i>Ownership</i>	Multinational Chain	-0.315	0.583
	Local Entrepreneur	0.315	0.583
(Constant)		3.451	0.614
Importance Values			
<i>Environmental Damage</i>		36.730	
<i>Unfair Labour Practices</i>		30.501	
<i>Price</i>		24.864	
<i>Ownership</i>		7.905	
Correlations			
		Value	Sig.
Pearson's r		0.931	0.000
Kendall's tau		0.857	0.001
Kendall's tau for Holdouts		1.000	

Table 2: Ranking and Rating Results

Combinations					Boycott %	Attractiveness	
Environment	Fairness	Price	Ownership			Mean	S. D.
Hotel A		700€/week	Mult/nal Chain		42.4	5.28	3.136
Hotel B	Unfair Labour	400€/week	Mult/nal Chain		65.7	3.58	2.849
Hotel C	Environ. Damage	Unfair Labour	400€/week	Mult/nal Chain	88.3	2.30	2.699
Hotel D	Environ. Damage	Unfair Labour	700€/week	Local Entr/neur	96.5	1.18	1.677
Hotel E	Environ. Damage		400€/week	Local Entr/neur	66.9	3.16	2.848
Hotel F	Environ. Damage		550€/week	Mult/nal Chain	85.4	2.22	2.228
Hotel G		Unfair Labour	550€/week	Local Entr/neur	78.1	2.78	2.354
Hotel H			400€/week	Local Entr/neur	6.9	8.75	2.004
Hotel I	Environ. Damage		400€/week	Mult/nal Chain	71.9	3.17	2.973
Hotel J	Environ. Damage	Unfair Labour	550€/week	Mult/nal Chain	96.7	1.50	1.880

The examination of **Previous Boycott Participation** indicated that one out of four (26.3%) respondents have previous experience in boycotting. As to the **Number of Previous Boycotts**, 16.1% of the consumers have just once experienced boycotting, while 7.6% have participated twice in a boycott. The variable of **Negative Ethical Consumption** takes theoretical values from 0 to 36 and providing a Mean of 28.0741 (Std. Dev. 5.7047) indicated a relatively high level of total intentions to boycott unethical products and/or companies in the future. It is indicated in Table 1 that the higher Means were obtained by items N04 (Mean=3.51) and N06 (Mean=3.27). The first one (N04) refers to child

labour while the second one (N06) to workforce exploitation, so both of the items concern unfair labour practices.

ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

The analysis focused on those hotels with only one unethical attribute (Hotels B, E, F, G, I). The Hotels A and H were from the beginning excluded from the analysis because they had no unethical attributes at all. The Hotels C, D and J were also excluded from the analysis because they have been accused for both kinds of unethical attributes (environmental damage and unfair labour practices). A very large majority of the respondents (almost all) declared their intentions to boycott these hotels; so, no statistically significant differences would be expected among respondents.

Chi-square test was utilised to examine whether Previous Boycott Participation as well as Number of Previous Boycotts might influence consumers' intentions to boycott the Hotels B, E, F, G and I. It was found (Table 3) that consumers, who boycotted in the past even one product or service, are more likely to get engaged in Boycotting these hotels. No statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) results were found between the Number of Previous Boycotts and Boycotting of any of the above 5 hotels.

Chi-square was also employed to examine the impact of demographics on Boycotting of the aforementioned hotels. Statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) differences were found with regard to Boycotting of Hotels E, F, and I (accused only for environmental damage,) across Age (> 34 years old) and Occupation (employees and retired persons). Also, with regard to Boycotting of Hotels B and G (accused for unfair labour practices) across Age (> 34 years old).

Spearman's non parametric correlation was utilized to investigate the relationships between customers' Boycotting of each one of the Hotels B, E, F, G and I with Negative Ethical Consumption as a whole, as well as with each one of its items. A statistically significant but very weak relationship was found between Boycotting of Hotel F and Negative Ethical Consumption as a whole (Table 3, first line). Many statistically significant relationships are indicated between Boycotting of a hotel and each one of the separate items of Negative Ethical Consumption. All the relationships are weak but they lead to certain comments upon observing the results more carefully (Table 3).

It is observed that relationships are indicated between Hotels E, F and I (accused for environmental damage) and item N07 (boycott a

favourable brand accused for providing financial support to Governments responsible for wars) and also item N09 (boycott a favourable brand accused for excessive and irresponsible profiting). Significant, again weak, relationships were also found (Table 4) between Boycotting of Hotels B and G (accused for unfair labour practices) and item N06 (boycott a favourable brand accused for workforce exploitation).

Table 3: Correlation between Boycotting Hotels and intentions of Negative Ethical Consumption

		Boycotting Hotels				
		Hotel B	Hotel E	Hotel F	Hotel G	Hotel I
Negative Ethical Consumption (as a whole)	r	0.068	0.058	0.129	0.085	0.081
	Sig.	0.116	0.177	0.003	0.049	0.059
N01: Environmental damage	r	0.084	0.070	0.102	0.030	0.052
	Sig.	0.050	0.102	0.017	0.485	0.227
N02: Financial scandals (bribery of social servants, cartels etc)	r	0.045	-0.038	0.108	0.116	0.065
	Sig.	0.298	0.378	0.012	0.007	0.129
N03: Scandals concerning product safety (dangerous gadgets, etc)	r	-0.084	-0.043	0.082	-0.014	0.008
	Sig.	0.051	0.315	0.055	0.754	0.852
N04: Child labour	r	-0.054	-0.027	0.035	-0.065	-0.036
	Sig.	0.214	0.530	0.418	0.130	0.407
N05: Animal testing	r	0.064	0.028	0.005	0.014	-0.002
	Sig.	0.139	0.514	0.904	0.748	0.972
N06: Exploitation of work force	r	0.125	0.058	0.058	0.106	0.099
	Sig.	0.004	0.179	0.177	0.014	0.022
N07: Financial support to governments. responsible for wars	r	0.008	0.109	0.120	0.008	0.116
	Sig.	0.861	0.011	0.005	0.853	0.007
N08: Interests are hostile to our country	r	-0.029	0.057	0.044	-0.014	0.026
	Sig.	0.503	0.185	0.313	0.740	0.552
N09: Excessive and irresponsible profiting	r	0.092	0.117	0.131	0.129	0.128
	Sig.	0.033	0.006	0.002	0.003	0.003

DISCUSSION

The respondents' intentions to participate in future boycotts of products or brands as well as boycotts of unethical hotels are rather high. Although Greece is currently facing one of the most severe economic crises in history, the results of this study demonstrate that price is not the ultimate criterion when Greeks decide to boycott an unethical hotel. It seems that ownership of the hotel does not play any role at all. Instead, environmental damage was found to be the most important factor of this conjoint analysis scenario. The findings (both rating and ranking) that concern Hotels C and F might be viewed as an example of the above mentioned argument. These two hotels are both owned by multinational chains. The Hotel C has been accused for both environmental damage and unethical labour practices while the Hotel F has been accused just for environmental damage. The Hotel C is cheaper than the Hotel F. However, they both obtained almost equal scores in both rating (Means 2.30 and 2.22 respectively) and ranking (88.3% and 85.4% of rejection respectively). These findings simply verify that the most important factor in the respondents' perceptions is the damage to the environment.

In case denouncements about unethical practices are absent, the price plays a central role in customers' decision making. For example, the Hotel H gained by far the higher score in rating (Mean=8.75) and the lower boycotting percentage in ranking (6.9%). This hotel at the price of 400 Euros is owned by a local entrepreneur. It is followed in rating by the Hotel A (Mean=5.28) and in ranking (42.4%). The Hotels H and A are the only combinations free from denouncements. The Hotel A is owned by a multinational chain and its price has been set at 700 Euros. The ownership has been found of not much importance as a factor. So, it is obvious that the large differences in scores are associated with the difference in price between the two hotels. Of course, price has always been the most important factor in consumer behaviour and its significance will not get any weaker during an era of a global economic crisis.

Further, it is argued that previous experience should be taken into consideration in consumer research studies like the present one. The results of this study indicated that Greeks' previous participation in boycotting was found to be rather low. Nevertheless, the results indicated that those consumers, who had even once experienced boycotting in the past, were found more likely to get involved in hotel boycotting in the future.

There are also some subtle relationships hidden in rather weak relationships among the correlations. For example, consumers' intention

to boycott unethical hotels, accused only for unfair labour practices, seems to be associated with boycotting favourable brands in case of workforce exploitation. On the other hand, consumers' intention to boycott unethical hotels accused only for environmental damage is associated with boycotting favourable brands, accused either for financial support to Governments responsible for wars or for excessive and irresponsible profiting. However, the relevant relationships in Table 3 are very weak and thus further, possibly non parametric statistical analyses are needed to understand better the insights of these aspects of ethical behaviour.

With reference to demographics, it has been mentioned above that analysis was focused only on those hotels with just one unethical attribute. There was no reason to analyse the demographics with relevance to the hotels with two unethical attributes due to the fact that all of the respondents declared their intentions to boycott them. So, it was found that employees and retired persons are more likely to boycott hotels accused just for environmental damage. Middle aged customers intend to boycott both the hotels that are accused just for environmental damage and the hotels that are accused just for unfair labour practices.

It should be noted that the discussion of our results is mandatorily limited as no other conjoint analysis study has been located in the literature to allow results' comparison. Most probably a certain limitation of this study was the limited explanatory strength of the conjoint analysis design; this might be attributed to the small number of attributes that were included in the analysis. This exploratory effort should be followed by a broader research project in order to get deeper in a relatively undiscovered area, such as negative ethical consumption or boycotting in particular. Another limitation of this study is the partial profile of boycotters. It should be attributed to the absence of other - besides demographics - personal variables of the respondents, for instance attitudes or psychographics. Further research is needed to cover some parts of the existing research gap. The large difference between the estimations of previous experience in boycotting and intentions of future hotel boycotting might be also considered to be a limitation of this study. This finding might be most probably attributed to a remaining social desirability effect (Robinson *et al.*, 1991, p.47).

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In this study, the conjoint analysis was employed to explore customers' intentions to boycott (reject) unethical hotels and reveal the factors that might be found able to affect this type of negative ethical behaviour. The results indicated that almost all respondents declared their intentions to boycott those hotels, which have been accused of both environmental damage and unethical labour practices. In addition, price was found to be an important factor in the decision making process, in case that no unethical denouncement has taken place with regard to a certain hotel. The respondents did not seem to be taking into consideration the ownership (local or foreign) of any given hotel. Customers, who declared higher than their counterparts' intentions to boycott the hotels, accused just for environmental damage, are older than 34 years of age, employees and retired persons. The same customers are influenced by their past boycotting experience as well as by their intentions to boycott favourable brands that provide financial support to Governments responsible for wars and unfair profiting. Customers, who declared higher than their counterparts' intentions to boycott the hotels, accused for unfair labour practices, are older than 34 years of age, who also intent to boycott their favourable brands in case these brands are accused for exploitation of workforce.

The results of this study might highlight important implications for those hotel managers, who are interested in adopting and implementing an honest ethical strategy. They should design their communication techniques in a way sufficient to reach mature employees and retired persons. They should definitely target their efforts to the ecologically conscious consumers, as the environmental concerns were found the strongest decision making criterion. The marketing effort should include publicity about the measures taken for environmental protection (e.g. energy and water conservation, recycling, organics etc) in combination with information relevant to the rights of the hotel staff, or actions of corporate social responsibility, which aim to benefit the employees. On the other side, hotel management trying to avoid customers' boycotting should design advertising messages that not only confine to the description of the hotel's facilities and services but also include green certification(s) and employees' testimonials on fair labour practices.

Ethical consumers need to get an ethical merit for their trouble to search for information and reject a hotel due to its unethical attributes. Their choice should make them feel that they are not alone; that they actively contribute to a movement in favour of the protection of the

physical environment and the human rights. After all, these consumers need to feel that they are powerful enough to make a socially beneficial difference even through their holiday consumer behaviour.

There is no doubt that tourism is one of the most significantly increasing industries in the beginning of the 21st century. At the same time there is also no doubt that the presently evolving economic crisis will affect tourism too among all other sectors of the global economic and social life. There is much left to be further understood with regard to the evolutions in the tourism industry and the development of ethical tourism.

Acknowledgements: *This study is financed by the Research Committee of Alexander T.E.I. of Thessaloniki, Research Support Programme 2010. Project number 80099 entitled: Investigating aspects of the negative ethical consumerism: Emphasis on the determination of factors influencing the choice of “ethical or green” hotels by their potential customers.*

REFERENCES

- Cleverdon, R. & Kalisch, A. (2000). Fair Trade in Tourism. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, No. 2, pp. 171-187.
- Crane, A. (2001). Unpacking the Ethical Product. *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 30, pp. 361-373.
- Creyer, E. H. & Ross, T. R. Jr (1997). The Influence of Firm Behaviour on Purchase Intention: Do Consumers Really Care About Business Ethics? *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, Vol. 14, No. 6, pp. 421-433.
- Delistavrou, A. & Tilikidou, I. (2012). Exploring the Ethical Behaviour Adopted by Greek Consumers. *Journal of Marketing Vistas*, Vol. 1, no. 2, January-June 2012, pp. 22-35.
- Friedman, M. (1999). *Consumer Boycotts: Effecting Change Through the Marketplace and the Media*. New York: Routledge.
- Goodwin, H. & Francis, J. (2003). Ethical and Responsible Tourism: Consumer Trends in the UK. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, Vol. 9, No.3, pp. 271-284.
- Green Hotels Association, (2005). What is a Green Hotel? [Http://greenhotels.com/index.php](http://greenhotels.com/index.php). Accessed the 12th January 2011, at 10:45.
- Han, H., Hsu, L -T. & Lee, J-S. (2009). Empirical Investigation of the Roles of Attitudes towards Green Behaviours, Overall Image, Gender and Age in Hotel Customers' Eco-friendly Decision-Making Process. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 28, pp. 519-528.

- Han, H., Hsu, L. T. J. & Sheu, C. (2010). Application of the Theory of Planned Behavior to Green Hotel Choice: Testing the Effect of Environmental Friendly Activities. *Tourism Management*, Vol. 31, No. 3, pp. 325-334.
- Jaffe, W. E. (1993). Solid Waste Disposal: Independent Food Service Practices. *FIU Hospitality Review*, Vol. 11, No. 1, pp. 69-77.
- Klein, J. G., John, A. & Smith, G. N. (2001). Exploring Motivations for Participation in a Consumer Boycott. *Working Paper, No. 01-701, Centre for Marketing*, London Business School.
- Klein, J. G., Smith, G. N. & John, A. (2003). Why We Boycott: Consumer Motivations for Boycott Participation and Marketer Responses. *Working Paper, No. 03-702, Centre for Marketing*, London Business School.
- Kozinets, R. V. & Handelman, J. M. (2004). Adversaries of Consumption: Consumer Movements, Activism, and Ideology. *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 31, pp. 691-717.
- Lansing, P. & De Vries, P. (2007). Sustainable Tourism: Ethical Alternative or Marketing Ploy? *Journal of Business Ethics*, No. 72, pp. 77-85.
- Manaktola, K. & Jauhari, V. (2007). Exploring Consumer Attitude and Behavior towards Green Practices in the Lodging Industry in India. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 19, No. 5, pp. 364-377.
- Micheletti, M., Stolle, D., Nishikawa, L. & Wright, M. (2005). A Case of Discursive Political Consumerism: The Nike e-mail exchange. *Proceedings from the 2nd International Seminar on Political Consumerism*, (pp. 255-290). Oslo.
- Mintel (1999). *The Green and Ethical Consumer*. March.
<http://oxygen.mintel.com/display/79586>. Accessed the 21st September 2012, at 13:48.
- Ritchie, B. W., Burns, P. & Palmer, C. (2005). *Tourism Research Methods: Integrating Theory with Practice*. CABI Publishing, Manchester, UK.
- Robinson J. P., Shaver D. R. & Wrightsman L. S. (1991). *Measures of Personality and Social Psychological Attitudes*. Academic Press.
- Robson, J. & Robson, I. (1996). From Shareholders to Stakeholders. *Tourism Management*, Vol. 17, No.7, pp.533-540.
- Sen, S., Gürhan-Canli, Z. & Morwitz, V. (2001) Withholding Consumption: A Social Dilemma Perspective on Consumer Boycotts. *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 31, pp. 399-704.
- Smith, N. C. (1990). *Morality and the Market*, London, Routledge.
- Tallontire, A., Rentsendorj, E. & Bowfield, M. (2001). Ethical Consumers and Ethical Trade: A Review of Current Literature. *Policy Series 12*. Chatham, UK: Natural Resources Institute.
- Tilikidou, I. (2007). The Effects of Knowledge and Attitudes upon Greeks' Pro-environmental Purchasing Behaviour. *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*, Vol. 14, pp. 121-134.
- Tull, D. S. & Hawkins, D. I. (1993), *Marketing Research*, Sixth edition, McMillan, New York.

- Watkins, E. (1994). Do Guests Want Green Hotels? *Lodging Hospitality*, Vol. 50, No. 4, pp. 70-72.
- Weeden, C. (2002). Ethical Tourism: An Opportunity for Competitive Advantage? *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 141-153.
- World Tourism Organization / WTO (2001). Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (GCET). <http://www.bmw.de/BMWi/Redaktion/PDF/G/global-code-of-ethics-englisch,property=pdf,bereich=bmw2012,sprache=de,rwb=true.pdf>. Accessed the 21st September 2012, at 13:48.
- World Tourism Organization / WTO (2012). Sustainable Tourism Development Conceptual Definition. <http://sdt.unwto.org/en/category/internal-programmes/public/unwto/sustainable-development-tourism> Accessed the 21st September 2012, at 13:50.
- Zikmund, W. G. (1991), *Exploring Marketing Research*, Fourth edition, The Dryden Press, Orlando

SUBMITTED: JUL 2013

REVISION SUBMITTED: OCT 2013

ACCEPTED: NOV 2013

REFEREED ANONYMOUSLY

Irene Tilikidou (etilik@mkt.teithe.gr) is a Professor at the Alexander Technological Educational Institute, Thessaloniki Greece, Department of Marketing, P.O. Box 141, 57400, Thessaloniki, Greece.

Antonia Delistavrou (adelis@mkt.teithe.gr) is a Lecturer at the Alexander Technological Educational Institute, Thessaloniki Greece, Department of Marketing, P.O. Box 141, 57400, Thessaloniki, Greece.

Christos Sarmaniotis (xsarman@mkt.teithe.gr) is a Professor at the Alexander Technological Educational Institute, Thessaloniki Greece, Department of Marketing, P.O. Box 141, 57400, Thessaloniki, Greece.