

Special Issue on
Interdisciplinary Aspects of
Tourism

Guest Editor
Professor Theano S. Terkenli
University of the Aegean



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TOURISMOS

An International Multidisciplinary Journal of Tourism

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RESEARCH PAPERS:

GAY AND LESBIAN TOURISM – IN SEARCH OF GAY SPACE?

Elia-Nikoleta Apostolopoulou

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The paper explores existing published work related to gay and lesbian tourism motivations. Following, the findings of a small-scale quantitative study regarding the profile of the Greek gay and lesbian tourists and their motivations when choosing a holiday destination and accommodation are presented. The paper concludes that lesbians are less prone to travel to well-known gay destinations compared to gays and that both avoid homophobic destinations. In terms of accommodation and destination choice, sexuality is not the most decisive factor, although it plays a more important role for gays. Revealing the motivations of the gay and lesbian niche market can help develop an effective marketing strategy.

APPROACHING COMPETITIVE STRATEGIES AND HUMAN
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN CITY HOTELS

Miltiadis Floras & Dr. Theodoros A. Stavrinoudis

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In this paper the implementation of Human Resources Management (HRM) practices related to hospitality selection, staffing and job design is to be explored according to the hotels' business strategy categorization. The HRM practices are also tested for any positive effects on specific performance variables. Schuler's and Jackson's (1987) typology was used to capture the strategic groups (Othman and Ismail, 1996; Wei, 2006; Liao, 2005; Kelliher and Perret, 2001) in the hospitality sector (Tavitiyaman et al., 2012; Alleyne et al., 2006; Hogue, 2000). HRM practices were adopted by Kim Hogue's (2000) research in Great Britain's hospitality and tertiary sector, while the selection of variables measuring the hotels' performance was based

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on relevant scientific literature (Tzafrir, 2006; Liao, 2005; Tseng and Lee, 2009; Azmi, 2010; Stavrou et al., 2007; Wang and Syu, 2008). The survey's outcomes highlight the need of hotels' to focus on the proper selection and staffing systems-procedures. The differentiations among the strategic groups, according to the implementation of HRM practices, are pointed out and discussed.

AN EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION IN TOURISTIC ISLANDS: THE ROLE OF GREEN TRANSPORT

Andreas Papatheodorou, John A. Paravantis & Amalia Polydoropoulou 40

Tourism is a global high consumption industry with important sustainability implications. Given the strong link between tourism and transport, this research analyses the opinion of local authorities and stakeholders to help promote sustainable transport in the touristic islands of Chios and Lesbos, in the Aegean Sea, in Greece. The attitudes of stakeholders towards the current state of tourism, future targets of the tourism industry and ways that green transport may assist the local tourism industry achieve these targets, were analyzed. A total of 82 completed questionnaires were collected from public consultations in Chios and Lesbos. Tourism seasonality, an emphasis on sun and sea, the small size of tourist enterprises and pressure from tour operators were seen as problems of the existing situation of the tourist industry. Stakeholders considered the independent operation of local institutions, a reduction of the emphasis on sun and sea tourism as well as an increase in the size of enterprises, important future targets for the tourist industry. Finally, it was established that stakeholders thought that green transport may prove to be particularly helpful with an increase in the size of tourist enterprises, legalization of more unlicensed establishments and less emphasis on sun and sea tourism.

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Ivan Paunović

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The study is a contribution towards identifying major tourism market segments in Serbia. An overview of market shares is presented through

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LAND USE POLICY AND TOURISM: THE CASE OF GREECE

Theano S. Terkenli & Despoina E. Schistou

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Land use changes in Greece are the end product of social shifts and influences, historical developments and changes over time to the land which, combined with the effects of European, national and in particular sectoral policies, have brought about a complex and diverse land situation subject to a variety of continuing pressures. One such pressure is tourism, with various significant consequences for economic and social activities on the land and natural resources. The authors' objective is to explore and briefly analyze both in what ways spatial policies in Greece (including tourism policies) have had an impact on tourism and vice-versa how tourism activities have generally speaking affected land uses in Greece, especially over the last decades.

UNDERGRADUATE TOURISM EDUCATION IN GREECE:
GRADUATES' EMPLOYMENT IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

Evangelia Simantiraki & Irini Dimou

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In this study the authors examine the public tourism education system provided at the tertiary level in Greece by: (a) the Technological Educational Institutes (TEIs) supervised by the Ministry of Education and (b) the Advanced Schools of Tourism Education (ASTE) supervised by the Ministry of Tourism. The aim of the study is to examine whether tourism education graduates are well-qualified, and the extent to which the hospitality industry recruits tourism higher education graduates. For this purpose, a primary research focused on the upscale hotel enterprises in Crete was carried out. The managers of 60 hotels were contacted and were asked to fill a questionnaire that was sent to them by email. Among the issues surveyed were the extent to which these hotels are staffed by higher education tourism graduates and whether the graduates' education meets the industry's needs. In addition, the participants were asked to evaluate the industrial placement which is incorporated in all tertiary-level programs of study. The results of the research indicate that, although tertiary education graduates are considered to be well qualified, they lack certain 'soft skills' which are considered to be very important in this sector.

Moreover, the study reveals that only a minor percentage of hospitality employees (24%) are tourism graduates, an issue that requires further examination. Finally, it is suggested that education providers develop a close and effective cooperation with the tourism bodies, in order to keep track with the new developments in the tourism business, and update the academic curricula constantly to fit the industry's needs.

BASIC QUESTIONS OF ECOTOURISM IN GREECE: DEMAND AND SUPPLY, MANAGEMENT BODIES, ENTERPRISES

*Sofia Avgerinou-Kolonias, Anastasia Toufengopoulou
& Ioannis Spyropoulos*

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The review and assessment of the ecotourism-related literature reveals confusion as regards the definition of ecotourism, its basic features, its activities and the principles governing it. The absence of a definition generally acceptable by the academic community, those shaping and

those exercising politics and, in general, all parties involved in the tourist system, has led to the absence of reliable data about the current size of the sector. This paper is not aimed at providing another answer to the question "what ecotourism is?" or "which activities does it comprise?", but at demonstrating the multifaceted character of the phenomenon and highlighting the various aspects each approach focuses on, with a view to exploring, afterwards, its development prospects, focused on the data of the Greek reality. In this context, the methodological approach applied consists in the following steps: i) Secondary research of the literature on the theoretical framework, ii) Primary research concerning the characteristics of ecotourism in Greece: the features of ecotourist demand and supply, the features of ecotourism organisation and management and, last but not least, the bodies and enterprises involved in the ecotourist development process, iii) Synthetic analysis and assessment of the literature and the field study. The conclusions aspire to lead to answers about the factors that are critical for the development and organization of ecotourism in Greece.

SOCIAL MEDIA AS A MARKETING TOOL FOR GREEK DESTINATIONS

Emmanouil Perakakis, Nikolaos Trihas, Marinos Venitourakis, George Mastorakis & Ioannis Kopanakis

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Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) have to redefine their marketing strategies, in order to meet current challenges in tourism, such as the emergence of new tourism destinations, the intense competition, the change in the motivations and preferences of tourists, as well as the global economic crisis. On the other hand, social media are gaining prominence, as a cost effective marketing tool with high returns. In this respect, the aim of this paper is to investigate the use of social media among 325 municipalities in Greece for destination marketing purposes. The results show that Greek municipalities just begin to recognize the added value of this new marketing trend, since social media exploitation is still very limited and largely experimental. Subsequently, the social media strategy of the Greek Municipality of Ierapetra – ‘Visit Ierapetra’ – is analyzed and presented. In the analysis, social media usage patterns were identified that could serve as good practices for other municipalities in Greece, at a time when

public sector cuts in their funding are requiring them to seek greater value in the way marketing budgets are spent. Findings and discussion of this study are useful to industry practitioners and academic researchers interested in the use of social media in destination marketing.

FACTORS AFFECTING AN ISLAND'S IMAGE AS PERCEIVED BY TOURISM DEMAND AND SUPPLY

Ioanna Tsoka, Vasilis Angelis & Katerina Dimaki

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The development and competitiveness of a tourism destination is subject to its ability to attract tourists – willing to visit the place - and tour operators – willing to promote the destination. This ability depends on a number of factors affecting the image of the destination. A literature review reveals that most of the studies referring to tourism destinations focus on the factors attracting tourists, i.e. the demand side and very few on the factors attracting the supply side.

The objective of this paper is to identify, for the case of island destinations, the common factors i.e. those which affect both demand and supply side and hence determine what we shall be referring to as the destination's Basic Image and the specific factors i.e. those which affect one of the sides only and hence, together with the Basic Image, determine what we shall be referring to as the destination's Specific Images as perceived by the two sides respectively.

WELLNESS TOURISM: INTEGRATING SPECIAL INTEREST TOURISM WITHIN THE GREEK TOURISM MARKET

Magdalini Vasileiou, Paris Tsartas & Marianthi Stogiannidou

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Tourism industry in the past two decades is increasingly subsuming the identity of an experience industry. Within the framework of the global crisis, Greece seeks for a way of rejuvenating, differentiating and upgrading in quality a "tired" tourism product within a broader framework of an enriched tourism product in terms of special interest tourism development- either as a core product or as a complementary product to the mass tourism model. In particular, wellness tourism in Greece, following the tradition of the past - which related to the

traditional spa- towns-presents a dynamic revival and claims its position in the global tourism market. This paper examines the typology and potentials created through investing in special interest tourism and in particular in the dynamics of Wellness Tourism development in Greece. It examines the main characteristics and typology of a major part of the supply side of the wellness tourism market in Greece. It tries to identify the possible relation of wellness tourism to other special interest tourism types that could support the development of a complex of special interest tourism activities. It aspires to identify the consumer behaviour / motives of the tourists visiting wellness hotels in Greece in order to relate them with the need to invest in rising markets and new ways of wellness tourism marketing management and finally, presents some of the most important problems the Greek wellness tourism market encounters that must be addressed in order to escape form the crisis vortex.

GASTRONOMY, TOURIST EXPERIENCE AND LOCATION. THE CASE OF THE 'GREEK BREAKFAST'

Anna Kyriakaki, Smaragda Zagkotsi & Nikolaos Trihas

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Although in previous decades gastronomy was not considered as an element that could attract tourists, nowadays it is being identified as a 'peak touristic' experience. It acts as a 'pull' factor and can create 'loyal' visitors, thus gastronomy has been used as a core marketing element in different destinations. Gastronomy tourism offers opportunities for communities to integrate tourism and local food systems in order to promote economic development and respond to the specific needs of visitors. It can also be viewed as a source of sustainable tourism which supports local producers and boosts local economies. The 'Greek Breakfast' project is an initiative of the Hellenic Chamber of Hotels, which focuses on the Greek culinary tradition and aims to promote the wealth and authenticity of local agricultural products and gastronomy by uniting hoteliers and local producers. This article aims to investigate the contribution of the use of local agricultural products in tourism as a way to strengthen the tourism sector, enrich tourist experience and promote both the local producers and the cultural tradition of a place. The results of the primary research into the effectiveness of the 'Greek Breakfast' in hotels reveal: a) the strong relationship between agricultural and tourism sector, b) the multiple influences of the use of local products on strengthening

(cultural and economic) of local communities, and c) local gastronomy's contribution to the enrichment of tourist experience.

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Interdisciplinary Aspects of Tourism in SE Europe (at the threshold of the 21st century)

Scholarly and empirical progress in the study of Tourism is well-established and broadly indisputable, in terms of its dimensions, functions, impacts—indeed all of its aspects—just as contemporary global tourism continues to grow and thrive in diversity and transformation. Nonetheless, new forces and factors are increasingly coming to bear on on-going tourism trends and entrenched patterns: terrorism, economic crisis, climatic change, lifestyle changes, etc. All of the latter are opening up new arenas of global tourism demand and supply, as well as diverse challenges and responses to questions of tourism planning, management, research and development—often at interdisciplinary and globalized levels of analysis, policy-making and intervention. There are, then, new instances and circumstances where in-depth study and investigation into the course of such trends is imperative—and such is the *raison-d'être* of this issue. This issue of TOURISMOS specifically delves into and traces interdisciplinary aspects of tourism trends, with a focus on a rather troubled part of the Western world at the outset of the 21st century, Southeastern Europe, fraught by crises, but remaining one of the world's most vibrant tourism destinations.

This special issue was conceived as a due outlet of the research and advances in tourism presented at the 5th International Scientific Conference with the title “Tourism Trends and Advances in the 21st Century”, organized by the Interdepartmental Graduate Program in ‘Tourism Planning, Management and Policy’ and the Laboratory for Tourism Research & Studies (ETEM) of the University of the Aegean, during May 30-June 2, 2013, in Rhodes, Greece. The objectives of the Conference were to capture the growing dynamism of 21st century tourism in this part of the world and to respond to the imperative need to secure its growth in concerted, integrated and sustainable ways. The Conference addressed both internal and external factors impinging on the direction of global tourism growth, bridging the past with the future and making the most of the present. Its

goals and objectives, thus, focused on recent developments in tourism, at all levels and areas of analysis, calling for novel, innovative and often imperative tools, strategies and approaches, for future growth. The thematic areas of the Conference—also reflected in the ten articles included in this special issue—centered on and revolved around the following themes:

1. contemporary tourism challenges; tourism economics; global competition and low-cost companies in tourism; transport and tourism
2. tourism in the service of society (socio-economic, ethical, environmental, cultural, technological etc aspects of tourism); local sustainability and sustainable tourism
3. tourism policy and planning (top-down and bottom-up); tourism impacts on the land/ land uses/ landscape; the role of transnational organizations in tourism and public governance; institutional issues in tourism
4. tourism training and prospects of higher education in tourism
5. special-interest and alternative forms of tourism; the local factor; contemporary Mediterranean Tourism in Greece/ Rhodes
6. tourism theory and research: advances and challenges; perspectives into the future of tourism science; technological and multimedia applications in tourism
7. tourism entrepreneurship, management and marketing: tourism management and management of tourism enterprises; service and quality management in hotels; human resource management in the hospitality sector; strategy and leadership in hotels; marketing tools and strategies

Instead of describing one-by-one the eleven articles included in this collective effort, then, suffice it to state that they embrace and explore all of the above themes, in stimulating new areas of research (such as green transport or the use of social media in tourism marketing) or in established fields of tourism study (such as destination management and tourism training and education). The knowledge and insights offered by this undertaking are hoped to constitute a significant contribution to Tourism Studies and to lay the ground for further research and investigation into interdisciplinary aspects of tourism, in this part of the world, into the 21st century.