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An International Multidisciplinary Journal of Tourism

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E-BUSINESS ADOPTION IN SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZED TOURISM FIRMS IN IRAN: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

Zahed Shafiei & Manizheh Karoubi

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Information technologies play a vital part in managing a tourism firm efficiently. As SMEs form the major share of tourism industry, they are increasingly adopting e-business to benefit from its numerous advantages. However, to adopt e-business, SMEs may encounter a plenty of challenges and find it not a trouble-free path. In Iran, by growing the number of internet users, more and more tourism SMEs are adopting e-business, to enhance their competitive advantage in the market. The paper is aimed to explore the challenges and prospects of e-business adoption by travel and tourism SMEs in Iran, and role of government in facilitating the process. To serve the purpose, mixed method is adopted to identify these barriers and benefits. The results of an in-depth interview with e-tourism experts and tourism SMEs' managers, and a questionnaire containing close-ended questions showed that macro-level challenges are of the major importance, and the benefits fell into to marketing strategies and e-CRM categories.

OBLIQUITY IN TOURISM ECONOMICS: SMART AND SUSTAINABLE TOURIST DESTINATIONS

José Francisco Perles-Ribes & Ana Belén Ramón-Rodríguez

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Obliquity describes the process of achieving complex objectives indirectly. The recent emergence of the concept and paradigm of intelligent or smart tourist destinations has given rise to a proliferation, often driven by publicly and privately financed technologically-based companies, of initiatives to convert many tourism destinations into smart tourism destinations (STDs). In theory, the concept of the smart tourist destination includes different levels of action in the environmental, social and technological fields, directed at enhancing the satisfaction and experience of tourists. However, in many practical applications of the concept only the latter level is addressed and the other dimensions are neglected. This article argues that the STDs represent the first real opportunity to make the concept of sustainable tourism operational. This argument is based on the fact that for the first time, the intensive use of technology involved in implementing an STD will enable the continuous measurement of aspects related to sustainability which, until now, in the absence of this technology, were difficult or impossible to measure, and therefore, manage.

TOURISM DESTINATION-COMPETENCY AS AN ANTECEDENT TO TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS' ENGAGEMENT AT THE DESTINATION

Sabira Nalakath & Moli P. Koshy

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Stakeholders in tourism are broadly classified as players of supply-side and demand-side. The comparative and competitive advantage that a destination possesses over similar other destinations heighten the engagement and commitment of supply-side stakeholders for further investment in the tourism sector and thereby business enlargement at the destination. Thus, framing proper stakeholder management policies and strategies are important for any tourist destination to enhance and sustain its competitiveness in both domestic and international markets. This article presents an analytical framework to explore whether tourism destination competitiveness with a mediating effect of destination-supplier fit lead to supply-side stakeholders' engagement at the destination which could facilitate a clearer understanding of the nature of tourism stakeholders' reactions to tourism, so that the results could help tourism planners and policy-makers to develop more appropriate destination products as well as to enhance competitiveness in tourism markets in turn.

INFLUENCE OF WORKING AGE IN ORGANIZATION ON EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTION OF IMPORTANCE OF BASIC TOURISM POLICY TYPES IN CULTURAL TOURISM

Aleksa Š. Vučetić & Snežana Milošević

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The study tries to find out the influence of working age in the organization on employees' perception of the importance of basic tourism policy types in cultural tourism. The main aim is to find significant differences between employees' ages of working in the organization and basic tourism policy types in the sector of cultural tourism in Montenegro. Data were collected online, and multivariate analysis of variance was used. The study outcome points out a significant difference between the youngest and the oldest employees in organizations about the perception of supplementary tourism policy in cultural tourism. This research could be a good example for future researchers in the field of employees in organizations of cultural tourism and basic tourism policy types.

THE ROLE OF FOLK CULTURE IN THE PROMOTING TOURISM

Moh. Karmin Baruadi, Sunarty Eraku & Syahrizal Koem

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Gorontalo City embodies highly valuable tourism potentials to reveal. The city offers not only physical attractions for the tourists to please their eyes but also values of the objects that live along with the highlighted events within the historical timeline. Among the historical objects is Otanaha Fort, a tourist spot in Gorontalo, named after the place's feature of historical legend. Many believe that stories and legends behind the naming of a place or an object are highly

related to the socio-cultural life of the ancient society. With that in mind, a study is essential to carry out and to reveal the historical events that lie behind tourism objects with the aims of enriching insights of local people. Such an effort is undertaken as a support of local contents acquisition to be capable of extending the information of a tourism object for the locals.

The study aims to carry out the historical overview of Otanaha Fort as a supporting element of cultural tourism in Gorontalo. The researchers employed field survey and interview to obtain the data and folklore analysis to approach the research object. The result shows that the folklore of Otanaha Fort is a manifestation of features of social events of Gorontalo in the ancient times that depict the record of past events. The historical facts are further packaged in the form of imaginative fable for people to enjoy as an act of historical preservation. The evidence of the historical facts is observable by data tracking within the naming process of the objects, site or tombstone of influential figures of the story, preservation of address of traditional titles related to the figures, and distinct building techniques observable in the fort' architecture.

A CASE FOR USING OF SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS IN TOURISM MARKETING STUDIES

Nuno Baptista

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The aim of this research note is to present an overview of the application of social network analysis in tourism marketing studies. The objectives are to discuss the application of this research tool in field of tourism marketing studies, identify theoretical benefits, main contributors and core research streams. Based on these, we present relevant research gaps and the identification of research opportunities for future application of social network analysis in tourism marketing studies.

DETERMINING THE EFFICIENCY OF TOURISM INDUSTRY IN CHABAHAR FREE ZONE BY USING DATA ENVELOPMENT ANALYSIS (DEA) METHOD

Ali Sardar Shahraki & Saba Baharvandi

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Basically, many developed any developing countries need to expand tourism activities for accessing to the goals of national economic development and attracting foreign funds, therefore evaluating the efficiency of tourism industry can have significant help in recognizing the existed tourism potentials. The Chabahar zone in spite of numerous potential abilities in attracting domestic and foreign tourists and despite the fact that it is known as one of the important poles of tourism in Iran, but it is not so successful in attracting tourists. The present research has been provided to access to the efficiency of tourism industry in this area. For analyzing the information, the Data Envelopment

Analysis Method (DEA) have been used. According to the results, the technical, management and scale efficiencies are 0.58, 0.69 and 0.84 percent respectively. It is suggested to strengthen the marketing, advertising and doing appropriate transportation infrastructure by employing manpower and efficient and expert management.

**PROMOTING EDEN DESTINATIONS IN BULGARIA –
THE WAY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM**

Krasimira Yancheva & Desislava Dimitrova

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The European Destinations of Excellence (EDEN) initiative provides the opportunity to enhance the visibility and recognition of emerging European tourist destinations, to create a platform for exchanging good practices at European level and to promote a network between award-winning destinations that could lead other destinations to adopt the model for sustainable development of tourism.

The EDEN project is an excellent option for destinations that do not have the necessary financial funds but want to develop tourism. It provides a chance for every tourist product to be advertised free of charge in the other EU Member States.

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EDITORIAL

The issue comprises eight (10) papers on various aspects of tourism. In the first paper **Nguyen Minh Huan** aimed to identify the most frequently cited hospitality scholars from 2006 to 2015. For this purpose two journals, International Journal of Hospitality Management and International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, were reviewed. Then a productivity analysis was conducted based on the repeated authorship, author affiliation, and research contribution. In the second paper **Conceição Castro** detected and analyzed the most significant motives that may lead someone to start a business in a rural tourism destination. Family and personal success indicated as the most important motivators by the study. Then researcher surveyed the problems and barriers that entrepreneurs in Northern Portugal have to face. The research results identified bureaucracy, lack of financial support and information as the most important obstacles. Then **Zahed Shafiei and Manizheh Karoubi** explored the challenges and prospects of e-business adoption by travel and tourism SMEs in Iran. They also analyzed the role of government as a facilitator in the process of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) adoption by the SMEs. A mixed method research process that compines qualitative and quantitative research was employed to serve the research aims.

In the fourth paper, **José Francisco Perles-Ribes and Ana Belén Ramón-Rodríguez** interlinked the concept of smart tourism destinations (STDs) with sustainable tourism development. According to the authors, the concept of STDs is the first real opportunity to make sustainable tourism operational as the intensive use of technology involved in STD allows the continuous measurement of indicators related to sustainability. Then, **Sabira Nalakath and Moli P. Koshy** are concerned with the role of the supply-side stakeholders in tourism destination's competitiveness. The study presents an analytical framework grounded on social exchange theory according to which destination competency and stakeholder destination fit is significantly important for stakeholder engagement in the destination. In the sixth

paper, **Aleksa Š. Vučetić and Snežana Milošević** aimed to detect on the influence of employees' working age in the organization on the perception of the importance of basic tourism policy types in the sector of cultural tourism. The study was concentrated in the case of Montenegro. In what follows, **Moh. Karmin Baruadi, Sunarty Eraku and Syahrizal Koem** attempted to reveal the historical facts behind tourist objects to enrich the knowledge of the locals. They employed a field survey and interview to obtain the data that would produce the historical overview of Otanaha Fort that constitutes a supporting element of cultural tourism in Gorontalo. The results show that the folklore of Otanaha Fort was a manifestation of features of social events of Gorontalo in the ancient times that depict the record of past events.

Subsequently, **Nuno Baptista conducted a research to** present the application of social network analysis in tourism marketing studies. theoretical benefits, main contributors and core research streams of this approach are examined and analyzed. In the ninth paper, **Ali Sardar Shahraki and Saba Baharvandi** studied the case of Chabahar zone where in spite of its potentials in attracting domestic and foreign tourists and to become an important pole of tourism in Iran, it has not been successful in attracting tourists. The Data Envelopment Analysis Method (DEA) was adopted and points of improvement were highlighted. Finally, Krasimira Yancheva and Desislava Dimitrova presented the European Destinations of Excellence (EDEN) initiative and analyzed the EDEN destinations of Bulgaria. This paper also mentions the opportunities to promote and develop the EDEN destinations of Bulgaria as a way to improve sustainable development of tourism in the country.