

*Special Issue on*  
Interdisciplinary Aspects of  
Tourism

*Guest Editor*  
Professor Theano S. Terkenli  
University of the Aegean



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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*

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*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.*

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*Magdalini Vasileiou, Paris Tsartas & Marianthi Stogiannidou*

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*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.*

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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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> century.



## GAY AND LESBIAN TOURISM – IN SEARCH OF GAY SPACE?

Elia-Nikoleta Apostolopoulou  
University of the Aegean

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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.*

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**Keywords:** *gay tourism, lesbian tourism, gay space, gay identity, motivation*

### INTRODUCTION

Although gay men and women have always travelled, it is only in the last 15 years that scholars have tentatively started to look into the relationship between gay men and tourism mostly, as women remain neglected (Holcomb and Luongo, 1996). Similarly, tourism professionals ignored the gay and lesbian travel market, until it became evident that the so-called “pink pound” or “pink dollar” implied increased revenue.

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This initiated an effort in part of the tourism businesses to cater for the gay and lesbian clientele and was based on a widespread belief that this market has distinct travel preferences and motivations dictated mainly by their sexual orientation. There is a widespread view that gays have up-scale characteristics and are heavy holiday-makers. This profile, however, does not apply to the entire Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community; lesbians are assumed to have different travel patterns and so are older gays among others. The surveys are inevitably biased towards gays who are more easily accessible, that is gays that are out and attend specific events (Hughes, 2004).

Such perceptions are reinforced by annual marketing data, such as the Community Marketing reports. According to the 2012 LGBT Tourism Demographic Profile the median LGBT traveler is gay, 47 years old, holds a bachelor's degree and works full time; he lives with his partner and together they have a household income of \$115.000; he took 4.7 trips last year and almost always uses the internet to plan and book travel. However, the reliability of such data has been questioned. Although CMI's research panel consists of 5,700 respondents, they are all US based and represent consumers who are interacting with the LGBT community through media outlets, organizations and events (Community Marketing Inc., 2012).

Within the frameworks of a wider on-going research on LGBT tourism in Greece, some first findings will be presented and analyzed. The paper attempts to shed some light on the profile of the Greek gay and lesbian tourists and their motivations when choosing a holiday destination and accommodation. This is part of a wider research that assumes that gay and lesbian tourism is a discrete tourism market with differentiated motives and needs.

As for the terms used in this paper, it should be noted that homosexual is assumed to be a biological term, while gay is a term used to describe homosexual men and women and lesbian is a specific term for gay women (Valentine and Skelton, 2003).

Therefore, the word "gay" will be used with reference to homosexual men and the word "lesbian" for homosexual women. Gay tourism is a term used to describe the tourism activity for both gays and lesbians.

## **TOURISM AND GAY IDENTITY**

Consumption and especially leisure activity is assumed to play a decisive role in the formation and validation of individual identity (Wearing and Wearing, 1992). Gay identity is a term used to describe both gay and lesbian identity. Although the acceptance of the gay identity may be a personal matter, its validation is a result of interaction with others, i.e. the sense of belonging to a community with the same characteristics and of being different from the people outside the community (Hughes, 1997; 2006).

The social constraints, often evident in home environments do not allow gays and lesbians to perform their identities. To establish and validate their identity, gay men and lesbians are often forced to travel to places where they can have access to gay space. Under this light, Hughes argues that the search for gay identity is a form of tourism (Hughes, 1997). The salience of holidays is even greater for those who have not come-out. According to Howe (2001) gay tourism is a kind of pilgrimage in search of the individual identity (Waittand Markwell, 2006).

## **TOURISM AND GAY SPACE**

Inextricably connected to the issue of gay identity is that of gay space. Gay space consists of a spatially discrete concentration of cafes, restaurants, bars, clubs, shops and residences; a public space where gays and lesbians are allowed to be affectionate and show intimacy (Myslik, 1996). They gay and lesbian space is usually the place where young gays and lesbians come-out, it offers support groups and the opportunity to meet people like themselves and develop a social network. It is the place where identities can be expressed and validated through the gaze of others (Valentine and Skelton, 2003).

Gay space develops most often in places where there is also a gay population and liberal attitudes towards homosexuality (Pritchard, Morgan and Sedgely, 1998). The development of gay space has functioned as a

measure of cosmopolitanism and tolerance for the modern city (Rushbrook, 2002). The lack of gay space in non-urban, non-metropolitan settings explains the strong association between gay identity and tourism. For some gays and lesbians, holidays may be their only opportunity to be openly themselves and behave as such. It is simultaneously a pull factor for gay tourists and a push factor, when it is absent from home (Hughes, 1997).

Gay tourism functions in a reciprocal way nowadays: it is about seeing and being seen. Gay tourists visit gay spaces as a tourist sight and simultaneously they become a sight themselves for the mainstream tourists, i.e. an attraction (Giorgi, 2002). Gradually gay space is undergoing a process of touristification, with the heterosexual gaze, introducing a “heterosexual invasion” and often re-establishing their hegemony over gay space and leading to its de-gaying. It is a contested space, where the homosexual and heterosexual identity conflict, while its establishment challenges the heterosexual norm (Pritchard, Morgan and Sedgely, 1998; 2002).

The development of the gay space has introduced new forms of marginalization and exclusion; it does not welcome the older, the women, the racial minorities or the less affluent (Rushbrook, 2002). Gay tourism, given gay visibility and lesbian invisibility, reflects and reproduces the gender inequalities visible in travel in general terms (Giorgi, 2002). Women are doubly marginalized, as women and homosexuals, in the tourism literature. The established community of gay men does not welcome lesbians in the gay space (Pritchard, Morgan and Sedgely, 2002).

Lesbians are less frequent users of the gay space because on the one hand it is male dominated and thus perceived as unsafe and on the other hand women have a greater tendency to rely on private social networks for leisure and identity validation (Hughes, 2007). “Lesbian identity is less focused on sexual activity or consumption in the way gay men’s is” (Hughes, 2007, pp. 21). Lesbian spaces are characterized as time-spaces, because they do not exist permanently, but are places temporarily transformed into lesbian spaces for specific days and at specific times. Lesbian venues are less visible and commercial than gay venues (Valentine and Skelton, 2003).

## **THE GAY AND LESBIAN TOURIST: LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL TRANSEXUAL (LGBT) HOLIDAY MOTIVATIONS**

In 1998, it was already evident that at least the gay travel market consists of upscale, well-educated and free spending visitors, gay-friendly travel companies had expanded and gay destinations had begun to emerge. However, the gay and lesbian travel market is not a homogenous segment: not all wish to travel to a gay-friendly destination or take exclusively gay vacations, but certainly they wish to avoid being excluded from any destination (Pritchard, Morgan and Sedgely, 1998).

One of the first empirical studies on the holiday motivations of gay men is Clift and Forrest's research working with a sample of British gay men. The study revealed that gay men traveled to well-known gay destinations, urban and coastal, but to other destinations as well. Regarding the holiday motivations of gay men, the majority is motivated by factors similar to the straight tourists; comfort, good food and relaxation. One third of the respondents rated the gay dimension of a holiday as important. On the whole, respondents having visited a gay destination were more motivated by opportunities to socialize with other gay men (Clift and Forrest, 1999a).

Pritchard et al. conducted interviews and focus groups with gay and lesbian residents in Wales and the Netherlands and concluded that sexuality influenced holiday choices. The most important factors for travelling were the need for escape, for a sense of belonging and safety and the opportunity to be oneself, factors not that different from their straight counterparts. However, in the case of gay and lesbian tourists these factors were directly associated with their sexuality. Furthermore, gay holidays seem to be much different than lesbian holidays, with the first having a strong association with sex and the body. Thus, women have a feeling of being neglected by the travel industry (Pritchard, et al., 2000).

Hughes conducted a research regarding gay men's destination avoidance and choice in 2002 based on a small number of semi-structured interviews with gay men in Manchester. The researcher developed a typology of gay

men's holiday ranging from non-gay holidays, to gay-related and finally gay-centric holidays. Generally the gay men follow the same holiday patterns as the rest of the society and have a minimum requirement that a destination is either gay-friendly or has gay space. More important was the motivation to avoid destinations that were perceived to be intolerant to homosexuality (Hughes, 2002b).

Drawing the attention to on-site travel experiences, Poria conducted a qualitative research exploring the hotel experiences of gays and lesbians in the UK and in Israel. Gays and lesbians wish to be treated in the same way as their straight counterparts. Furthermore, they are interested in services associated with their lifestyle and sexuality (late breakfast, proximity of gay space, double bed allocation), and in issues concerning their personal safety (Poria, 2006).

Focusing on the neglected issue of age and sexual orientation, Hughes and Deutsch investigated the motivations of older gay men. They adopted a qualitative approach with semi-structured interviews with gay men over 35 living in the UK. The results reveal that older gay men are interested in renewing old and making new friendships, wish to have access to gay space, stay at a gay-friendly hotel and avoid homophobic places and situations, while sexual activity didn't appear to be a decisive factor for travelling. They are not satisfied with the gay holiday packages offered by gay tour operators, as they are sex-oriented and expensive and confirmed a need for diversity of gay travel products (Hughes and Deutsch, 2010).

## **METHODOLOGY**

Purpose of the study was to assess the travel motivations and patterns of Greek gay and lesbian tourists. To this end a quantitative research was conducted with the use of a self-administered questionnaire with mostly closed-ended questions and a couple of open-ended questions.

### **Questionnaire design**

The questionnaire consisted of 23 questions and was structured in 4 sections. The section "General travel attitudes" included questions on travel frequency, on average stay by type of accommodation, expenditure, seasonality and preferable booking methods. Section "Tourist accommodation" included questions on motivators influencing accommodation choice and staff's behavior. Section "Tourist destinations" included among others questions on popular destinations, factors influencing destination choice and media influences. The last section of the questionnaire was "Demographics".

### **Sample and data collection**

Sampling for the LGBT community is a particularly problematic issue, since there are no official data in Greece regarding the size of the population. There is a widespread view that the LGBT population constitutes the 10% of the entire population based mostly on the Kinsey reports on human sexual behavior: *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (1948) and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (1953) by Alfred Kinsey (<http://www.kinseyinstitute.org/research/ak-data.html#homosexuality>, accessed 13/06/2013). However, this view hasn't been confirmed by other studies and has been the subject of considerable criticism (Binson et al., 2007). The sampling technique employed was snowballing. Although, this method has a number of disadvantages, in the case of hard-to-reach or socially stigmatized populations it appears to be an almost indispensable method.

Conducting an ethnographic research would have probably shed more light on the understanding of the population's motives and behavior and the decision-making process. However, such a research would also introduce subjectivity to the analysis of the data. Even more importantly, the presence of the researcher within the community of the gay and lesbians would have influenced their behavior and answers regarding their travel motives. The latter becomes more evident when taking into consideration the fact that the researcher is not herself a lesbian, which provides though the research with an objective perspective. Probability sampling would have allowed for generalization of the findings to a larger population, but this involves

estimating the size of the population. Since the national census in Greece doesn't yet include questions related the sexual identity or behavior, such data is unavailable. The use of large samples can partially overcome the problem of selection bias (Atkinson and Flint, 2001).

In total 100 questionnaires of Greek gay and lesbian travelers were completed. Initial respondents were identified through the researcher's friends and acquaintances and at the OutviewLGBT Film Festival in Athens (18th to 28th April 2013).

## **RESULTS**

### **Sample characteristics**

A total of 100 questionnaires were completed, 98% of whom had completed all the sections. Men and women not identifying themselves as gays or lesbians were excluded prior to analysis, leaving a sample size of 82 questionnaires. Respondents excluded were those identified as heterosexual/straight, bisexual, queer or trans. Gay men represented 62.2% of the sample, while lesbians 37.8%. The quota for the general population in Greece is 49.2% men and 50.8% women ([http://el.wikipedia.org/wiki/%CE%94%CE%B7%CE%BC%CE%BF%CE%B3%CF%81%CE%B1%CF%86%CE%AF%CE%B1\\_%CF%84%CE%B7%CF%82\\_%CE%95%CE%BB%CE%BB%CE%AC%CE%B4%CE%B1%CF%82](http://el.wikipedia.org/wiki/%CE%94%CE%B7%CE%BC%CE%BF%CE%B3%CF%81%CE%B1%CF%86%CE%AF%CE%B1_%CF%84%CE%B7%CF%82_%CE%95%CE%BB%CE%BB%CE%AC%CE%B4%CE%B1%CF%82), accessed at 5/7/2013). This mismatch may be explained by the fact that gays are assumed to be more than lesbians; the 2011 Census data by the Office for National Statistics, UK indicate that lesbians represent 31.8% and gays 68.2% of the total gay and lesbian population (Office for National Statistics, 2011). Along the same line, the Community Marketing Report indicates that only 25% of their sample was lesbians, while gays accounted for the 74% (Community Marketing Inc., 2012).

In order to make up for this misrepresentation between gays and lesbians a sample weight has been applied with the use of SPSS only for the tables and figures where information is presented comparatively for gays and lesbians.

Table 1 reports information on the age, partnership, education, residence and employment status of respondents in the sample.

**Table 1:** Characteristics of gay and lesbian respondents

<b>Age group (n=82)</b>	<b>%</b>
18-24	19,5
25-34	42,7
35-44	23,2
45-64	14,7
<b>Partnership (n=82)</b>	
Single	45,1
Withpartner, livingseparately	32,9
Withpartner, livingtogether	22,0
<b>Education (n=82)</b>	
High schoolgraduate	19,5
Technical/tradecourse	8,5
College	12,2
Bachelor'sdegree	29,3
Master'sdegree	25,6
Doctoraldegree	4,9
<b>Residence (n=82)</b>	
Largecity	89,0
Smallcity	6,1
Village/countryside	4,9
<b>Employment (n=82)</b>	
Full-time in the private sector	18,3
Part-timeprivatesector	9,8
Full-time in the public sector	15,9
Part-timepublicsector	3,7
Freelancer/Entrepreneur	22,0
Student	19,5
Pensioner	3,7

Networking

7,3

There is an overrepresentation of ages 25-34 (42.7%), most respondents are single (45.1%) and have received a high education (54.9% hold a bachelor's or master's degree). Furthermore, the population in the sample is almost exclusively urban and 47.6% of the respondents are private or public sector employers. Within the sample, gays are slightly more educated than lesbians.

## Destinations

The questionnaire included an open-ended question on destinations visited within the last five years in Greece; in Europe and outside Europe, as well as destinations the respondent intends to visit within the next three years. The fact that this question was open-ended resulted in answers including countries, cities and islands. Definitely there are huge differences and particularities among these tourist destinations. However, a closed-ended question in this instance would have suggested a restricted range of destinations, selected with the researcher's criteria.

**Figure 1: Popular destinations**

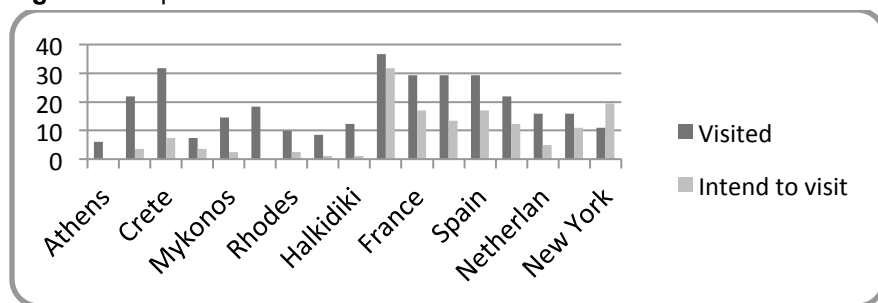
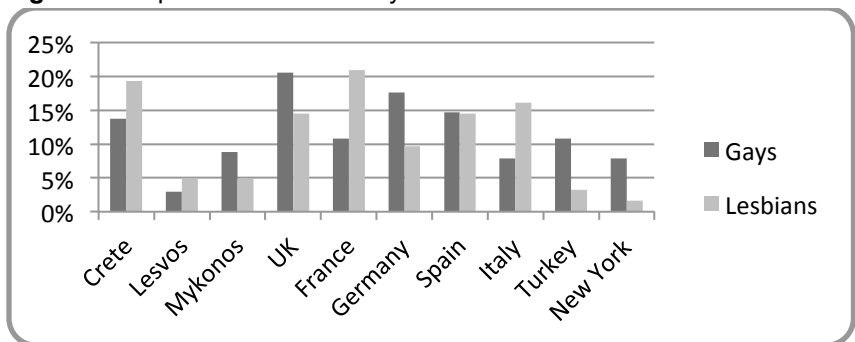


Figure 1 presents the most popular destinations as mentioned by all respondents. The black bar indicates the places already visited by gay and lesbian tourists and the grey bar the destinations they plan to visit. The most popular destinations in Greece are Crete, Thessaloniki, Paros and Mykonos. However, Mykonos and Lesbos don't seem to be as popular as expected

taking into consideration their reputation as gay and lesbian destinations respectively. Abroad, UK is by far the most visited destination and most importantly respondents intend to travel to the country again. France, Germany and Spain rank also very high and interestingly New York although not a much visited destination is one of the top destinations gays and lesbians plan to visit.

Regarding the special motivations of visitors of the above destinations, Crete is more popular with tourists looking for sea and sun, archaeological and cultural sites and local culture, while Thessaloniki is more popular with tourists seeking holiday and good food, rest and relaxation and getting away from other people. Lesvos attracts more tourists looking for rest and relaxation, sea and sun, archaeological and cultural sites, convenient and cheap holiday package and getting away from other people. Lesvos is a significant tourist destination especially for middle class and low-income Greek lesbians who cannot afford to travel to renowned lesbian resorts (Kantsa, 2002). Visitors motivated by sea and sun, gay and lesbian night life and getting away from other people will more probably have visited Mykonos and Paros, while gays and lesbians looking for gay night life will choose UK and Spain. Italy is mostly popular for the archaeological and cultural sites.

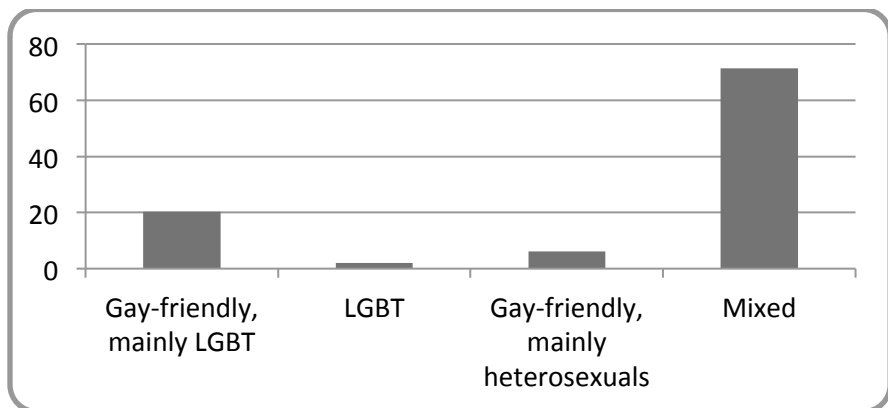
**Figure 2: Popular destinations by sexual orientation**



Data on figure 2 demonstrate that Crete (19.3%), France (20.9%), Italy (16.1%) and Lesvos (4.8%) are more popular with lesbians, while Mykonos

(8.8%), UK (20.6%), Germany (17.7%), Turkey (10.8%) and New York (7.9%) are more popular with gays.

**Figure 3:** Preferable composition of visitors at tourist destinations



Respondents were also asked what the preferable composition of visitors at tourist destinations was. As shown in figure 3, a great majority (71.5%) would prefer a mixed composition of people, followed by a 20.3% that would prefer to be around gay-friendly, mainly LGBT people.

### Motivations

**Table 2:** Factors influencing accommodation choice by sexual orientation

	Gays	Lesbians
Price	3,69	3,65
Referral from friend	3,30	3,00
Internet access	2,96	2,10
Gay-friendly reputation	2,90	2,63
Location	2,82	2,77

<b>Review of accommodation</b>	2,80	2,77
<b>Location near LGBT neighborhood</b>	2,60	2,27
<b>Advertising in LGBT print and/or Internet media</b>	2,31	2,03
<b>Affiliation/rating with gay-friendly organizations</b>	2,27	2,20
<b>Restaurant</b>	1,90	1,55
<b>Pool</b>	1,82	1,69
<b>Availability of gay/lesbian entertainment</b>	1,78	1,47
<b>Loyalty program/points</b>	1,65	1,27
<b>Hotel gym</b>	1,45	1,20

Respondents were given a 4-point Likert scale, where 1 indicated not at all influencing and 4 extremely influencing and asked to indicate the degree to which the above factors were –if at all– influencing when choosing a tourist accommodation. For both gays and lesbians the most important factor is the price of the accommodation and the least important the availability of a hotel gym. Other factors ranking high are referral from a friend, the gay-friendly reputation of the accommodation, on-line review of the accommodation and its location. Gays are more interested than lesbians in internet access, while singles seem to be more interested in the gay-friendly reputation and the proximity of the gay space.

**Table 3:** Factors influencing destination choice by sexual orientation

	<b>Gays</b>	<b>Lesbians</b>
<b>Explore new destinations</b>	3,39	3,10
<b>Convenient and cheap holiday package</b>	3,20	3,26
<b>Getting away from other people</b>	3,18	3,26
<b>Rest and relaxation</b>	3,16	2,90
<b>Local culture</b>	3,16	3,06
<b>Return to favorite destinations</b>	3,06	3,16
<b>Holiday and good food</b>	2,96	2,90
<b>Sea and sun</b>	2,94	2,94
<b>Archaeological and culture sites</b>	2,94	2,84

<b>Well known tourist sights</b>	2,92	2,58
<b>Visit friends/family</b>	2,78	2,48
<b>Mainstream event</b>	2,67	2,48
<b>Gay/lesbian night life</b>	2,65	2,42
<b>Socialization with other gays/lesbians</b>	2,61	2,19
<b>Famous night life</b>	2,55	1,90
<b>Gay/lesbian culture and venues</b>	2,55	2,39
<b>Spontaneous decision</b>	2,45	2,00
<b>Sex</b>	2,35	1,87
<b>Gay/lesbian event</b>	2,31	2,16
<b>Luxury and shopping</b>	2,04	1,58
<b>Adventure trip</b>	1,98	2,10
<b>Gay/lesbian accommodation or cruise</b>	1,92	1,68

Respondents were asked to rate items regarding the decisive factors when choosing a tourist destination in the same 4-point Likert scale. On the whole the most important factor is exploring new destination and the least important, travelling to a gay/lesbian accommodation or on a cruise. Other important factors include booking a convenient and cheap holiday package and getting away from other people. As for the differences between gays and lesbians, gays are more interested in exploring new destinations, while lesbians are more likely to return to a favorite destination. Gays value more rest and relaxation, visiting well-known tourist sights, night-life including gay socialization, and all items associated with their sexual orientation. Lesbians are more likely to book a cheap holiday package and need to get away from other people.

Regarding other characteristics of the respondents in the sample, holiday and good food is more important for respondents 35-44 years old, who are also very interested in rest and relaxation. For a convenient and cheap holiday package will look mostly the young students. Young respondents (18-24 years old) need mostly to get away from other people, while people in a relationship, living together are more likely to return to a favorite destination and look for good food. As expected, singles are interested in gay and lesbian night life.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Destinations**

Despite the small sample size and the fact that a non-probability sampling technique does not allow for generalizations, the study still provides interesting findings, since it is the first of its kind in Greece. Regarding popular destinations, gays and lesbians seem to choose destinations with an established gay scene, mainly abroad, but also resorts, where they can enjoy sun and sea holidays. Among gays the most popular are UK and Germany, among lesbians Crete, France and Italy, while Spain seems to be a favorite destination for both.

Taking into consideration the fact that the majority of gays and lesbians feel more comfortable among a mixed composition of visitors at tourist destinations, we can conclude that gays and lesbians in the sample don't travel exclusively to well-known gay destinations, although none of the destinations visited include homophobic countries.

### **Tourist destination and holiday motivations**

The choice of a holiday destination is above all an exploration of a new destination for gays and lesbians and then booking a convenient and cheap holiday package and getting away from other people. The second factor can be associated with the Greek recession, which has restricted the Greek tourists' ability to pay for high quality services. Gay and lesbians have been described as natural travelers due to their intrinsic need to escape from home and from people to whom they have to conceal their sexual identity. Even for people who are not "in the closet" travelling may entail an exposure to different perspectives on sexuality and sexual identity(Hughes,2006; 2002).

Other important factors influencing the choice of the holiday destination are: returning to a favorite destination, learning the local culture, resting and relaxing and enjoying sea and sun. Gays are more interested in exploring

new destinations, while lesbians in returning to a favorite destination. All in all, gays value more factors associated with their sexual orientation, such as gay and lesbian night life and socialization with other gay men. Although most surveys indicate an increased sexual activity of the LGBT people – mainly the gays- during holidays, sex doesn't seem to score high in the factors influencing destination choice (Clift and Forrest, 1999b).

Youngsters and students, who probably have a lower disposable income are more likely to book a cheap and convenient holiday package and are motivated by their need to get away from other people. Singles are more interested in gay and lesbian night life, while respondents living with their partners are more likely to be repeater tourists. Respondents 35-44 years old are interested on holiday and good food and rest and relaxation mostly.

On the whole, gay and lesbian tourists appear to travel to the same destinations, as their straight counterparts and are motivated by fairly the same factors. However, they need to feel safe and have access to gay space.

### **Tourist accommodation and holiday motivations**

As for the accommodation choice during holidays, price is the most decisive factor. This can be easily explained by the fact that Greece is going through a great recession at the time the study was conducted. Friends' referrals, location and on-line review of the accommodation, gay-friendly reputation and internet access play also a very important role. It is again evident that gays and lesbians are interested in quite the same attributes as straight customers when choosing a tourist accommodation; they only need to feel welcomed regardless of their sexual identity.

When comparing accommodation motivation between gays and lesbians, gays are more interested in internet access, probably due to the fact that men are more intense users of the internet (Ono and Zavodny, 2003). Furthermore, if we take into consideration the available social media and mobile applications, we can assume that gays tend to socialize more through the internet and become more sexually active. The fact that they value high internet access is under this light another factor related to sexual identity. On the whole, gay men pay slightly more attention to attributes associated with their sexual orientation, such as gay-friendly reputation and proximity

to the LGBT neighborhood. The facilities of the accommodation – restaurant, pool gym– are not evaluated when choosing a holiday accommodation.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The study extended the analyses of previous researches on gay and lesbian tourist motivations by focusing for the first time on the Greek market, but also by including lesbians, a group mostly neglected within tourism research.

However, the methodological approach of the paper was different from most studies, as a quantitative research was employed here, in order for the trends and the types of tourists under research to be revealed without the interference of the researcher. Certainly the study suffers representativeness of the sample, as the snowballing technique employed does not allow for generalizations of the findings.

The findings of the study are in the same line with many of the conclusions of other studies in the field but most importantly added some knowledge regarding the motivations of lesbian tourists and their differences from gay tourists. Greek gays and lesbians do not frequent the same holiday destinations, while their sexual identity seems to influence in different ways their accommodation and destination choices. Mykonos, UK and Germany, all destinations with a developed gay scene are very popular with the gay travelers. When choosing accommodation, gays consider the price, friends' referrals, internet access and its reputation as gay-friendly. As for the factors influencing their destination choice, gays are motivated by the need to explore new destinations, the price and quality of the holiday package, the need to get away from other people and to rest and relax.

Lesbians travel more frequently to Crete, France, Italy and Lesbos. The most decisive factors for accommodation choice for lesbian tourists are the price, a friend's referral, the location and the review of the accommodation. When it comes to destination choice the price of the holiday package together with the need to escape from other people are the most important

factors. Lesbian tourists are also frequently repeaters and return to their favorite destinations.

It remains to be seen in comparative studies how the tourism profile of Greek gays and lesbians is different from that of other nationalities, while the tourism of lesbian tourists needs also further and in depth research.

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## APPROACHING COMPETITIVE STRATEGIES AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN CITY HOTELS

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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 on relevant scientific literature (Tzafirir, 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.*

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**Keywords:**hotels, HRM, selection, staffing, job design, performance



## LITERATURE REVIEW

Kim Hoque (2000) argues that in the past, interest on human resources (HR) issues in the hospitality industry was to some extent limited. However, nowadays, through the increased number of researches in HRM new approaches have come forth. Interest focuses, among others, on the affect of HRM practices on organizational performance (Alleyne et al., 2006; Chand and Katou, 2007; Tavitiyaman et al., 2012; Nankervis, 1993), HRM performance (Ahmad et al., 2010; Hogue, 2000; Alleyne et al., 2006), individual HRM practices, such as job satisfaction (Gallardo et al., 2010; Fisher et al., 2010), staff commitment (McGunnigle and Jameson, 2000), and service innovation (Chang et al., 2011).

According to Guerrier and Deery (1998) through their bibliographic research in 156 books and scientific papers, selection and staffing, but also the meaning and content of the strategic management of HR, are frequently explored. Strategic management is a set of processes—approaches to address the competing challenges of tourism enterprises (Noe et al., 2003). Tyson and York (2000) argue that HRM issues must be taken into account at every stage of business strategy formulation. Experience in HRM and the knowhow of strategic planning play a vital role on business outcomes and performance (Thompson and Strickl, 1998). HR executives, who are not aware of the involvement of the activities of HR in strategic needs, will find that this process takes time and persistence in order to achieve specific goals.

Available researches on the relationship between business strategy and strategic management of HR are both theoretical and empirical (Ferris and Buckley, 1996). Schuler and Jackson (1987), suggest that the existence of clear corporate and operational strategy is a prerequisite for effective integration of HRM in strategic decision making. In the past, selection, staffing, and job design in hotels was the work of the personnel department (Kelliher and Johnson, 1987) which, through its evolution, participates in decisions related to the operational management (Kelliher and Johnson, 1997) and strategic planning (Raub et al., 2006). Today they are part of

complex HRM systems (Ahmad et al., 2010) of hotels, representing high frequency's factors of research in HRM overview. In the Greek hospitality sector, HRM practices have been explored on the basis of comparison of domestic personnel selection and staffing methods with corresponding abroad (Paraskevas, G., 2000) while the hospitality market of Thessaloniki has not been investigated in terms of HRM.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The main purpose of this paper is to explore the affects of selected HRM practices (selection, staffing and job design) on organizational performance (labor productivity, service quality, financial performance, market share, sales growth, service innovation) and HRM performance (staff commitment, job satisfaction, staff flexibility, staff rotation, quality of staff, quality of work). This is a case study which contributes in scientific research through combined exploration of the interaction of specific HRM practices on organizational performance. The following research hypotheses were tested:

**1st Hypothesis-H1:** Selection–staffing and job design causes a positive and direct affect in hospitality organizational performance

**2nd Hypothesis-H2:** Selection-staffing and job design causes a positive and direct affect in HRM performance.

Pearson chi square was used in order to explore the correlations among the variables. Crosstabs which indicate significances  $< 0.05$  suggest that there are positive and direct affects on the depended variables of organizational and HRM performance. The questionnaire is based on the same tool that Kim Hogue (2000) used in his research in the field of HRM in the tertiary and hospitality sector of Great Britain. From the set of the independent variables, those related to selection-staffing and job designs were selected. The contribution of the present research is related with the enrichment of previous scientific research's conclusions, tested exclusively on city hotels, enabling relevant comparisons and interesting conclusions.

Thessaloniki's hospitality market, which by the time of the survey amounted 64 hotels (source: Hellenic Chamber of Hotels), had been chosen for the survey's conduction. Being the second largest city in Greece and

offering a variety of alternative tourism services such as, among others, archeological tourism, convention tourism, city breaks, e.tc, Thessaloniki's hospitality market was selected to be tested for the first time on HRM applications. At the same time there had been serious efforts in Thessaloniki the past few years in developing city tourism and city breaks. Nevertheless, corresponding research has not yet come to pass. Based on the total number of rooms, a dozen hotels have capacity exceeding one hundred rooms; fifteen are between 65 and 99 rooms while the rest have less than 64 rooms. 72% of the city's hotel population (all the hotels had been invited to participate in the survey) allowed their hotel manager or HR manager to answer the questionnaire. The large percentage of participants can ensure sufficiency for safe outcomes.

The presentation and analysis of the research outcomes is divided into two parts. The first part discusses the hotels policies and practices on the one hand in personnel selection and staffing and on the other in job design. In the second central part any positive correlations among the HRM practices and the hotel performance are explored.

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS**

According to Schuler's and Jackson's (1987) typology and Kim Hogue's (2000) methodology hotels were divided into the following strategic groups: cost reducers (28.26%), quality enhancers (41.31%) and strategic group "others" (30.43%) consisted of hotels which do not apply any of the cost reducing or quality enhancing strategy. In order to develop the strategic groups respondents were asked to select two of the features that portrayed their business strategy: price, quality, cost control, responsiveness to customer needs, advertising / marketing, providing a distinctive service.

### **Selection and Staffing**

The first group of HR practices (selection and staffing), will be examined as to their approach from the hotel businesses according to their business strategy.

### Education and training

Recruiters consider applicants' education and training background as a key initial assessment criterion when CV and job applications are evaluated. But when it comes to the decision making process, do they play a vital role also? Hotels belonging to cost reducers chose "yes" with a rate of 69.2% and "partially" (30.8%). Only two hotels of business strategy "others" (4.3%) replied negatively. The rest of the hotels(quality enhancers) replied "yes" and "partially" of percentages 68.4% and 31.6% respectively. There had been no negative response for any hotel belonging to one of the above two strategic groups. Either completely or partially the educational level is a key factor in the final selection of new employees. Business strategies do not seem to differentiate the corporate policies, at least as it is interpreted by this variable analysis.

### Communicating the firm's culture to new employees

The process of communicating the firm's culture to new employees is a practice based upon the belief of best fit among HMR strategy and business strategy. The general theoretical approach, in practice, refers to the early stage of the evaluation of candidate employees, where the corporate philosophy is presented alongside employee's perceptions on matters related to their job. The goal is to make distinct any common or diverse attitudes and perceptions between the firm and the employee since, according to best fit theory, the better qualified candidates are not always the better choice. Table 1 presents the executives' responses regarding this particular HRM practice when it is applied in the decision making process.

**Table 1** Communicating the firm's culture to new employees

	Yes		Partially		No	
<b>Cost reducers</b>	23.1%	3	38.5%	5	38.5%	5
	63.2%	12	15.8%	3	21.0%	4
<b>Quality enhancers</b>	28.6%	4	28.6%	4	42.9%	6
<b>Others</b>	41.3%	19	26.1%	12	32.6%	15
<b>Total</b>						

Quality enhancers (63.2%) seem to employ this practice more than the rest of the population since 12 among 19 hotels answered “yes”. Cost reducers are divided between the three available options while the same thing happens with “others” were most of the negative responses are observed (6). Analyzing the responses under the prism of the business strategy, a differentiation of quality enhancers is distinguished. In general, however, a tendency rather towards the adoption of the practice arises with different, in cases, intensity of implementation per hotel.

### Deliberate use of job previews

The third practice refers to the use of deliberate job previews in order to test the candidates under realistic working conditions.

**Table 2** Deliberate use of realistic job previews

	Yes		Partially		No	
<b>Cost reducers</b>	69.2%	9	30.8%	4	.0%	0
<b>Quality enhancers</b>	52.6%	10	31.6%	6	15.8%	3
<b>Others</b>	71.4%	10	7.1%	1	21.4%	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>63.0%</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>23.9%</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13.0%</b>	<b>6</b>

Monitoring the candidates’ performance can be done either through simulation of realistic working situations or in real working environment, assigning tasks which are concluded in their job descriptions. Hotels classified as “cost reducers” are the unique strategic category that has not given any negative response. Hotels with an ambiguous approach to business strategy present the most positive (yes) responses (71.4%), while “quality enhancers” the fewest (52.6%). Interestingly, a clue which can explain the hotels’ attitudes, is that the Greek law gives hospitality firms the right to retain new recruits for a limited period of time without the obligation to compensate in case the staff proves to be ineffective to its responsibilities. It seems that, according to the responses, the hotels make use of the relative advantage, since the only inhibitory factor is the

alternative costs that may occur. This particular practice emerges as strategic feature of “cost reducers” and “others”.

### Job design

Completing the selection process, the responsible executives must now introduce the new employees to their working environment and present them their duties-responsibilities. Job design in hotels definitely depends on many factors and its composition is subject to even more. In this paper, four relevant factors are to be investigated: flexible job descriptions, deliberate job designs for complete utilization of staff’s skills, teamwork orientation and staff’s participation in setting performance goals.

### Flexible job descriptions

The usage of job descriptions in hotels ensures that new employees are formally informed in every detail of their duties according to the organizational and operational standards. Job descriptions can in some cases be specific, brief with clear guidelines and instructions, and in others encourage initiatives, extraversion and innovation. Among the “cost reducers” only one hotel responded negatively to the use of flexible job descriptions and the remaining were divided equally in the options of “yes” (46.2%) and “partially” (46.2%). Approximately the same percentages were encountered in “quality enhancers” with also a single negative response, 42.1% to “yes” and “52.6%” to “partially”. The third strategic categorization (“others”) was the ones which specified most of the negative responses (28.6%), limited however in terms of strategic differentiation.

**Table 3** Flexible job descriptions

	Yes		Partially		No	
	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count
<b>Cost reducers</b>	46.2%	6	46.2%	6	7.7%	1
	42.1%	8	52.6%	10	5.3%	1
<b>Quality enhancers</b>	42.9%	6	28.6%	4	28.6%	4
<b>Others</b>	43.5%	20	43.5%	20	13.0%	6
<b>Total</b>						

### Deliberate job design

The second variable of the HRM practices, investigates the degree of utilization of distinguished abilities and skills of employees during organizing and planning of jobs. “Quality enhancers” with a percentage of 68.4%, gave the most of the positive responses. More specifically, 13 out of 19 hotels with strategic orientation to quality improvement responded that either totally or partially they implement deliberate job designs. “Cost reducers” were equally separated to “yes” (46.2%) and “partially” (46.2%) while in “others” occurred more or less similar results with 42.9% in “yes”, 50% in “partially”.

**Table 4** Deliberate job design

	Yes		Partially		No	
<b>Cost reducers</b>	46.2%	6	46.2%	6	7.7%	1
<b>Quality enhancers</b>	68.4%	13	26.3%	5	5.3%	1
<b>Others</b>	42.9%	6	50.0%	7	7.1%	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>54.3%</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>39.1%</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>6.5%</b>	<b>3</b>

Overall, more than half (54.3%) of the hotels indicate clearly that they plan and organize jobs in a way to make full use of their staffs’ skills and abilities, and a smaller percentage of the population (39.1%) partially adopts this particular practice.

### Work is organized around teamwork

According to the responders’ views, teamwork’s role is of increased importance and significance. Only “others” have given a negative response but, at the same time, they are the group with the most positive responses (78.6%). “Quality enhancers” follow with a percentage of 63.2% and finally, last but not least, the “cost reducers” with a remarkable high percentage of 61.5%.

**Table 5. Work is organized around teamwork**

	Yes		Partially		No	
<b>Cost reducers</b>	61.5%	8	38.5%	5	.0%	0
<b>Quality enhancers</b>	63.2%	12	36.8%	7	.0%	0
<b>Others</b>	78.6%	11	14.3%	2	7.1%	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>67.4%</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>30.4%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>1</b>

A 38.5% of “cost reducers”, 36.8% of “quality enhancers” and 14.3% of the third category responded “partially”. According to these data, all hospitality firms, regardless their business strategy, approach teamwork similarly positively. However, “others”, to a certain degree, seem to fully and totally adopt teamwork since they presented the highest percentage in “yes” responses.

### **Staff is involved in setting performance goals**

The last HRM practice which composes job design is of particular interest as it examines the role of staff in setting performance goals for the hotels’ departments. A role through which attitudes are tested and confidence on opinions and views is deliberately given by the administrations.

**Table 6 Staff involvement in setting performance goals**

	Yes		Partially		No	
<b>Cost reducers</b>	23.1%	3	23.1%	3	53.8%	7
<b>Quality enhancers</b>	31.6%	6	36.8%	7	31.6%	6
<b>Others</b>	42.9%	6	28.6%	4	28.6%	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>32.6%</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>30.4%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>37.0%</b>	<b>17</b>

Correspondingly to the previews case, the most responses to “yes” occurred from “others” (42.9%). “Quality enhancers” followed with a percentage of 31.6% while most of the negative attitudes are among the “cost reducers” (53.8%).By summing all of the hotels responses, a generally perspective can hardly be cleared out. What it seems more safe outcome is that “cost reducers” are rather negative in allowing their staff to set performance goals. It is indeed the HRM practice were most of the negative responses aroused.

### Correlations and hypothesis testing

The variables investigated on the basis of business strategy, in the first part, are explored in the second part, according to their relationship with organizational performance and HRM efficiency.

### Selection-staffing and organizational performance

The first group of the independent variables refers to “selection and staffing” and any positive effects on organizational performance are explored. Table 7 presents in detail the values of Pearson chi square and the corresponding significances, values that may indicate positive relations.

**Table 7<sup>1</sup>** Selection–staffing and organizational performance

Pearson chi square	Education– training as majorselection criterion		Deliberate use of realistic job previews		Communicating firm’s culture	
	value	sig.	value	sig.	value	sig.
<b>Labor productivity</b>	7.013	<b>0.03</b>	0.349	0.911	8.708	<b>0.013</b>
<b>Service quality</b>	11.077	<b>0.004</b>	0.284	0.156	9.9	<b>0.007</b>
<b>Financial</b>	0.281	0.869	0.1	0.474	2.2	0.33

<sup>1</sup> In tables 7-10, the more statistically significant correlations are marked bold.

<b>performance</b>			82			3
<b>Market share</b>	2.316	0.314	0.3 26	0.113	0.76 7	0.68 1
<b>Sales growth</b>	7.664	<b>0.022</b>	0.5 15	0.818	3.22 3	0.2
<b>Service innovation</b>	9.055	<b>0.044</b>	3.3 43	0.502	10.5 14	<b>0.033</b>

According to the crosstabs' outcomes, education and training as a major selection criterion presents the most positive correlations in four out of six dependent variables since significance values are  $<0.05$ . Labor productivity (0.03), service quality (0.004), sales growth (0.022) and service innovation (0.044) are positively and directly affected when candidates' qualifications are of highly importance during the selection process. No positive effects on hotel's financial performance and market share have occurred. Service innovation (0.033), service quality (0.007) and labor productivity (0.013) are directly and positively affected from communicating the firm's values to new employees. Financial performance, market share and sales growth significance values are  $>0.05$ , dependencies among these variables are rejected. The third practice, which refers to deliberate use of realistic job previews, does not affect positively any of the business performance variables according to Pearson chi square and significances ( $>0.05$ ).

### **Selection–staffing and HRM efficiency**

The effects of the selected HR practices are now tested on HRM efficiency. The deliberate use of realistic job previews affects directly and positively staff flexibility (0.045) but also the ability of staff to move between positions with different responsibilities when the need is required (0.033). Many positive correlations have occurred from communicating the firm's culture to new employees, since significance values militate towards this conclusion.

**Table 8** Selection–staffing and HRM efficiency

<b>Pearson chi</b>	<b>Education–</b>	<b>Deliberate use of</b>	<b>Communicatin</b>
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square	training as major selection criterion		realistic job previews		g firm's culture	
	value	sig.	value	sig.	value	sig.
<b>Staff commitment</b>	0.121	0.728	2.194	0.334	7.774	<b>0.021</b>
<b>Job satisfaction</b>	6.307	<b>0.043</b>	0.29	0.865	0.802	0.12
<b>Staff flexibility</b>	2.56	0.634	9.763	<b>0.045</b>	13.763	<b>0.008</b>
<b>Ability to move</b>	4.194	<b>0.041</b>	6.798	<b>0.033</b>	0.682	0.711
<b>Quality of staff</b>	2.736	0.098	0.983	0.612	6.104	<b>0.047</b>
<b>Quality of work</b>	3.349	0.085	1.702	0.427	4.822	0.09

Staff commitment (0.021), staff flexibility (0.008) and quality of staff (0.047) seem to be also positively related to this HRM practice. Education and training does not indicate many positive correlations in HRM efficiency as it did on organizational performance. However, it positively and directly affects job satisfaction (0.043) and the ability of staff to move between different positions (0.041).

### **Job design and organizational performance**

In this section the influence of HRM practices belonging to the group "planning and organization of work" are tested on organizational performance. Based on the significance values, flexible job descriptions affect directly and positively only one variable, the quality of the services offered (0.01). The rest of the crosstabs support the independence among the variables. None of the organizational performance variables seems to be related to the use of deliberated job designs since significances are  $>0.05$ .

**Table 9** Job design and organizational performance

Pearson chi	Flexible job	Deliberate job	Work organized	Staff
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square	descriptions		design		around teamwork		involvement in setting performance targets	
	value	sig.	value	sig.	value	sig.	value	sig.
<b>Labor productivity</b>	4.951	0.084	0.844	0.656	0.874	0.646	1.072	0.585
<b>Service quality</b>	9.13	<b>0.01</b>	3.92	0.141	6.109	<b>0.047</b>	2.113	0.348
<b>Financial performance</b>	0.205	0.902	0	1	0.793	0.673	0.271	0.873
<b>Market share</b>	1.957	0.376	1.073	0.585	5.11	<b>0.024</b>	3.894	0.143
<b>Sales growth</b>	2.669	0.285	2.233	0.327	2.714	0.194	0.625	0.732
<b>Service innovation</b>	8.649	0.07	6.402	0.171	5.256	0.262	5.143	0.273

Most of the positive correlations of the specific crosstabs occur from the approach of teamwork in job design as it directly and positively affects the service quality (0.047) and market share (0.024). Staff involvement in setting performance targets fails to affect any of service innovation, sales growth, market share, financial performance, service quality and labor productivity. The majority of the current Pearson chi square values have significances  $>0.05$  therefore it can be said that the variables are independent and organizational performance is not related to the specific HRM practices group.

### **Job design and HRM efficiency**

The final presented crosstabs tested the relation among the HRM group of variables “selection and staffing” and the dependent variables which measure HRM efficiency. The positive correlations that have aroused in this case are presented in table 10 and, as in the previous cross tabulation, dependencies among the variables are limited. Nevertheless, two variables of HRM efficiency seem to be positively related to selection–staffing practices in six out of eight crosstabs, therefore the outcome can be quite different when it is approached individually for each dependent variable.

Three out of four HRM practices cause a positive and direct affect on staff commitment and job satisfaction.

**Table 10** Job design and HRM efficiency

Pearson chi square	Flexible job descriptions		Deliberate job design		Work organized around teamwork		Staff involvement in setting performance targets	
	value	sig.	value	sig.	value	sig.	value	sig.
Staff commitment	0.284	0.868	4.129	<b>0.044</b>	9.733	<b>0.008</b>	11.034	<b>0.004</b>
Job satisfaction	0.221	0.895	8.455	<b>0.015</b>	8.383	<b>0.015</b>	12.025	<b>0.002</b>
Staff flexibility	0.456	0.796	0.921	0.631	1.841	0.398	3.158	0.206
Ability to move between positions	1.865	0.394	2.617	0.27	1.226	0.542	1.832	0.4
Quality of staff	0.982	0.612	1.498	0.473	2.351	0.309	0.51	0.816
Quality of work	0.447	0.8	1.702	0.427	2.865	0.239	5.141	0.076

The use of deliberate job design (0.044, 0.015), promoting team work (0.008, 0.015) and staff involvement in setting performance targets (0.004, 0.002) suggest that the hypothesis which refers to positive relations among HRM practices and HRM efficiency should be accepted. Indeed, Pearson chi square values, alongside the very low significances indicate that the existed dependencies are also very strong. The only HRM variable which failed to affect positively any of the dependent variables is the use of flexible job descriptions. The current Pearson chi squares are rated very low, most <1 and the significances are far from the boundary separating dependence and independence. Staff flexibility, ability to move between different positions, quality of staff and quality of work are not affected by any of the explored HRM practices.

## CONCLUSIONS

In order to test the two hypotheses, 96 individual crosstabs have been performed among the HRM policies which refer to selection, staffing and job design and the variables which measure organizational performance and HRM efficiency. A total of 22 positive correlations have emerged, 23% of

the 96 crosstabs, leading to a first conclusion that certain HR practices can affect directly the hotels' performance. Judging by the overall results, we reject cautiously and without prejudice the H1 and H2 hypotheses which explore the existence of dependency and positive correlations between HRM practices and performance measurement variables. The reservation lies in the fact that the positive correlations that emerged could support a hypothesis of dependency exploring solely the specific variables. Interesting findings derive when approaching the outcomes separately through one by one cross tabulation in relation to the business strategy and the HRM practices implementation.

The communication of firm's culture to new employees, according to the results, is adapted to a higher degree by the hotels which belong to quality strategy. According to the Pearson chi square and the significances values, quality enhancers which implement the above HRM practice enhance their staff's quality of work, quality of staff, service quality, labor productivity, staff flexibility, service innovation and staff commitment. In the same strategic categorization, it is occurred that job satisfaction and staff commitment are favored through the use of deliberate job design. Hotels that formulate an ambiguous strategy-"others", emerged to pay more attention in designing jobs based on team working, gaining through this practice positive effects on service quality, staff commitment and job satisfaction. Considering organizational performance, their above average market share seems to be related also. On the contrary, hotels that apply cost reduction strategy lag in staff commitment and job satisfaction of their employees as they are the most reluctant strategic group in involving their staff in setting performance targets. Interpreting the results further, no major differences among the applied strategies occur, according to the implementation of the explored HRM practices. Differentiations are located mostly in the intensity of the HRM practices implementation, rather than in the decision to adopt them or not. The positive, direct and immediate correlations that arose within the organizational performance and HRM efficiency increase the significance of the implementation's intensity.

The research's findings largely advocate to related surveys that the approach of HRM in business strategy is a field that can contribute both in

scientific and in hotel business development. Safer findings, when exploring the affects of HRM practices on performance results, can be achieved when the occurred positive correlations of the overall population or sample are further explored according to the hotels' business strategy. Through this approach researchers can retrieve and determine which combination of business strategy and HR lead to a direct affection on hotels' performance through HR practices.

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

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*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 Lesvos, 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 Lesvos. 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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**Keywords:** *tourism, island communities, public consultation, stakeholders, green transport*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In this age of sustainable development, a few important facts come to mind when one considers tourism within its social, economic and environmental setting (Patterson, Niccolucci & Bastianoni, 2007). Firstly, tourism is the world's largest industry so it has a large footprint globally. Secondly, it is oftentimes rich tourists travelling to poor (or poorer) countries (same source), so, on a per capita basis, tourists typically consume more than the host community. As a result, the local impact of tourists is disproportionately large. Thirdly, due to the large influx of tourists, many destinations operate at sustainability below the global average.

These considerations underscore the importance of tourism especially for touristic islands that oftentimes play an important role in economic development. Island communities are caught in a dilemma: they are often incapable of autonomously developing comprehensive plans for environmental protection and tourism development yet they are, at the same time, increasingly anxious to preserve their identity, environment as well as natural and cultural wealth. This is definitely the case with many touristic islands such as those in Greece.

On the other hand, tourism is closely intertwined with transport. Tourism transport contributes 94% of the energy used in tourism, with road transport and aviation being the most developing and most polluting transport sectors (Woodcock et al., 2007).

Given this strong link between tourism and transport, this research documents and analyses the opinion of local authorities and stakeholders to help promote sustainable (green) transport in the touristic islands of Chios and Lesbos, in the Aegean sea in Greece. The rest of the paper includes a literature review, a methodology with specific research questions, results and conclusions.

### **Literature review**

Given the aim of this research, five things are carried out in this literature review: (1) important characteristics of the tourism industry are

delineated (a necessary precursor to the rest of the items carried out); (2) important characteristics of small touristic islands are presented; (3) green transport is defined in relevance to the rest of the economy and tourism; (4) the importance of stakeholders in solving conflict and creating synergies is pointed out; and (5) policies in the field of tourism are discussed. The overall goal of literature review is to pinpoint knowledge gaps that may be synthesized into specific research questions that this work may address.

Tourism is a global high consumption industry with important sustainability implications for most popular destinations (Patterson, Niccolucci & Bastianoni, 2007). Tourism's ramifications are wide ranging, impacting socio-economic life, culture and the environment. Most importantly, tourism presents a unique opportunity for viable economic and social development in many destination areas (Mathieson & Wall, 1982; Murphy, 1985). Compared to other destinations, islands are geographically isolated and lack of capital is an issue for many islanders (Enoch & Waren, 2008). In the case of touristic islands, tourism constitutes an important component of insular transport as well as an important source of income for local societies. The problem is that island communities are keen both on (a) preserving their identity, natural and cultural wealth as well as (b) forging a unique identity into a competitive product that may be exported globally. This is where sustainable (or green) transport enters the picture.

Of the numerous definitions of sustainability, the authors of this work prefer to think of it as economic development that secures a satisfactory quality of life (QoL) for the current generation within the carrying capacity of the environment (by respecting the constraints imposed by the limited availability of natural resources, future generations are assured of equivalent development opportunities). Sustainable and green transport refers to transportation systems that are built and operate in a sustainable manner. Green transport is seen as an appropriate means of achieving the twin goals of making tourism overall more sustainable as well as helping the economy of destinations. Clearly, both of these goals are very pertinent to touristic islands that place a high value on their environment and natural resources and are located in countries hit by the economic crisis.

This special significance that tourism has gained in the economic reconstruction of many regions or even countries has attracted the interest of various institutions and organizations at a national, regional or local level (Marinakos & Papatheodorou, 2009). The large number of tourism enterprises (including accommodation, transport, dining and entertainment), particularly in countries with developed tourism, constitute important partners on issues of social dialogue on the topic of tourism development through the professional associations which represent them. In many countries, including Greece, private enterprises operate as official spokespersons with the state (through official and unofficial channels) and influence the formation and implementation of tourism policies.

The tourism industry is oftentimes turned into a field of conflict and opposition over the structural problems faced in tourism development, in particular among stakeholder groups such as public authorities and the private sector that oftentimes pursue their own agenda (Marinakos & Papatheodorou, 2009). At the same time, tourism is an important cross-sectorial economic activity in many destinations and may also become a field of synergies among the agencies involved in the tourism development process. This is how stakeholders enter the picture and assume an important role in outlining future directions for the tourist industry.

The literature indicates that stakeholder participation and public involvement generates many benefits and is a central component of integrated environmental management, bringing together diverse societal groups in generating support for the implementation of sustainable policies such as green transport (Margerum, 1999; Reed, 2008). Although very little has been published on stakeholder attitudes towards green transport in tourism, it is noted that the attitudes and beliefs of stakeholders may be assessed with consultation events. These also promote the support of local authorities for sustainable transport policies and help synthesize guidelines for the successful implementation of green transport measures in touristic island communities.

What is the state of the art in policies in the field of tourism? Although tourism may be a desirable option for touristic islands, it should be developed on the basis of a strategic action plan. The plan for tourism

development in destination areas will have to take into consideration and balance the unique structural problems which arise during the tourism development process on the one hand, and the conflicting opinions of the stakeholders on the other (Marinakos & Papatheodorou, 2009). Moreover, the complexity of the tourism phenomenon demands that tourism policy should be applied at a national, regional and local level and that it should be part of a broader industrial, social, environmental and cultural policy. Attard (2005) points out that transport policies in island states, have so far escaped the attention of the research community. Like many touristic islands, island states are unique in terms of geography, economic development and varying degrees of government. In such islands, society, culture, and local politics influence decisions. Coleman (2000) suggests that local authorities need to continue on the green transport path with awareness efforts, although he points out that this is likely to be a lengthy process with a slow return. On a pessimistic note, he argues that the widespread implementation of green commuter plans is unlikely unless national legislation requires it. Interestingly, he suggests that targeting (large) businesses in urban and suburban locations may be a sensible short term way forward.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Literature review findings may be synthesized into the following research questions that could be answered by analyzing the responses of stakeholders in the islands of Chios and Lesbos:

1. What are the attitudes of respondents towards (a) the current state of tourism in these islands, (b) future targets of the tourism industry and (c) ways that green transport may assist the local island tourism industry?
2. Are there any differences in the attitudes of stakeholders between the two islands and among professions (especially public versus private employees) for matters (a), (b) and (c) of the previous question?
3. Based on the responses to the previous questions, how should green transport measures target the most pressing issues raised by local tourism stakeholders more efficiently?

Three public meetings, the oldest and simplest form of public participation, were carried out in the Aegean Islands of Chios and Lesbos, in Greece, in order to explore: major issues faced by these islands with respect to the tourism industry. The following parties were invited to these public meetings: community groups; religious groups; business organizations; public authorities; utilities and sundry cross-sectoral groups such as trade unions. These parties were presented with a questionnaire on tourism and green transport right after the main consultation event.

The questionnaire was structured in three sections: The first section captured the perception of respondents on the current state of tourism. The second section reflected the thoughts and beliefs towards future targets of the islands in terms of tourism development. Finally, the third section focused on the impact and role that green transport may play in achieving the targets set at the previous set of questions. The questionnaire concluded with some biographical characteristics of each respondent.

The questionnaire contained 5-level Likert-scaled items addressing: (1) the seasonality of the tourism product; (2) emphasis on sea and sun tourism; (3) alternative and special interest forms of tourism; (4) the quality of tourism services; (5) the size of tourism enterprises; (6) the practices of tour operators (TO); (7) unlicensed tourism accommodation establishments; (8) and the cooperation between local and national stakeholders. Specific Likert items are shown in Tables 1, 2 and 3.

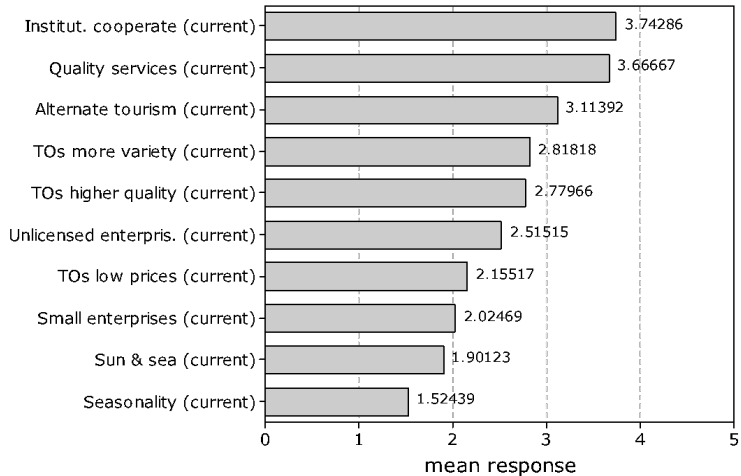
## **RESULTS**

A total of 82 completed questionnaires were collected: 65 from two public consultations in Chios (considered to be the more significant island of the two, touristically) and 17 from one public consultation in Lesbos. Data from the two public consultations in Chios were pooled on the reasonable assumption that audiences in these two events shared local attitudes. A little under two thirds of the participating stakeholders were male, with public servants being twice as many as freelancing professionals. Unfortunately, socioeconomic data contained many missing observations

and were thus disregarded for the rest of the analysis, shifting the focus on Likert scale responses.

To address research question 1a, the average value of responses on the current situation of the tourism industry is graphed in Figure 1. Respondents agreed, in decreasing order of preference, that: regional and national authorities cooperate harmoniously (average score of 3.74 out of 5); tourism services are of high quality (3.67); alternative and special interest forms of tourism are supported (3.11); tour operators pressure tourist enterprises for more choice (2.82) and services of higher quality (2.78); unlicensed establishments are a problem (2.52); tour operators pressure tourist enterprises for cheaper prices (2.16); most tourist enterprises are small (2.02); there is emphasis on sun & sea tourism (1.90); there is seasonality in tourism (1.52).

To address research question 2a, independent sample t-tests were used to test the hypothesis of equality of average responses between the two islands and the corresponding p-values are shown in the rightmost column of Table 1a (where the proper type of t-test was determined with Levene's test for homogeneity of variances). It is noted that average responses were identical between the two islands with the exception of a statistically significant difference (at a 99% confidence level) in the sun and sea item: apparently Lesvos stakeholders felt more strongly that tourism presently puts an emphasis on such sun and sea activities. Average responses between the two sexes were tested with similar t-tests and were found to be statistically different ( $p=0.0412$ ) only in the case of current state of tourism offering high quality services, with male scoring higher than female stakeholders (detailed results not shown).



**Figure 1.** Average value of “current state” responses for both islands

Average responses broken down by profession are shown in Table 1b and indicate that most responses were more or less the same among the different profession groups with a few exception: public servants and freelance professionals seemed to believe more strongly that support for alternative tourism is offered by the current state of the industry at a 90% confidence level, indicated by one way ANOVA (shown at the rightmost column of the table) and accompanying Bonferoni multiple comparison tests (not shown); students and public servants believed more strongly that touristic enterprises are too small (at a 95% confidence level); and, as expected perhaps, private employees did not really believe that unlicensed enterprises present a problem, in stark contradiction to what was thought by public servants (at an 80% confidence level approximately).

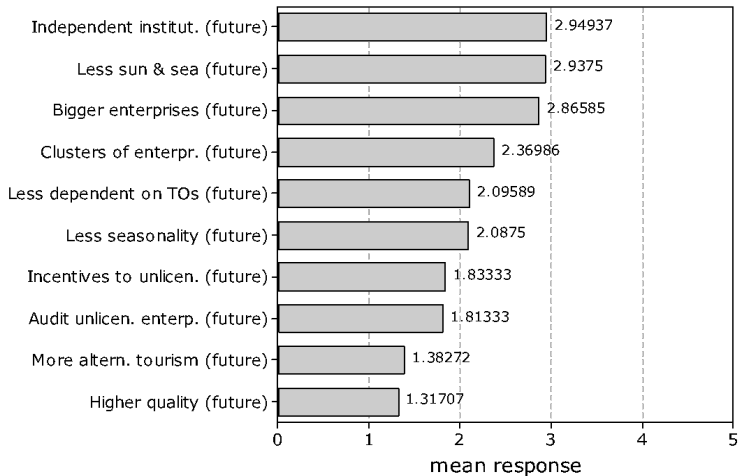
**Table 1a.** Average responses to items describing the current state of the tourism sector broken down by island (t-tests are appropriate independent sample after testing for homogeneity of variances)

<b>Itemdescription</b>	<b>Chios average</b>	<b>Lesvos average</b>	<b>t-test p-value</b>
current state of tourism characterized by seasonality	1.523	1.529	0.9710
current state of tourism places emphasis on sun & sea	1.781	2.353	0.0046*
current state of tourism supports alternative tourism	3.097	3.177	0.7574
current state of tourism offers high quality services	3.629	3.813	0.3866
most current enterprises are small	2.078	1.824	0.1533
currently, tour operators (TOs) pressure enterprises for reduced prices	2.196	2.000	0.4950
currently, TOs pressure enterprises for higher quality	2.813	2.636	0.5411
currently, TOs pressure enterprises for more variety of offered services	2.864	2.636	0.4278
unlicensed enterprises are currently a problem	2.482	2.700	0.5003
currently, local & national institutions cooperate harmoniously	3.714	3.857	0.5972

**Table 1b.** Average responses to items describing the current state of the tourism sector broken down by profession

<b>Variabledescription</b>	<b>public servant</b>	<b>private employee</b>	<b>freelance</b>	<b>student</b>	<b>ANOVA F-test p-value</b>
current state of tourism characterized by seasonality	1.333	1.667	1.545	1.667	0.157
current state of tourism places emphasis on sun & sea	1.952	2.000	2.000	1.783	0.811
current state of tourism supports alternative tourism	3.429	2.000	3.182	3.087	0.100
current state of tourism offers high quality services	3.762	4.000	4.000	3.476	0.160
most current enterprises are small	2.095	1.667	1.545	2.261	0.013*
currently, tour operators (TOs) pressure enterprises for reduced prices	2.067	2.333	2.333	2.364	0.816
currently, TOs pressure enterprises for higher quality	2.571	2.333	2.889	2.923	0.453
currently, TOs pressure enterprises for more variety of offered services	2.667	3.000	3.000	2.769	0.767
unlicensed enterprises are currently a problem	2.625	1.500	2.125	2.579	0.208
currently, local & national institutions cooperate harmoniously	3.737	4.667	4.200	3.444	0.063

To address research question 1b on the future targets of the tourism industry, depicted in Figure 2, respondents on the average agreed, in decreasing order of preference, that: regional and national authorities should operate independently (average score of 2.95 out of 5); there should be less emphasis on sun & sea tourism (2.94); tourist enterprises should become bigger (2.87); tourism enterprises should form clusters (2.37); tourism enterprises should become less dependent on tour operators (2.10); more licensing incentives should be given to unlicensed establishments (1.83); unlicensed establishments should be subjected to more control (1.81); more emphasis should be afforded to alternative and special interest tourism (1.38); and tourism services should be of higher quality (1.32).



**Figure 2.** Average value of “future target” responses for both islands

As for research question 2b, as tabulated in Table 2a, there was statistically significant difference between the two islands in three items: Chios stakeholders were keener on less sun & sea; Lesvos stakeholders were more intent on quality; and Chios stakeholders desired less

dependence on tour operators more strongly. As before, average responses between the two sexes were tested with similar t-tests and were found to be statistically very different ( $p=0.0006$ ) only in the case of improved quality of services, with female scoring higher than male stakeholders (detailed results not shown).

**Table 2a.** Average responses to items describing alternative future targets of the tourism industry broken down by island (t-tests are appropriate independent sample after testing for homogeneity of variances)

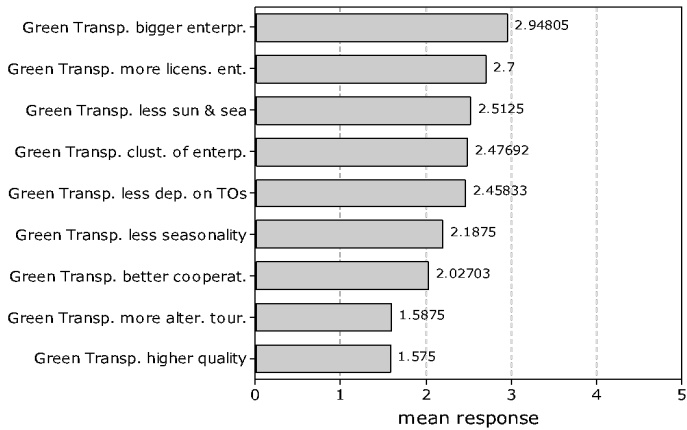
<b>Itemdescription</b>	<b>Chios average</b>	<b>Lesvos average</b>	<b>t-test p-value</b>
reduce seasonality	2.125	1.938	0.5385
reduce emphasis on sun & sea	3.063	2.438	0.0299*
offer more alternative tourism	1.391	1.353	0.7796
improve quality of services	1.246	1.588	0.0065*
increase size of enterprises	2.877	2.824	0.8649
create clusters of enterprises	2.414	2.200	0.4904
reduce dependence on tour operators (TO)	2.207	1.667	0.0407*
provide unlicensed enterprises with incentives	1.793	2.000	0.2716
intensify auditing of unlicensed enterprises	1.754	2.071	0.2009
operate local and national institutions independently	2.953	2.933	0.9581

**Table 2b.** Average responses to items describing alternative future targets of the tourism industry broken down by profession

Itemdescription	public servant	private employee	freelance	student	ANOVA F-test p-value
reduce seasonality	2.095	2.670	1.636	2.455	0.240
reduce emphasis on sun & sea	2.952	3.667	2.364	3.409	0.026*
offer more alternative tourism	1.238	1.000	1.455	1.478	0.190
improve quality of services	1.238	1.000	1.364	1.500	0.170
increase size of enterprises	2.810	3.000	3.091	2.667	0.770
create clusters of enterprises	2.600	3.667	2.400	2.421	0.229
reduce dependence on tour operators (TO)	2.100	1.667	1.778	2.400	0.317
provide unlicensed enterprises with incentives	1.944	1.333	1.889	1.952	0.370
intensify auditing of unlicensed enterprises	2.105	1.333	1.889	1.636	0.195
operate local and national institutions independently	2.952	3.333	2.900	2.783	0.881

Average responses to future target items broken down by profession are shown in Table 2b. Sun and sea scores differently among the different profession groups (at a 95% confidence level), with both private employees and public servants in strong agreement with this target. Of the other items, it is noted that private employees were very keen on creating clusters of enterprises (although not statistically different from the other groups) and private employees, as expected, not at all enthusiastic on intensifying auditing of unlicensed enterprises (at an approximate 80% confidence level).

Finally, to address research question 1c on how green transport may assist the tourism industry, as shown in Figure 3, respondents on the average agreed, in decreasing order of preference, that: tourist enterprises should become bigger (2.95); more unlicensed establishments should become legal (2.70); there should be less emphasis on sun & sea tourism (2.51); tourism enterprises should form clusters (2.48); tourism enterprises should become less dependent on tour operators (2.46); tourism should become less seasonal (2.19); cooperation of regional and national authorities should improve (2.03); more emphasis should be afforded to alternative and special interest tourism (1.59); and tourism services should be of higher quality (1.58). The only gender difference was related to green transport reducing emphasis on sun & sea, with female being more enthusiastic than male employees on green transport helping the industry shift focus away from the sun and sea paradigm.



**Figure 3.** Average value of “green transport” responses for both islands

**Table 3a.** Average responses on how green transport may assist the tourism broken down by island (t-tests are appropriate independent sample after testing for homogeneity of variances)

<b>Itemdescription</b>	<b>Chios average</b>	<b>Lesvos average</b>	<b>t-test p-value</b>
green transport may reduce seasonality	2.172	2.250	0.7622
green transport may reduce emphasis on sun & sea	2.540	2.412	0.6448
green transport may offer more alternative tourism	1.540	1.765	0.3385
green transport may improve quality of services	1.540	1.706	0.4162
green transport may increase size of enterprises	2.902	3.125	0.4295
green transport may create clusters of enterprises	2.510	2.357	0.5640
green transport may reduce dependence on tourist operators (TO)	2.421	2.600	0.5437
green transport may integrate unlicensed enterprises in the industry	2.719	2.615	0.7374
green transport may improve cooperation between local and national institutions	1.949	2.333	0.1438

**Table 3b.** Average responses on how green transport may assist the tourism broken down by profession

Itemdescription	public servant	private employee	student	freelance	ANOVA
					F-test p-value
green transport may reduce seasonality	2.333	2.000	2.522	2.000	0.467
green transport may reduce emphasis on sun & sea	2.476	2.000	2.909	2.455	0.294
green transport may offer more alternative tourism	1.762	1.000	1.636	1.636	0.335
green transport may improve quality of services	1.762	1.000	1.609	1.455	0.379
green transport may increase size of enterprises	2.950	3.000	2.773	3.300	0.592
green transport may create clusters of enterprises	2.556	3.333	2.500	2.000	0.117
green transport may reduce dependence on tourist operators (TO)	2.600	2.000	2.450	2.444	0.789
green transport may integrate unlicensed enterprises in the industry	2.737	2.667	2.947	2.500	0.704
green transport may improve cooperation between local and national institutions	2.500	2.333	1.900	1.778	0.132

On research questions 2c, this time there was no statistically significant difference between the two islands (Table 3a).

On how responses differ among professions, shown in Table 3b, although none of the differences was statistically significant, it is noted that private employees were keener than other professions on creating clusters of enterprises (just short of a 90% confidence level).

To recap the most significant findings in answering research questions 1 and 2, responses to the item group describing current conditions in the field of tourism in Chios and Lesvos indicated that local stakeholders feel that the field is characterized (in order of decreasing strength of conviction) by undesirable seasonality, excessive emphasis on sun and sea, enterprises of too small a size, and unwelcome pressure by tour operators for prices to be cheaper. In addition, responses to items in the group on future targets of the tourism industry indicated that local stakeholders believe (in about equal strength of conviction) that it would be desirable for regional and national authorities to operate independently, less emphasis should be placed on sun and sea tourism, and an increase in the size of tourist enterprises should be sought after. Finally, responses to the item group on how green transport may assist the tourism industry, indicated that local stakeholders agreed (in decreasing strength of conviction) that green transport will help achieve tourist enterprises of bigger size and will aid in more unlicensed establishments becoming legalized; on the other hand, local stakeholders do not expect green transport to be of help in achieving tourism services of higher quality nor that it will be of help in placing more emphasis on alternative and special interest tourism. Some profession groups are keener than others in certain measures and these differences may be exploited when developing and deploying specific green transport measures. All in all, these findings suggest directions for corrective measures and policies.

Analysis is rounded up with some thoughts regarding research question 3. The literature reports that the effort to engage green transport in the development of alternative forms of tourism such as ecotourism or agro-tourism, may be enhanced through investments in infrastructure projects such as those exploiting renewable energy sources (RES,

Gossling et al., 2005). In fact, the presence of new technologies in the tourist industry, such as RES projects, might attract more visitors and thereby revitalize the economy and improve profitability (Solino et al., 2009). Furthermore, such projects may also reduce the level of internal migration and help decentralization, by providing motives to young people to remain in their hometown and take advantage of its natural resources. In other words, there will be more local development, stimulation of local entrepreneurship, creation of new jobs and attraction of investment funds exploiting local resources (Lehr et al., 2008; Sastresa et al., 2010).

## **CONCLUSION**

The consultation events reviewed herein succeeded in measuring the relative strength of the convictions of stakeholders; showing that they are clear on some issues and skeptical on others and uncovering some differences among profession classes. All in all, it is noted that there are great expectations of green transport in tourism. Findings of this exploratory research will be useful in synthesizing practices that guide local actors in identifying, signifying, valorizing and managing their resources.

Implementing sustainable transport policies is not easy. It is an unfortunate fact that, as Woodcock et al. (2007) and Chapman (2007) point out, good sustainable solutions, such as walking and cycling, are at the same time the least preferred. In way of confirmation, the European Conference of Ministers of Transport's (ECMT) "Sustainable Urban Travel" (SUT) program (1997–2001) sponsored a series of workshops aimed at addressing "why implementation of integrated sustainable policies has proven to be so difficult" (Goldman & Gorham, 2006). It is hoped that the findings of this research will facilitate the implementation of green transport policies in the field of tourism by taking into consideration the attitudes of stakeholders and their role in resolving conflict and creating synergies.

Future research could focus on an attempt to distinguish clusters among the stakeholders in order to be able to target green transport policies more efficiently.

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## AN EXPLORATORY STUDY: ANALYSIS OF SERBIAN TOURISM MARKET AND IDENTIFICATION OF MAJOR MARKET SEGMENTS

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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 descriptive statistics, together with analysis of variance tests performed in SPSS with a goal to differentiate groups of tourists both on the supply and demand side of the market. Analysis of variance post-hoc Tukey test was used to identify major market segments, using following six variables: daily spending, age, length of stay, core motive, region of origin, destination. The study should serve as the basis for gaining deeper understanding of the Serbian tourist market as well as identification of the best market segmentation approach (common-sense, data driven, activities-interests-opinions, etc.). The study identified that the two major so-called common sense market segmentation variables (age and country of origin) should not be used together, as tourists coming from different regions show no statistically significant difference in terms of age. However, pairs of variables, such as daily spending-country of origin, as well as length of stay-country of origin showed much potential as important pairs of variables in conducting destination market segmentation in Serbia.*

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**Keywords:** *Market segmentation, Serbian tourism, destination marketing, tourist behavior*



## **INTRODUCTION**

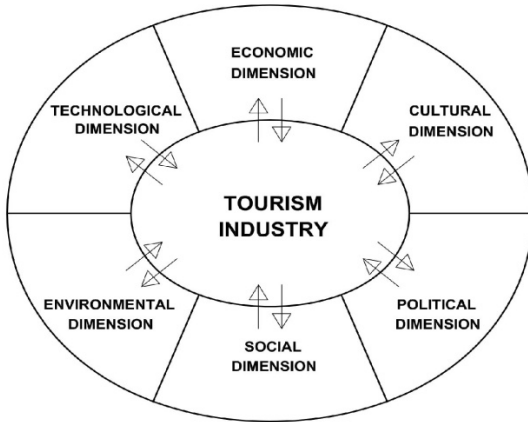
Market research has not yet been fully utilized as a basis for tourism decision making and destination policy creation in the Republic of Serbia. Tourism decision makers and policy creators in Serbia are facing a difficult task of reaching decisions, creating government policies, as well as creating advertising campaigns with insufficient data. The focus of the study was the identification of the best methodology for segmenting the tourism market in Serbia, as well as identification of the characteristics of the major market segments, using the 6 variables: daily spending, age, length of stay, core motive, region of origin, and destination. Identified market segments should form the basis for developing marketing and communication strategies which are effective and efficient especially given the scarce DMO promotion budgets. There are numerous methodological considerations regarding market segmentation, including proper variables selection. However, in practice the already collected data sets often prevent the application of particular methodology.

### **Global trends in the tourism markets**

As Hudson (2008) notes, tourism industry is a powerful economic force which operates in a global environment. Therefore, in order to understand the global competitive environment in tourism, besides economic dimensions, it is important to consider also cultural and political dimensions. Additionally, Hall (2008) identified environmental and social dimensions of tourism to be as equally important. Holloway (2004) emphasizes the profound effect that ICT has on the global tourism industry. Altogether, tourism industry is a complex, multidisciplinary phenomenon operating in a global environment, with economic, cultural, political, social, environmental and technological implications.

**FIGURE 1: Tourism industry in the global market**

**TOURISM INDUSTRY  
IN THE GLOBAL MARKET**



Source: Author

As identified by the UNWTO(2011), major global trend on the demand side of the market will be the continuing domination of Europe as the region of origin with the largest share of tourists in the global tourism market, both to advanced economies, and to emerging economies. However, Asia and Pacific Region will be the region with the highest growth of outbound tourism to other regions.

*Table 1: Global tourism market trends*

		Market share (in %)				
		Actual data			Projections	
		1980	1995	2010	2020	2030
<b>To advanced economies</b>		<b>70</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>43</b>
From:	Africa	1.0	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6
	Americas	15.9	11.9	8.9	7.4	6.3
	Asia and the Pacific	5.1	8.2	8.8	9.9	10.7
	Europe	47.5	42.5	34.4	29.1	24.8
	Middle East	0.6	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
<b>To emerging economies</b>		<b>30</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>57</b>
From:	Africa	1.0	1.8	2.7	3.4	4.4
	Americas	9.8	9.0	8.1	8.2	8.3
	Asia and the Pacific	3.8	8.4	12.9	16.4	19.2
	Europe	13.7	15.8	19.7	20.9	21.2
	Middle East	1.5	1.6	3.6	3.9	4.2

Source of data: (UNWTO, 2011)

### **Tourism market research**

Goeldner and Ritchie (2009) present an overview of contemporary tourism research techniques and postulate that although early tourism research has been criticized for lacking academic rigour and for being too descriptive, contemporary tourism research uses a variety of methods. The authors contend that many of the contemporary tourism research techniques are very complex, while the most popular methods include multidimensional scaling (MDS), analysis of variance (ANOVA), multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), factor analysis, cluster analysis, case studies, as well as ethnographic research techniques.

Market research deals with systematic measurement and analysis of markets (Medlik, 2003). It is important to understand the notion of the market research, as Holloway (2004) defines it, as a research which deals with the consumers. In contrast, marketing research, besides consumers, deals with promotion, sales, performance monitoring research (Middleton, et al., 2009) as well as product, price, distribution and publicity research (Holloway, 2004). There are three major types of market research: geographic, demographic and psychographic research (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2009).

Effective marketing depends on market research and survey methodologies (Sheldon, 2006). The importance of the market research for the overall tourism marketing activities can be seen on the example of Piedmont region in Italy. Otgaar et al. (2010) present an example of the specialized research and development agency (*Sviluppo Piemonte Turismo*), which is a public company with 2 major goals: 1) *market research and statistics*, as well as 2) *strategic marketing based on research and statistics*. In this agency, only after this the two major goals, come the following goals: 3) *product development*, 4) *website promotion*, and 5) *administration and logistics of promotional material*. However, as Veal (2002) noticed, many public-sector agencies tend to see market research as a one-time activity, while private sector organizations mostly see market research as a continuous activity.

## **Market segmentation**

Modern marketing practice moves away from the mass marketing because it is both more effective and efficient to identify and target market segments (Hudson, 2008; Kotler & Armstrong, 2006). In tourism marketing, there are few vacation destinations which have such a universal values to be universally marketed (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2009). Also, the very nature of consumer needs is that they are heterogeneous, which means that different consumers have different needs (Zivkovic, 2013; Dolnicar, 2012). Market segmentation is identified as one of the most important marketing tools used in tourism (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007), as well

the first step in the marketing process which affects all later stages of the process (Middleton, 2001). It is only after the identification of the market segments, that the marketers can devise specific marketing mix for each market segment. In the later stages of the marketing process, marketers can also prioritize the development of the most competitive products/services in each marketing segment (Kozak & Andreu, 2006).

**McCabe (2009) defines market segmentation as:**

“...the process of dividing up the total market (all the people the organization can sell its products or services to) into identifiable, measurable and discrete groups who share some common characteristics or needs and whose attitudes or reactions towards communications messages about products or services might be similar.”

The purpose of the market segmentation is to enable cost effectiveness by identifying target groups which share common characteristics and product preferences (Medlik, 2003). Solomon et al. (2006) go as far as to state that market segmentation means targeting a specific groups of people rather than everybody, even if that makes other people uninterested about the service, or even makes them avoid the product.

Kotler and Armstrong (2006) have grouped market segmentation variables into 4 groups: *geographic*, *demographic*, *psychographic* and *behavioral* variables. Barry and Weinstein (2009) have found that today, *psychographics* have become one of the most accepted segmentation methods, particularly in consumer markets. The authors give examples of the companies like Ikea and Porsche, which use it to a point where entire product launch campaigns are designed around customer personality profiles. Mc Cabbe (2009) notes that *Psychographics*, with the three types of appeals (personality, identity and lifestyle) have become very common in the tourism and hospitality industry as well. This means that travel in itself can become the source of identification with certain social groups, the projection of the aspired status in society, or statement about own personality traits.

Dolnicar (2012) has identified country of origin as the most frequently used criteria for commonsense tourism market segmentation, along with age, brand loyalty and visitor status regarding disability, which are also commonly used. Prokopoulos and Saveriades (2010) agree that the market of origin is important, and propose the use of ethnographic techniques to profoundly explore the factors influencing the satisfaction levels. This way, new information can potentially surface as an input for the marketing system. Decrop and Kozak (2009) emphasize the usefulness of the travel market segmentation based on the trip purpose (pleasure, visiting family and friends, business, etc.). The underlying rationale is that the tourists in one group will have similar approach to making decisions.

Dolnicar (2012) points out that unless a need for a more complex approaches (such as data-driven market segmentation) is identified, commonsense segmentation should be used in order to keep the process as simple as possible. Furthermore, although commonsense market segmentation is often criticized as being raw, for many destinations it can serve its purpose in creating the competitive advantage and effectively serving the market. The author emphasizes that segmenting the tourism market by country of origin can be very effective in European destinations, because the marketing messages need to be customized to each country because of the different linguistic and ethnic backgrounds. Besides data driven market segmentation, one of the most popular complex methodological approaches to constructing a market segment is AIO (activities, interests, opinions) (McCabe, 2009; Gonzalez Fernandez, et al., 2006). This approach is often combined with the social, economic and demographic variables (Gonzalez Fernandez, et al., 2006). Other authors (Tuma, et al., 2011; Graham Tonks, 2009; Quinn, 2009) however emphasize that the real world selection of segmentation variables and sample sizes is often limited by already collected data sets, where methodological considerations are of no relevance any more; or is limited by lack of manager's knowledge and understanding of the market segmentation techniques. Dolnicar and Lazarevski (2009) also investigated the problems Australian managers have in using the market

segmentation as a marketing tool, and found the following main problems: poor understanding of the market segmentation fundamentals which affects the interpretation and use of the solutions, unawareness of the importance of up-to-date and specialized research for data driven segmentation, as well as unawareness of the speculative nature of the market segments.

Contemporary market segmentation should take into account the growing role of women in the tourism decision making (Barles, et al., 2010; Hudson, 2008), increased integration of marginalized groups into mainstream socio-economic developments (gay tourism, accessible tourism) (Diez, 2011), as well as important role of diaspora and its connection to cultural heritage (Cohen, et al., 2008). Solomon et al. (2006) similarly identify the gay community, single women and disabled people as the new, trendy and lucrative general market segments. The role of the Destination Management Organization can be very important in discovering all the market segments it serves, however small they are, and serving them in the best possible way. In that sense, Bailey et al. (2009) emphasize the importance of techniques such as customer insight and customer relationship management in conducting the market segmentation. The authors identified the following market insight techniques: market predictions, customer segments, opportunity analytics, as well as customer value analytics.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The methodology follows recommendations for commonsense, a priori segmentation made by Dolnicar and Kemp (2009), where 4 most frequently used types of variables are: *behavioral*, *geographic*, *socio-demographic* and *psychographic variables*. At later stages, the study also conducts post-hoc analysis.

The research was designed to explore the possibilities of creating market segments in the Serbian tourism market. For this purpose, six market segmentation variables were used, presented in the table

below. The three variables in the second group (geographic and behavioral) were classified as follows:

- **Core motive for travel** (Pleasure, Fun& Entertainment, Nature, Culture, Sport& Adventure, Health, and Business)
- **Origin of tourist** (Domestic, Western Europe and the rest of the World, Central Eastern Europe, Ex-Yugoslavia, Expatriates/Emigrants)
- **Major tourism destinations** (Belgrade, Novi Sad, Nis, Kopaonik, Zlatibor & Western Serbia)

**Table 2:** Market segmentation variables used in the research

Market segmentation variables used in the research	
1. Demographic and psychographic variables	2. Geographic and behavioral variables
1.1 Daily spending	2.1 Core motive
1.2 Age	2.2 Origin
1.3 Length of stay	2.3 Destination

Source of data: (Grabler & Mamula, 2011)

Each one of the three variables in the first group was combined with the three variables in the second group, in order to create nine hypothesis. The statistical test was the one-way ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) in the SPSS software, with post-hoc Tukey test which was used to identify further characteristics of the market segments.

### Collection of the data

The data was collected through Serbia Guest Survey 2011. The survey has been conducted as a component of the EU financed project: “Support to implementation of the National Strategy for Tourism”, by HD-European Consulting Group. It produced a large amount of data, out of which only one portion is used in the presented study. The objectives of

the survey were to assess tourist profiles, core motives for travel, booking habits, expenditures, satisfaction and image perception of Serbia.

Total sample was 1500 respondents on the following locations in Serbia: Belgrade, Novi Sad, Zlatibor, Guca, Kopaonik, Fruska Gora, Zasavica, Vrdnik, Erdevik, Sremska Mitrovica, Divcibare, Valjevo, Banja Vrujci, Sokobanja, Vrnjacka banja, Banja Koviljaca, Niska banja, Nis, Subotica, Vrsac, Palicko jezero, Belocrkvanska jezera, Srebrno jezero, Ecka, Skorenovac. The fieldwork was done only for the summer season: from July 11 2011 to September 5 2011 by MASMI market research agency.

**FIGURE 2: Data collection locations in Serbia**



Source of data:(Grabler & Mamula, 2011; Geodetski zavod Republike Srbije, 2009)

## RESULTS

### Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

**Table 3: Hypotheses tested through analysis of variance**

Hypothesis no.	Variables	Level of significance	Critical Value for the F distribution	F	P-value

H 1	Motive-daily spending	0.01	2.8	6.59	0
H 2	Motive- age	0.01	2.8	42.75	0
H 3	Motive-length of stay	0.01	2.8	25.09	0
H 4	Origin-daily spending	0.01	3.32	78.13	0
H 5	Origin-age	0.01	3.32	3.15	0.014
H 6	Origin-length of stay	0.01	3.32	11.14	0
H 7	Destination-daily spending	0.01	3.32	14.38	0
H 8	Destination-age	0.01	3.32	13.57	0
H 9	Destination-length of stay	0.01	3.32	6.75	0

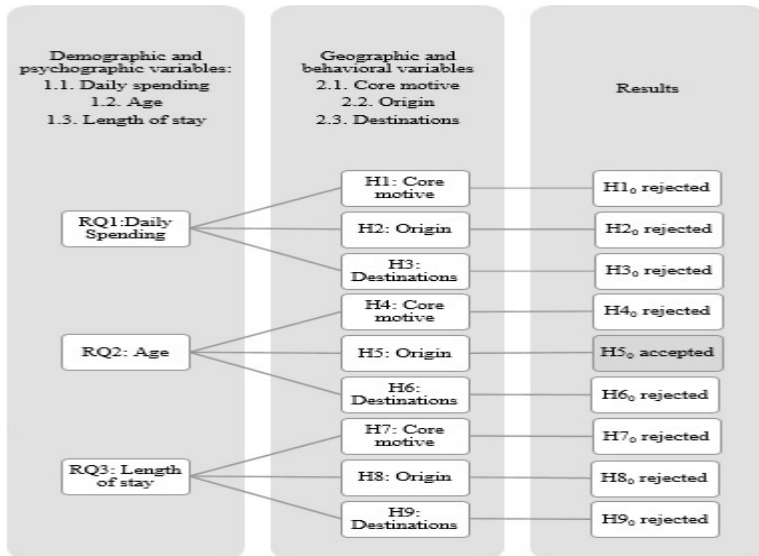
Source of data: (Grabler & Mamula, 2011)

The nine hypotheses tested:

- H1<sub>A</sub>: There is a statistically significant difference between the seven groups of tourist grouped by the core motive for the travel, in terms of mean daily spending.
- H2<sub>A</sub>: There is a statistically significant difference between the seven groups of tourist grouped by the core motive for the travel, in terms of mean age.
- H3<sub>A</sub>: There is a statistically significant difference between the seven groups of tourist grouped by the core motive for the travel, in terms of mean length of stay.
- H4<sub>A</sub>: There is a statistically significant difference between the five groups of tourists grouped by the region/country of origin, in terms of mean daily spending.
- H5<sub>A</sub>: There is a statistically significant difference between the five groups of tourists grouped by the region/country of origin, in terms of mean age.
- H6<sub>A</sub>: There is a statistically significant difference between the five groups of tourists grouped by the region/country of origin, in terms of mean length of the trip.
- H7<sub>A</sub>: There is a statistically significant difference between the tourists on the five major destinations, in terms of mean daily spending.

- H8<sub>A</sub>: There is a statistically significant difference between the tourists on the five major destinations, in terms of mean age.
- H9<sub>A</sub>: There is a statistically significant difference between the tourists on the five major destinations, in terms of mean length of stay.

Out of the nine tested null hypothesis, only *hypothesis H5<sub>0</sub> was accepted*, while eight null hypothesis were rejected, and *alternative hypothesis were accepted (H1<sub>A</sub>, H2<sub>A</sub>, H3<sub>A</sub>, H4<sub>A</sub>, H6<sub>A</sub>, H7<sub>A</sub>, H8<sub>A</sub>, H9<sub>A</sub>)*, all at the 0.01 significance level.



**FIGURE 3: ANOVA hypotheses testing results**

Source: Author

### Market shares

In order to better understand the full relation between supply and demand market segments, the study also concentrated on calculating the

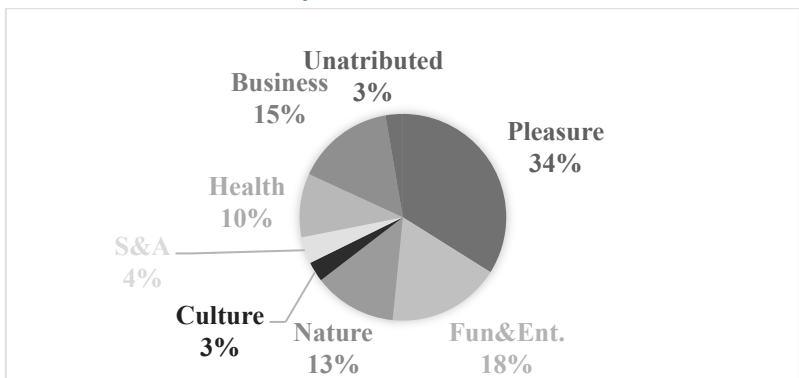
market shares of each one of the market variables in the second group, through a following formula:

$$\text{Market share of the segment} = \frac{\text{average daily spending} \times \text{length of stay} \times \text{segment sample size}}{\text{total sample size}}$$

The calculated values were:

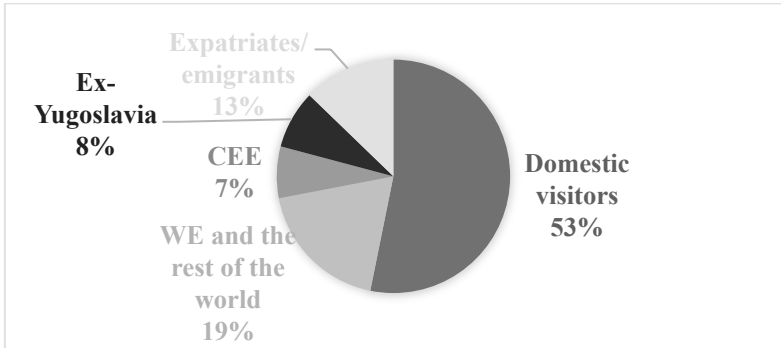
- Core motivation for travel (Pleasure 34%, Fun & Entertainment 18%, Nature 13%, Culture 3%, Sport & Adventure 4%, Health 10%, and Business 15%)
- Region of origin (Domestic 53%, Western Europe and the rest of the world 19%, Central Eastern Europe 7%, Ex-Yugoslavia 8%, Expatriate/Emigrant 13%)
- Destinations (Belgrade 22%, Novi Sad 5%, Nis 7%, Kopaonik 19%, Zlatibor 13%, Other 34%)

**FIGURE 4: Market shares by core motive for travel**



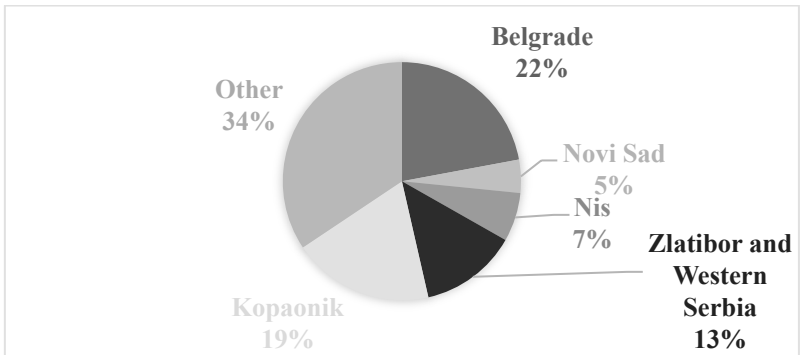
Source of data: (Grabler & Mamula, 2011)

**FIGURE 5: Market shares by region of origin**



Source: (Grabler & Mamula, 2011)

**FIGURE 6: Market shares of major tourism destinations**



Source: (Grabler & Mamula, 2011)

### ANOVA Post-hoc analysis and discussion

**Table 4: Tukey post-hoc ANOVA analysis for hypothesis H2 (origin-daily spending)**

Origin	Subset for alpha=0.01		
	1	2	3
Domestic	4.52		
Ex-Yugoslavia		5.99	
Expatriates/ emigrants		6.18	
Central eastern Europe		6.54	6.54
Western Europe and the rest of the World			7.35
P value	1	0.24	0.22

Source of data: (Grabler & Mamula, 2011)

Domestic tourists have lower daily spending from all other groups of tourists regardless of the region of origin. Svensson et al. (2011) also found that only having German nationality influences the daily expenditures on the destination.

**Table 5: Tukey post-hoc ANOVA analysis for hypothesis H3 (destination-daily spending)**

Destination	Subset for alpha=0.01	
	1	2
Novi Sad	4.54	
Nis	4.7	
Ex Yugoslavia	5.1	
Zlatibor and Western Serbia	5.16	
Kopaonik		
Belgrade		6.13
P value	0.09	1

Source of data: (Grabler & Mamula, 2011)

Tourists visiting Belgrade have higher daily spending from tourists on all other major tourist destinations in Serbia. This finding is supported by study conducted by Svensson et al.(2011), which also found that destination area has a great influence on daily spending.

Table 6: Tukey post-hoc ANOVA analysis for hypothesis H4 (motive-age)

Motive	Subset for alpha=0.01		
	1	2	3
Sport and adventure	26.3		
Fun and entertainment	29.37		
Pleasure		36.94	
Business		37.44	
Culture		38.28	
Nature		39.38	
Health			46.97
P value	0.56	0.79	1

Source of data: (Grabler & Mamula, 2011)

The 7 core motives for travel can be clustered into three separate groups by age, with differences between groups: 1 Younger (Sport, Fun& Entertainment), 2 Middle aged (Pleasure, Business, Culture, Nature), 3 Older (Health). This was the only criteria that clustered the whole market with 7 core motives for travel into 3 clear cut groups, which are both mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive.

Table 7: Tukey post-hoc ANOVA analysis for hypothesis H7 (motive-length of stay)

Motive	Subset for Alpha=0.01		
	1	2	3
Culture	1.67		
Fun and entertainment	1.78	1.77	
Business	1.79	1.79	

Nature	2.16	2.16	
Pleasure		2.17	
Sport and adventure			2.73
Health			2.86
P value	0.01	0.09	0.98

**Source of data: (Grabler & Mamula, 2011)**

Sport& Adventure and Health form a cluster with the length of stay which is higher than that of any other group.

**Table 8: Post-hoc Tukey for hypothesis H8 (origin-length of stay)**

Origin	Subset for alpha=0.01	
	1	2
Domestic	2.07	
Central eastern Europe	2.12	
Ex Yugoslavia	2.12	
Western Europe and the rest of the world	2.27	
Expatriates/ Emigrants		2.9
P value	0.67	1

**Source of data: (Grabler & Mamula, 2011)**

Expatriates/Emigrants have longer length of stay, from all other tourists in Serbia, regardless of their region of origin.

The major findings of the post-hoc analysis, which relate to the previous similar research are the following:

- Tourists visiting Belgrade have higher daily spending from the tourists on all other major tourist destinations in Serbia. This finding is supported by Svensson et al.(2011), who also found that destination area has a great influence on daily spending.

- Domestic tourists have lower daily spending from all other groups of tourists regardless of the region of origin. Svensson et

al.(2011) similarly found that having German nationality influences the daily expenditures on the destination.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The major finding of the study is the need for complex market segmentation in Serbia (either data driven or AIO). This is because the two variables that were identified by Dolnicar(2012) as the most important variables for commonsense market segmentation: country of origin-age where the only pair of factors, out of 9 tested, that proved no statistically significant differences. This means that although the two variables are important when used separately, they cannot be used together or combined to identify market segments. This two variables can only be used separately for common-sense market segmentation. However, it also means that more attention should be paid to the two other combinations that include origin: origin-daily spending, and origin-length of stay, which showed much potential in the post-hoc analysis, and created solid market segments.

Following the recommendations for further research about the role of demographics as a discriminating factor among tourism market segments (Tsiotsou & Goldsmith, 2012), the results showed the statistically significant connection between age and core motivation for travel, as well as age and destination.

The study confirmed the two findings of the previous study performed by Svensson et al.(2011) which support the hypothesis that geographic characteristics determine the travel spending:

- Destination region influences the travel spending, because the study has found that the tourists visiting Belgrade have a higher daily spending from the tourists on all other major tourist destinations in Serbia.

- Region of origin influences the travel spending because the study has found that domestic tourists have lower daily spending from all other groups of tourists regardless of the region of origin.

Major geographic region to focus the international marketing activities of emerging economies, such as Serbian economy, is Asia and the Pacific. According to the UNWTO(2011), this outbound market will have almost equal share to that of the European tourists (around 20%) in the emerging economies by 2030. Also, the high demand for the cultural tourism by Serbian diaspora should be considered as an important demand side factor, and focus marketing of cultural tourism products on countries where large Serbian diaspora exists.

The Serbian tourism market is very rich in small market segments on both supply and demand side of the market. This study demonstrated the important differences these groups of tourists exhibit in terms of key variables. Tourism policy should address the identified groups of tourists with specially designed marketing and communication strategies, appropriate to the tourist's needs and attitudes. Special attention should be given to the growing role of women and marginalized groups in tourism.

The 4 major Serbian tourism market segments identified:

- Younger tourists travelling with motivations: sport and adventure, fun and entertainment
- Older, domestic tourists travelling for health, with low daily spending, travelling outside Belgrade
- Young expatriates/emigrants with motivation sport and adventure, staying for longer periods of time on the destination
- Old expatriates/emigrants with motivation health, staying for longer periods on the destination
- Foreign tourists in Belgrade with high daily spending

As a continuation of the Serbia Guest Survey 2011, another survey should be conducted during the winter season, and be repeated each year. The questionnaire should also include the secondary motivation for trip in order to better understand motivation for trip. UNWTO(2005) shows that

culture is a strong secondary motivator for visits, especially for city tourism, while Swarbrooke and Horner (2007) emphasize that all groups of tourists are most likely to be influenced by multiple motivations.

Public agencies related to tourism in Serbia use market research only as a one-time activity, and not on a continual basis. International experiences show that tourism market research should be conducted continuously. The best way to ensure that is to make market research and statistics a primary goal of the specialized tourism agency/organization (such as Tourism Organization of Serbia). The collected data should then serve as a basis for any subsequent marketing activities.

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## LAND USE POLICY AND TOURISM: THE CASE OF GREECE

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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.*

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**Keywords:** *Tourism, land use changes, tourism land use policy, spatial planning, tourism policy*

### INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a “polydynamic sector at an international level” (Galanos, 2009), with both positive and negative impacts on the economic and social activities of land, on its natural resources and amenities. The relationship between tourism and natural resources may be associated with changes to their character, considering that the impact of tourism is “the result of the complex interaction and coevolution between ecosystems and societies” (Aretano et al., 2013; Antrop, 2005)



and, indeed, the policies connecting them. As a driver of growth for the global economy it is a mainstay which is therefore promoted at every level. At a global, European and national level, the impact of tourism on the environment, society and the economy has been the subject of various investigations and studies. The aim of this overview was to explore and briefly analyse the impacts of tourism on land use and, more specifically how spatial policies in Greece (including tourism policies) have impacted tourism and how tourism and its related policies have in general affected land use in the country. Such a correlation, which to our knowledge has received little research interest to-date, may provide a basis for analysis of endogenous and exogenous factors affecting the impacts of the tourism sector on the land and more specifically the natural and cultural resources on which it depends for its continuation and sustenance. Each particular form of the interaction involves the diverse nature of the place and the social, political and cultural life of the people.

### **A Brief Overview of Greek Tourism**

Greece features complex and multifunctional landscapes of rich ecological, biophysical, climatic and terrain diversity and value. Consequently it has been a magnet for humans (tourists and others) since antiquity. Confirmation of this fact is found in the study of the Observatory for Digital Greece (2007), which underlines that Greece ranks high in global tourism due to its strong relative advantages, with “...its rich heritage, natural beauty and established position as a key destination in Europe and the Mediterranean.”

In Greece, tourism developed during the post-war period and came to be based on the model of mass tourism. Issues and questions related to changes in land use as a consequence of tourism or other spatial (national or European) policy were identified. This was effected through an exhaustive literature review in the collaborative project VOLANTE under the European Commission’s Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) spanning recent decades. ([www.volante-project.eu](http://www.volante-project.eu))

## **CONSEQUENCES OF TOURISM IMPACTS ON LAND USE IN GREECE**

### **General Comments**

The bibliographical survey results demonstrate the interdependence of tourism and land use. Moreover, this interdependence is complicated by the fact that as often has been reported “tourism is linked directly and indirectly to all areas of economic activity ... such as agriculture, construction, power generation, transportation, and all activities of the tertiary sector and is the fastest growing industry worldwide” (Dimitriadi & Kallia-Antoniou, 2012; Hellenic Association of Travel and Tourist Agents, 2012).

Tourism has been on the rise, during the post-war period, throughout Greece with emphasis on coastal and insular areas. Its promotion and geographical spread, however, has been markedly polarized, leading to serious regional growth disparities. Moreover, infrastructure thus created was, in many cases, unregulated and is not accounted for or incorporated in the particular development plan (Association of Greek Tourism Enterprises, 2010). Since the 1980s the tourism product in Greece has shown signs of “industrialization”, in many tourist destinations in the country, due to the “adoption of the model of mass tourism” (Dimitriadi & Kallia-Antoniou, 2012) with all the obvious attendant negative social and environmental impacts (Association of Greek Tourism Enterprises, 2010).

The unrestricted expansion of tourism facilities was accompanied by the failure of the State to create an organizational planning framework, i.e. a system to protect natural resources or a realistic plan for development and promotion of the tourism product. The result was pressures and adverse impacts on both the Greek tourism industry and on land uses in these areas (and especially on the natural environment) whether built on or not, in all of its elements, biotic, abiotic, historical etc.

Particularly in rural areas some of the main causes of pressure towards land use change were: the combination of a failed urban spatial policy from 1950 onwards, the increase in the number of secondary residences, urban sprawl, the ownership pattern which developed in Greece, non-compliance with building provisions for both planned and for off-plan areas (illegal construction), lack of a complete cadaster and the development of tourism.

### **Infrastructure and Human Activities**

There is considerable inconsistency and variation among many destinations in their tourism development; e.g. a lack of common strategy and joint marketing and actions for the creation of new products and services and lack of transportation and links between the coastal areas and inland areas, as well as between islands and coastal islands. Furthermore “the physical interactions between land, sea and natural resources are complex and have equally complex legal consequences arising from the constant conflict between private and public rights, boundaries, responsibilities and management priorities” (Vittis, 2004). Conflicts over land use arose mainly in areas of high tourism development, due to the over-concentration there of tourism activities (Valavanidis & Vlachogianni, 2011; Association of Greek Tourism Enterprises, 2010). Major changes in land use have thus ensued in Greek coastal areas, especially in foreshore zones and beaches. Various structures both legal and illegal, as well as fencing-off for exclusive use, have weakened the institution of communality of the foreshore (Vittis, 2004).

The complexity of such conflicts over land use is exacerbated through the continuous expansion of tourism land coverage and conversion of traditional land uses such as farming to mixed or entirely tourism-oriented uses: not a simple change in use, but a complex phenomenon of interdependent processes and functions. As a result of tourism growth and expansion, in many parts of Greece, agricultural land was built on and land prices rose, rendering other uses prohibitively unprofitable. Furthermore, the resultant expansion of residential areas brought a need

for enforcement of town planning regulations. In these ways the burgeoning of tourist destinations brought about the abandonment or underdevelopment of various rural areas, growth of regional disparities and degradation of areas surrounding the great majority of the country's tourism destinations. Further supporting this is the finding that especially in coastal and insular areas the economy is "mostly based on tourism and services, but also on small scale, family agriculture" (Spilanis et al., 2009).

Finally, the creation of new transportation networks servicing destinations, both for tourists but also for supplying tourist facilities, apart from seasonal traffic congestion, led to the expansion of the existing infrastructure for tourism and other purposes, either legally or without the required authorization, resulting in the degradation of environmentally sensitive areas.

## **Environment and Climate**

Human-induced causes, such as illegal, off-plan and unregulated construction, as well as the creation of large infrastructure projects exert great pressure on natural resources. The main problems which are found are those of "land use conflicts between tourism, agriculture, mining activity, fish farming, fishing; residential development in protected areas (NATURA areas, sites of outstanding natural beauty, CORINE biotopes, marine parks etc.); unauthorized building and traffic" (Angelidis & Oikonomou, 2005). Growth sectors, including transport, water works, energy production and tourism exert concomitant pressures, being both the cause of and subject to the effects of land use change.

Tourism further exacerbated or brought new pressures and changes in the environmental balance of these areas: pressures inside and outside urban areas both throughout the year (infrastructure construction, large-scale facilities, ports etc.) and also seasonal (resource consumption climate change and environmental effects such as reduction in biodiversity, desertification, etc.) (Chiotis&Coccosis, 2000;Beriatos, 2008).

The constant expansion of tourism facilities and the increase in accommodation requirements and other related business activities also placed strains on natural and forest resources. “Regions with high growth in their tourism accommodation in ex-urban areas show significant signs of deforestation” (Minetos&Polyzos, 2010). Areas for proposed tourism activities were not afforded the appropriate protection and suffered degradation. Especially in recent years, having lost their protected status, forest areas in Greece were opened up to tourism development. Trails and footpaths were not demarcated and/or the regulations concerning providing proper forest access and protection of already established access routes were not observed.

With regard to climate, according to the Hellenic Republic Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change in the 5th National Communication to the UNFCCC (2010) “The Greek tourism sector is closely connected to climate quality, as to the nature-based resources”. The climatic conditions prevalent in tourist attractions are a key factor in tourist demand. Bearing in mind the seasonality of the tourism product, changes in land use and in the tourism product brought about by climatic changes affect supply and demand, with both direct and indirect changes in environmental conditions and/or parameters, which may lead to environmental degradation (Hellenic Republic Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change, 2010). “Climate change is expected to impact spatial and seasonal tourist distribution, resulting in change to both coastal and inland tourist destinations and exacerbating the problems of regional disparities” (Mourmouri, 2010).

## **POLICIES, LAND USE AND TOURISM**

### **Tourism Land Use Policy and Tourism Policy at the European Level**

The European Union has promoted no specific legal spatial framework specific to tourism among its member states (in contrast to the case of agriculture with the CAP) and the concept of spatial planning

stems from the EU Treaty itself, the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) and the Territorial Agenda of the EU (2007). In the Territorial Agenda, the emphasis is on spatial relationships, rules and commitments between member states, at the national and regional levels. Additionally, tourism is becoming an EU objective and a declared aim, within the European Cohesion Policy and several other regional programmes, actions and regional policies.

Looking at the respective trends of the last decade at the EU level, European action in the field of tourism focuses on targeting tourist destination promotion. Nonetheless, the importance of the tourism sector is recognized both by the Treaty of Lisbon and by the priorities for action identified in the 2010 Communication on Tourism. These were concerned with stimulating competitiveness in the European tourism sector, with promoting development of sustainable tourism, with consolidating Europe as a collection of sustainable and high quality destinations and with maximizing the potential of European economic policies for tourism development.

The European Commission, mindful of the importance of the tourism factor, promotes actions and measures for its integration into other policies. This promotion was primarily carried out through programmes of Community support for tourism. Included among these instruments are various European Structural Funds (ERDF, ESF), the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), and the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) etc. For example “in the Fifth Environmental Action Programme of the EU tourism has been identified as one of the policy areas with priority for action” and in the sixth Environmental Action Programme “Tourism is recognized explicitly in the fifth priority axis of strategic action and mainly in the development of networks across tourist destinations with the aim to encourage the exchange of experience and good practice on sustainable forms of tourism and furthermore of the active participation for sustainable tourism” (Coccosis, Mexa, & Collovini, 2002). In Greece, the National Strategy Plan for Rural Development subsidizes rural tourism and ecotourism activities and encourages tourism activities through Axis 3 and Axis 4. Additionally,

sustainable alternative tourism activities receive subsidization, as part of the National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013 (NSRF) of the Operational Programme “Competitiveness and Entrepreneurship”.

Moreover, according to the Annual Tourism Report (2013), funding for the tourism sector in Greece has been instigated through the sectoral Operational Programme “Digital Convergence” for “actions that aim at the optimal promotion of the tourism product and at the management of the electronic Tourism Business Register”. Greece also actively promotes the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative (AII) and the EU Strategy prepared and elaborated for the Adriatic and Ionian region. A horizontal priority of the Greek Presidency of the EU Council, the Integrated Maritime Policy, is supported by the Ministry of Tourism in the context of its wider aim of promoting "Blue Growth", the long-term initiative to better exploit the potential of Europe's oceans, seas and coasts, for sustainable growth in the marine and maritime sectors.

## **Tourism Land Use Policy and Tourism Policy in Greece**

### **Sectoral European Land Use Policies in Greece**

For the purposes of our analysis, the basic national policies resulting in land use changes are assumed to be spatial policies and, in particular, spatial planning for tourism. Secondly, with regard to tourism we also took into account land use impacts of other sectoral policies, such as the national maritime strategy and policy for protection from climatic changes etc., as these strategies and policies were affected by European guidelines and strategies especially in recent years.

As regards the role of policy, our research indicated that land use change is generally a result of the interplay among all European sectoral policies, in conjunction with national planning policy. Changes in the Greek legal framework, resulting from national policy and the integration of European directives, in tandem with natural and human drivers of change, as mentioned in the previous section, have significantly impacted land use.

As our study aims to elucidate, either as an activity or as policy, tourism both affects and is affected by existing policies and land uses.

In the agricultural sector, the 1980s witnessed an intensification of agriculture, an increase of yields, ecosystem degradation and soil erosion, followed, over the period 1980-2010, by uncontrolled urban expansion (Beriatos, 2008) and tourism development, due to the expansion of tourist destinations (following rising demand) and the lack of land use legislation and of development of tourism strategy. According to Minetos (2009), these changes occurred “from agricultural land to urban, forests and woodland to urban, from agricultural land to forest etc.” During the 1980s, farmers were encouraged to become entrepreneurs by changing their sources of their income, and turning more actively to land protection. The implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy has been shown to affect land use in many different ways, whether direct or indirect (Cosor et al., 2012), and this combined with other policies brought about the intensification of agriculture.

In the transport sector, the period 1980-2010 witnessed the modernization and expansion of infrastructure, e.g. the coastline highway servicing northern Crete, the Egnatia Motorway in northern Greece, etc. A key finding was the rampant change of roadside uses, with an emphasis on rural and large urban roadside land also constituting tourist attractions or service areas.

In the energy sector, EU directives on renewable energy, especially in recent years, have brought about changes, both at the legislative level and in land use, mainly through the construction of inland and coastal wind farms, the use of agricultural land for solar farms etc. The latter investment has had a positive impact on the tourism sector with regard to power supply, but also brought about significant and irreversible changes to the aesthetics of landscape as a tourist destination.

The environmental sector was perhaps the one that underwent the greatest impact, despite the transposition to Greek law in recent years of EU Directives on environmental and natural protection, with the creation of corresponding conservation areas and related measures (i.e. the drafting of forest maps, cadastre etc.). Unfortunately, these general

guidelines were then circumvented through specific or small-scale interventions, counter to the general legislation and through investment boosting efforts, under the justification of the economic crisis and purported sustainable development. This fact, combined with the non-implementation of the Biodiversity Strategy, the lack of funding for the management of protected areas, the occurrence of large forest fires, lack of full implementation of the Water Framework Directive and other factors, have led to land use transformation, with the results recorded above.

At all levels (urban, regional, sectoral and national) the mainstay was spatial planning, which, since the 1970s and 1980s, has promoted the creation of a framework for the implementation of land use policy in Greece. Indicative urban planning legislation, for 1971-72 was Legislative Decree (L.D.) 1003/71 Government Gazette (GG) 198A concerning active urban planning and L.D. 1262/72 (GG 194A) with reference to the master plans of urban areas etc.

### **National Land Use Policy and Tourism up to 2008**

During the 1980s, attempts were made to change the planning philosophy, as spatial planning was being influenced by changing political and social conditions of life in Greece, and by the accession of Greece into the EC. However, such steps towards modernization unfortunately just covered up existing problematic circumstances, without solving underlying spatial problems such as illegal construction etc. The latter situation has only been tackled in the last four years, in an attempt to normalize the legal framework, as shown in the following table (Table 1).

**Table 1** Legal Framework for Tackling Illegal Construction

<b>Law (L.) 4178/2013 (GG 174A/8.8.13)</b>	Tackling illegal building works, safeguarding environmental harmony and other provisions
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<b>L. 4014/2011</b>	Environmental licensing of projects and activities, regulating illegal buildings in relation to creating environmental balance and other provisions within the competences of the Ministry of Environment
<b>L. 3843/2010</b>	Electronic tagging of building, construction overruns and changes of use, metropolitan renovation and other provisions

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The multitude of laws and directives relating to issues of spatial organization and policy, combined with frequent changes in governmental structures during the past two decades has not brought about the desired results. Spatial planning was called upon on numerous occasions to incorporate and/or plan already existing situations, culminating in many cases in land use favouring tourism.

In Greece, various legal texts have acted as a starting point for spatial planning (Tables 2 and 3). The basic framework, however, was defined in Law 2742/2008 (GG 128/A/3.7.2008) of the General Framework of Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development. Despite the fact that this Framework was intended to “establish the fundamental principles ...(and) ensure the protection of the environment throughout the national territory and individual units thereof and reinforce the country’s position in the international and European context” under Article 2 of Law 2742/2008 (GG 128/3.7.2008), exceptions were made for site-specific areas of the framework, such as the Integrated Tourist Development Areas (ITDA), in accordance with the provisions of Law 2545/1997 (GG 254A).

The requirement for integrated national spatial tourism planning has been the subject of the Council of State, especially after the issuing of a Joint Ministerial Decision (JMD) on the delimitation of an Integrated Tourist Development Area in Messinia, despite the fact that this is an obligation under the Constitution and in particular Article 24. The result was that in Greece, Master Plans, Residential Control Zones, General Urban plans etc. have constituted spatial planning substitutes (Mathioudakis, 2013). Thus, a basic cause of many of the above issues is “beyond any doubt the far from clear delimitation of land uses” (Angelidis & Oikonomou, 2005) throughout the national territory, as well as “the lack of urban and regional planning or, where it does exist, its

ineffective implementation” (Angelidis & Economou, 2008). “No matter how these problems arise, the Greek legal framework and appropriate mechanisms of urban and regional planning prove seriously incapable of addressing them” (Cosor et al., 2012).

**Table 2** Existing National / Regional Spatial Planning Legislation

Name of Law	Summary
L. 2742/99 (GG 207A)	Spatial planning and sustainable development and other provisions.
L. 2941/01, article 2, par. 10 (GG 201A)	Environmental licensing – siting of renewable energy source (RES) stations – Special Framework.
<b>Ministerial Decisions 25290/03 (GG 1487B), 25291/03 (GG 1486B), 25292/03 (GG 1484B), 25294/03 (GG 1485B), 25297/03 (GG 1470B), 25301/03 (GG 1451B), 26295/03 (GG 1472B), 26297/03 (GG 1473B), 26298/03 (GG 1469B), 29310/03 (GG 1471B)</b>	Adoption of the Regional Framework for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development for the regions: Southern Aegean, Thessaly, Peloponnese, Western Greece, Epirus, Western Macedonia, Northern Aegean, Central Greece, Western Macedonia and Thrace respectively.
<b>Ministerial Decisions 674/04 (GG 218B), 48976/04 (GG 56B)</b>	Adoption of the Regional Framework for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development for the regions Central Macedonia and the Ionian Islands respectively.
<b>Parliamentary Decision 6876/4871/08 (GG 128A)</b>	“Adoption of the General Framework for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development.”
<b>Decision 49828/08 (GG 2464B) of the Government Policy Coordination Committee for the sector of Spatial Planning and Sustainable development</b>	Adoption of the Special Framework for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development for Renewable Energy Sources and associated Strategic Environmental Impact Study.
<b>Decision 11508/09 (GG 151AAII) of the Government Policy Coordination Committee for the sector of Spatial Planning and Sustainable development</b>	Adoption of the Special Framework for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development for Industry and associated Strategic Environmental Impact Study.

<b>Decision 24208/09 (GG 1138B) of the Government Policy Coordination Committee for the sector of Spatial Planning and Sustainable development</b>	Adoption of the Special Framework for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development for Tourism and associated Strategic Environmental Impact Study.
<b>Ministerial Decision 51949/10 (GG 1925B), MEECC</b>	Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the General, Special and Regional Frameworks for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development.
<b>Decision 31722/4–11–2011 (GG 2505B) of the Government Policy Coordination Committee for the sector of Spatial Planning and Sustainable development</b>	Adoption of the Special Framework for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development for Aquaculture and associated Strategic Environmental Impact Study.
<b>Ministerial Decision 10106/11 (GG 45AII), MEECC</b>	Adoption of specifications for the drawing up of the Regional Frameworks for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development (specifications for evaluation, revision and specialization of Regional Frameworks).
<b>L. 4002/11, article 14 (GG180A)</b>	Questions of implementation of the Special Spatial Planning Framework for Tourism and other measures for the promotion of tourism investment: Amendment to the provisions of L. 2971/01, L. 3342/05 and L. 711/77.
<b>Ministerial Decision 13390/12 (GG 811B), MEECC</b>	Amendment to Ministerial Decision 51949/2010 “Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the General, Special and Regional Frameworks for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development” (GG 1925B).
<b>L. 4042/12, article 56 (GG 24A)</b>	Harmonization of the Regional Frameworks for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development with the River Basin Management Plans.
<b>Ministerial Decision 18150/12 (GG 1341B), MEECC</b>	Provisions for drafting plans for integrated urban intervention.
<b>Decision 67580/13 (GG 3134B) of the Government Policy Coordination Committee for the sector of Spatial Planning and Sustainable development</b>	Drafting of the General and Special Frameworks for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development.
<b>L. 4269/14 (GG 142A)</b>	Spatialandurbanplanningreform Sustainabledevelopment. -

<b>L. 4277/14 (GG 156A)</b>	NewMasterPlanforAthens, Attikiandotherprovisions.
<b>L. 4280/14 (GG 159A)</b>	Environment upgrade and private urban development – sustainable development of settlements –regulation of forest legislation and other provisions

**Table 3** Existing National / Regional Tourism Legislation and the Special Framework for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development for Tourism

<b>Name of Law</b>	<b>Summary</b>
<b>L.2160/93 (GG 118A)</b>	Tourismregulation and other provisions.
<b>L. 4002/11 (GG 180A), L. 4014/11 (GG 209A), L.4070/12 (GG 82A), L.4093/A (GG 222A)</b>	Laws 4002/2011, 4014/2011, 4070/2012 and 4093/2012 include provisions concerning the simplification of licensing procedures for hotels and other tourism businesses, environmental licenses and new types of tourism investments (Integrated Tourism Development Areas and tourism accommodation complexes).
<b>Law 4002/11, article 14 (GG 180/A/2011)</b>	Implementation issues relating to the Special Spatial Planning Framework for Tourism and other provisions for the promotion of tourism investment - amending provisions of Law 2971/01, Law 3342/05 and Law 711/77.
<b>L.4070/2012 (GG 82A)</b>	RegulationforElectronicCommunications, Transport, PublicWorksandotherprovisions.
<b>JMD 170078/13 (GG 2507/B/2011)</b>	Standard environmental commitments for the projects and activities of class B of group 6 “Tourist facilities and urban development projects in the building sector, sport and recreation”.
<b>Law 4179/13 (GG 175/A/2013)</b>	Simplification of procedures to enhance entrepreneurship in tourism, restructuring of the Greek Tourism Organization and other provisions.
<b>Decision 65657/13 (GG 3156 B) of the Government Policy Coordination Committee for the sector of Spatial Planning and Sustainable</b>	Adoption of the findings of the report on implementation of the Special Framework for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development for Tourism.

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**development.**

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<b>Decision 67659/13 (GG 3155B) of the Government Policy Coordination Committee for the sector of Spatial Planning and Sustainable development</b>	Adoption of the amendment to the Special Framework for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development for Tourism and Strategic Environmental Impact Assessments.
<b>L. 4256/14 (GG 92A)</b>	Cruise ships and other provisions.
<b>L. 4276/14 (GG 155A)</b>	Simplification of operating procedures for tourism enterprises and infrastructure, special tourism types and other provisions.

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## **National Tourism Land Use Policy up to 2009**

The year 2009 saw the publication of the Special Framework for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development for Tourism JMD 24208/09 (GG 1138/B/2009): “Approval of the Special Framework for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development for Tourism and Strategic Environmental Impact Study.” Its key objectives were to protect and enhance the natural and cultural environment and to improve the competitiveness of tourism, while ensuring the sustainability of resources and the development of a clearer framework for the underlying planning principles and processes. The framework took into account the existing conditions prevailing in Greece, identified the main features of tourism in the country, set conditions and restrictions (regulations specifying minimum areal extent for the main tourist accommodation structures etc.) and provided tourism strategies and guidelines for the spatial organization of tourism. Thus, it constituted an attempt to solve spatial conflicts between tourism and land uses stemming from other sectoral policies (whether already in practice or not), such as environmental, agricultural,

forestry, and other policies, (JMD 24208/09: GG 1138/B/2009), as indicatively recorded in the table below (Table 4).

**Table 4** Special Framework for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development for Tourism (2009): Key Concerns and Proposed Strategies

<b>Key concerns of Special Framework for Tourism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The growth of tourism activity.</li> <li>• The increased housing demand in organized tourism facilities.</li> <li>• New forms of management of tourist accommodation (e.g. condo hotels).</li> <li>• The lack of coherent common tourism policy within the EU, hindering planned tourism development in Greece.</li> <li>• The country's comparative advantages (e.g. cultural capital, climate, the large number of islands, length and quality of coastal natural environment, diversity and degree of alternation in the form and type of resources, density and variety of areas of outstanding natural beauty, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Main characteristics of Greek tourism which were taken into account</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevalence of mass tourism, coupled with the limited development of other forms of tourism.</li> <li>• Environmental degradation in some destinations.</li> <li>• Strong seasonality, necessitating the enrichment of the tourist product with alternative and special-interest forms of tourism</li> <li>• Frequent limited accessibility of destinations.</li> <li>• Low degree of satisfaction with amenities.</li> <li>• The depreciation of a significant proportion of tourist accommodations, despite the attempted slow but steady qualitative upgrading of hotel capacity, based on new standards.</li> <li>• Dysfunctions and deficiencies in specific tourist infrastructures (congestion, lack of parking spaces, etc.), which exist in many tourist destinations, resulting in environmental degradation.</li> </ul>
<b>Proposed strategies and directions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The classification of areas according to their tourism development (developed, developing, less-favoured for tourism, metropolitan, coastal and island, mountainous, lowland and semi-mountainous areas, NATURA 2000 areas etc.).</li> <li>• Categorizing of tourism areas: mass, moderate and alternative tourism, island or non-island.</li> <li>• Promotion of various alternative and special-interest forms of</li> </ul>

tourism (conference, urban, marine, cultural, religious, etc.), directly linked to existing infrastructure.

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The outcome of the implementation of this framework and tourism policy, in general, reflects not only the effort to protect and conserve resources, but points to the fact that “ultimately the logic which has prevailed is development through exceptions to protective regulations”, (Mathioudakis, 2013). This argument has also been supported by observations from the Hellenic Association of City and Regional Planners (2013). Specifically, certain consequent issues were identified such as that focusing on small-scale interventions does not reflect the integrated spatial approach on a large scale, despite the provision of incentives; moreover, the application and development of organized facilities for sited tourism activities may bring about adverse impacts and increase strains in already overburdened contexts with an emphasis on special protection areas and uninhabited islands. Further reference was made to the lack of carrying capacity assessment in the JMD text and to conflicting provisions between the General Spatial Framework and the Special Framework for Tourism, as, for example, in siting industrial units of medium and high nuisance in tourist areas (incompatible uses).

Generally speaking, the current situation of tourism, in terms of existing land use, in Greece, is the result of both the existing spatial policy that has been practiced over the past decades, and of its failure to address tourism issues, especially after the decades immediately after the end of the Greek civil war. Numerous irreversible and permanent land use changes came about from the adoption of the mass tourism model, aided by a number of factors: the geographical sprawl of tourist facilities in the country; the concentration and expansion of tourist poles without the application of a particular spatial development framework; the insufficient restriction of off-plan construction; the lack of interest in improving the features and “applicability” of mechanisms for organized siting of tourist activities; the lack of a system of priority zones, carrying

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capacity assessments, and of operational criteria for siting within each zone of the different forms of tourism (especially organized and specific forms), etc. Thus, one of the basic results of the above is that a characteristic of tourism in Greece is “spatial dissipation” (Economic and Social Council of Greece, 2008), and furthermore the current spatial disorganization has “various consequences for development, spatial planning, residential/urban planning and the environment” (Economic and Social Council of Greece, 2008).

Organized forms of tourism activities, such as Integrated Tourist Development Areas (I.T.D.A.), Areas of Organization of Production Activities, and Areas under Special Zoning Regulation display weaknesses, especially as to their geographical siting, which may present constitutional problems. The incomplete institutionalization of measures to promote satisfactorily the financing of operations through development programmes, upon completion of a study, constitutes a major drawback resulting in inconsistency in effective inter-regional reinforcement of the tourism sector. Without specific protection regimes, urban planning policy, together with legislation for off-plan construction, was counterproductive as to the final form of the tourism product. Rather, it led to conflicts in urban and extra-urban areas and to environmental degradation. The development of roadside infrastructure, combined with the unmanaged and unplanned creation of mostly small tourist infrastructure (rented rooms) after qualification reports were issued by the Greek National Tourism Organization, did not take into account visual saturation standards and led to landscape deterioration of areas outside settlements.

### **National Land Use and Tourism Policy up to date - Recent Legislative Reform**

Significant legislative changes in spatial planning have been instigated since 2010, in an attempt to reinforce and organize the legal framework of tourism. In 2010, Ministerial Decision (MD) 51949/10 of the MEECC was issued for “Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the

General, Special and Regional Frameworks for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development” (amended in 2012). Combined with the provisions of L. 2742/1999 (GG 207A) and MD 10106/11 (GG 45AAlI) on “Adoption of specifications for the drawing up of the Regional Frameworks for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development (specifications for evaluation, revision and specialization of Regional Frameworks” (Table 2), it led to the drawing up of the Evaluation Reports for the Regional Frameworks applied to the 10 Greek regions, and to their (currently in progress) revision. As pointed out by Gemenetzi&Zaharos (2012), “the evaluation, revision and specialization of the Regional Frameworks for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development of the regions of Greece raises for the first time the issue of the protection and management of landscape as a significant parameter in spatial and regional planning”.

Towards the end of 2013, the Government Policy Coordination Committee in the sector of Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development, with JMD 67659/13 (GG 3155/B/12-12-2013) adopted the amended Special Framework for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development for Tourism and Strategic Environmental Impact Assessments. Table 5 sets out the assessment carried out for the purposes of the amendment, as well as the new proposed strategies and directions.

**Table 5** Amended Special Framework for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development for Tourism (2013): Key concerns and Proposed Strategies

<b>Key concerns of the new Special Framework</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The upgrading of spatial planning within the framework of the European guidelines and policies through sustainable development and recognition by the European Commission of the significance of tourism for the Greek economy.</li> <li>• The country’s comparative advantages (e.g. cultural capital, climate, the multitude of islands, natural environment, density and variety of areas of outstanding natural beauty, etc.</li> <li>• Tourism’s contribution to employment and the trade balance (economic crisis). The Greek tourism product remains typically “Mediterranean”.</li> <li>• A feature of Greek tourism is low package cost associated with</li> </ul>
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	<p>low foreign exchange earnings for the country of destination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The decline in internal tourism since 2010 due to the economic crisis and the low competitiveness of Greece, together with the development of new tourism destinations, e.g. Turkey &amp; Croatia.</li> <li>• The development at national level of a long term strategy for tourism, taking into consideration the unsatisfactory level of services in many tourist destinations in Greece and the calculated expansion in tourism activity on a worldwide level.</li> </ul>
<b>Aims are to facilitate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The promotion of sustainable and balanced development of tourism in the country.</li> <li>• The shift from a mass, undifferentiated and monothematic tourism to one which is high-quality, differentiated, multi-thematic, and with greater financial yields.</li> <li>• Reduction of the impact of seasonality of tourism through the promotion of high-quality tourist accommodation establishments, services and infrastructure, together with the upgrading of existing lower grade facilities.</li> <li>• The support of less-developed tourism areas, along with the exploitation of special / alternative forms of tourism and the broadening of the range of tourism products available, taking into consideration the natural, cultural, economic and social identity of each area.</li> <li>• The exploitation of the local natural and cultural features, and restriction of the sprawl of tourism facilities into off-plan areas.</li> <li>• The development and organization of the national territory for the tourism sector taking into consideration all provisions laid down for other sectors/industries &amp; the exploitation for tourism, in the context of present guidelines, of state owned real estate.</li> </ul>
<b>Indicative Proposed strategies and directions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Categorizing of the national territory based on the following criteria: a) intensity and type of tourism development, b) geomorphological features and c) vulnerability of the resources in area categories. (Developed and developing tourism areas; areas deemed appropriate for development of special / alternative forms of tourism, metropolitan areas, islands and coastal areas, mountainous areas, lowland and semi-mountainous areas, areas belonging to the National System of Protected Areas, protected and deserted settlements, archeological sites, monuments and historical sites, and areas of particular interest.</li> <li>• Establishment of guidelines, measures and actions linked to tourism development, according to area category.</li> <li>• Strengthening of alternative forms of tourism through the promotion of new sectors (such as cruises and marinas)</li> <li>• Introduction of new forms of infrastructure such as “mixed use resorts” or “tourism accommodation complexes.” etc.</li> </ul>

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- Priorities with regard to the type and form of tourism development in each area.
  - The promotion of incentives for the establishment of higher quality tourist accommodation establishments and the upgrading of existing tourist accommodation establishments to 4/5 star standard.
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Furthermore, besides the Special Framework for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development for Tourism, various other pieces of legislation have sought to reinforce and organize the legal framework for tourism (Table 3). A recent example is Law 4179/13, aiming to boost enterprise by simplifying procedures and introducing new tourist products (such as condo hotels and youth hostels etc.) and attempting to regularize operationally the infrastructure of diverse tourist attractions. Despite the commendable intentions underlying them, Law 4179/13 on mixed use resorts, in combination with the Special Framework for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development for Tourism, were unfavorably received by ecological organizations, who raised major concerns over such issues as the environmental strain of building in NATURA areas and changes to the terms of out-of-plan construction, so as to allow the siting of tourist accommodation facilities in forests etc.

Finally, the most recent relevant laws have been Law 4269/14 (GG 142/A/28-06-2014) “Spatial and urban planning reform–sustainable development” and Law 4280/14 (GG 159/A/08-08-2014, “Environmental upgrade and private urban development–sustainable development of settlements–regulation of forest legislation and other provisions”. As regards the spatial and urban planning reform, objections were raised in relation to the undermining of spatial planning at the national level with the promotion of the new concept of the governmental national spatial planning strategy and of national/regional spatial planning frameworks, while Law 4280/14 contains provisions regarded by ecological organizations as also increasing pressures on the Greek forest environment.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Our exploration of the interdependences between spatial land-use policies and tourism in Greece points to a complex, tentative and circular chain of existing balances, based on partially causal relationships, with interplay between causes and effects. All policies impacting on land use and tourism pursued, particularly in recent decades, represent a barrage of efforts to resolve existing problems, namely the promotion of politically motivated programmes (often not fully worked out) and the servicing of special interests (local or otherwise). In addition, all sectoral spatial policies, and in particular those for tourism, create pressures on land, with both permanent and non-permanent effects, which in turn, inevitably result in the dependency of the tourism product on changing the conditions of tourism destinations.

In Greece, as we have seen, there are significant land-use conflicts between tourism, agriculture, mining, fishing, infrastructure development, with the deterioration of the physical environment through tourism/recreation development, and landscape destruction through large-scale construction works. Meanwhile, and as a result of the above impacts on the land, the appearance of the rural landscape is changing fast, at rates so rapid that we find degraded landscapes in the vicinity of or within environmentally sensitive parts of the country. Also noteworthy is the debasement of environmental standards, the ecological degradation and the destruction of the landscape, in favor of economic growth. An ineffective legal framework and inappropriate mechanisms of urban and regional planning together with the lack of institutionalization for areas of ecological and cultural value, insufficient appreciation of the value of cultural landscapes and the lack of awareness and education, intensified the consequences of the various drivers mentioned above.

Reinforcing the tourism product through existing policies and legislation should be undertaken not only to solve problems when they arise, but as an application of procedures and guidelines that lead to specific, desirable and sustainable outcomes. Tourism, as a complex activity with a direct and indirect impact on the living and non-living space of human societies, should be suited to their characteristics and prospects, emphasizing regional uniqueness and particularities, protecting but at the same time

promoting the landscape and the environment, enhancing entrepreneurship and safeguarding local cultural, physical, economic and historical diversity and richness. For this purpose, all aspects of land use, change and development ought to be integrated, both in law and in practice, into prospective tourism planning and management.

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

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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)s 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.*

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**Keywords:** *Greek tourism education, graduates skills, demand for tourism graduates, industrial placement, hospitality industry*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Tourism education in Greece, as in most other countries, is provided by a number of state and private-sector bodies at the secondary, post-secondary and tertiary educational levels. At the tertiary level in particular, public tourism education (undergraduate studies) is provided by: (a) the Technological Educational Institutes (TEIs) supervised by the Ministry of Education, and (b) the Advanced Schools of Tourism Education (ASTE)s supervised by the Ministry of Tourism. The Technological Educational Institutes (TEIs) offer a 4-year broad academic program in tourism management, that includes a 6-month compulsory industrial placement, while the Advanced Schools of Tourism Education (ASTE)s offer a curriculum focused on hotel management, that includes a 3-year coursework and 3-month compulsory summer-time industrial placement at the end of each academic year.

Tourism education in Greece is a field that has attracted the interest of few researchers since the late 1990s. In particular, previous studies have focused on managers/ employers' opinions on what skills are required in order for the workforce to provide valued service to their customers (Christou, 1999; Christou & Eaton, 2000). Other studies examine tourism curricula effectiveness measured through graduates' evaluation by their employers' as well as by the investigation of employers' needs for qualified personnel (Christou, 1999; Pitsouli, 2005; Zacharatos, *et. al.*, 2006). Along these lines Dimou and Diplari (2010) examined the necessity for restructuring the Greek public tourism educational system. Finally, Stergiou & Airey (2012) focused on the assessment of Greek students' satisfaction with the curricula provided by tourism-related undergraduate programs of study. There are also studies that have been undertaken as part of governmental projects, or have been funded by tourism-related bodies, which aim to assess effectiveness of tourism and

hospitality degree programs and the need for tourism education reform; however the results of such studies are not easily accessible. Thus, the current study is expected to provide significant input in the debate over the ability of the Greek tourism education system to develop hospitality professionals. The study involves the hospitality industry, since the sector is considered to be the major employer for tourism education graduates in Greece and one of the major employers altogether (Institute for Economic and Industrial Research, 2013).

The objective of this research was to examine whether tourism education graduates are well-qualified when they enter the hotel labour market, and the extent to which the hospitality industry recruits tourism higher education graduates. Along these lines three research questions were identified: a) Do hoteliers prefer to employ tourism graduates as opposed to non-graduates? (b) Do graduates' competencies obtained through their studies meet industry needs and especially in regard to the skills that are considered to be of particular importance? (c) What is the perceived importance of industrial placement by hospitality employers? In particular, the participants were asked to evaluate the industrial placement which is incorporated in all the relevant programs of study. Additionally, participants were asked to state their suggestions for further improvement of the undergraduate tourism curricula provided in Greece.

This paper is organized as follows. Initially, a literature review of previous studies on competencies needed by the hospitality industry is provided, as well as a review of studies on the importance of internship (i.e. industrial placement) for the development of those competencies. An overview of the Greek public tourism education system is being presented later on, focusing on the tertiary-level institutions. Finally, the methodological approach followed in the paper is being described and the results of the research are being presented. Conclusions and suggestions for future research are provided in the last section.

## **Graduate skills and competencies in tourism**

There have been numerous studies that aim to identify the most important skills and abilities tourism graduates should possess in order to start a successful career in the tourism and hospitality industry (Agut, *et.al.* 2003; Christou, 2002; Dhiman, 2012; Huang & Lin, 2011; Kay & Moncarz, 2004; Lopez-Bonilla & Lopez-Bonilla 2014; Phelan & Mills, 2011; Rodriguez-Anton, *et.al.*, 2013, Suh, *et. al.* 2012; Testa & Sipe, 2012; Weber. *et.al.* 2012). The ultimate goal is the development of academic curricula which would provide graduates with the necessary competencies for the highly demanding jobs within the tourism sector. The tourism and hospitality industries have experienced tremendous alterations through the widely applied new technologies in most of their functions (DiPietro & Wang, 2010), and the emphasis on sustainability and green procedures (Johanson, *et.al.*, 2010; Ruiz-Molina, *et. al.* 2012), as a result, the skills required for a graduate to be successful have changed over time. For example, technical competencies, such as computing and languages, were found to be important managerial competencies by an early study (Agut, *et.al.* 2003), however there was less attention paid on those competencies later on, as most graduates are competent with computers and languages long before they enter tertiary education. Thus, the literature review of the studies on skills and competencies focuses mainly on studies carried out over the last ten to fifteen years.

A great emphasis is given by several studies on the importance of “soft” skills (Zehrer & Moessenlechen, 2009) for a successful career in the tourism and hospitality industry (Christou & Eaton, 2000; Kay & Russette, 2000; Weber, *et.al.*, 2012). Weber *et. Al.* (2013) developed a framework that consisted of five key soft skills competencies that were found to be of utmost importance for entry-level hospitality managers. These included managers' ability to develop and coordinate a team, their ability to develop, motivate and evaluate their subordinates, the need to be “problem solvers” and leaders, in the sense of influencing employees' behavior towards goal achievement. Along these lines, studies in the Taiwanese hospitality industry indicated communication skills, adaptability to environmental changes and problem solving capabilities as the most critical competencies (Huang & Lin, 2011; Lin, 2002). Connolly

& Mc Ging (2006) emphasized the preference of recruiters for practical skills, problem solving and decision making skills, rather than analytical skills, while their study also indicated that some tertiary hospitality degrees in Ireland did not meet industry's requirements. A more recent study by Testa & Sipe (2012) revealed the importance of a balance between business-oriented, people-oriented, and self-savvy skills, that included time management, self development and professionalism, while Sigala (2002) commented on the importance of cultural skills due to the multicultural characteristics of the tourism industry.

An interesting point came out from Ricci's study (2010) among lodging managers in the U.S., in order to identify whether hospitality degrees equip their graduates with the necessary qualifications to meet industry's requirements. He suggested that, due to significant inconsistencies among college hospitality programs, employers were urged to verify the level of graduates training before hiring and at the same time highlighted the need for more standardized hospitality curriculum.

### **Importance of Industrial Placement**

Another issue than has attracted the attention of researches is the importance of internship in the educational process; most studies have acknowledge the catalytic impact of industrial placement on the development of the skills that have been identified as important by the tourism and hospitality practitioners (Connolly & McGing, 2006). However, Yiu and Law (2012) asserted that, in order for internship to be successful, it requires the cooperation of students, educators and employers, since its main drawback is that students may become frustrated by the requirements of their employers and this can lead them to withdraw from their decision to enter the hospitality industry. Along these lines, Zopiatis and Theocharous (2013) examined the perceived impact of internships on students' intention to pursue a career in hospitality, while the results of a study by Koc, *et.al.* (2014) among tourism and hospitality students in Turkey, revealed that, almost one in

five interns, do not wish to work in the tourism sector after their graduation. According to Tse (2010, p. 260) “knowing what students perceive to be important and valuable in their workplace experiences is vital to ensuring the success of internships”.

Finally, a common conclusion in the studies reviewed is the need for cooperation between industry and education, in order to overcome skill shortages in the hospitality and tourism sector (Azim, 2012; Diplari and Dimou, 2010; Huang & Lin, 2011; Pitsouli, 2005; Suh, *et.al.* 2012, Tesone & Ricci, 2006; Zehrer & Moessenlechner, 2009). In particular, in their study, Beesley & Davidson (2013) revealed the importance of collaboration between government, industry and academia, if it were to combat the shortage of skilled workforce in the Australian hospitality industry and suggested various ways this cooperation could be achieved. In addition, Nolan, *et. al* (2010) asserted that partnerships between industry and academia are imperative not only in order to provide students with the necessary skills to meet industry's demands, but also as a means to boost graduates' level of job satisfaction.

In Greece, research on the effectiveness of tertiary tourism and hospitality education started in 1995, when Goldshmith and Smirli acknowledged the importance of public tourism education restructuring. The same conclusion came up through the field research conducted by Christou (1999), on hospitality graduates' satisfaction with the educational process and outcomes. The results revealed that graduates were not prepared to deal with the requirements of the tourism industry. Furthermore, an earlier study by Eaton & Christou (1997) among hotel managers, had identified “soft” skills to be of utmost importance, which included, leadership and communication skills, human resources management and total quality management. It is quite disappointing the fact that, a decade later, a study conducted by Diplari and Dimou (2010) brought up again the urgent need for tertiary tourism education restructuring, through a study they performed on both the tourism graduates and the tourism executives (directors and personnel managers). In particular, the lack of practice-oriented elements in the curricula was highlighted, including better structured internship programs, and

educational visits. It was also suggested that tourism-related bodies be encouraged to collaborate with educational institutions in the development of their new programs of study. An earlier study by Pitsouli (2005) concluded that one of the main drawbacks of the Greek tourism education system is the lack of planning and organization. Tourism education and training is provided by various institutions at different levels (secondary, post-secondary, vocational, tertiary), which are supervised by different authorities (e.g. Ministry of Education, Ministry of Tourism). As a result there is no strategy or clear direction for the Greek tourism education.

## **THE GREEK PUBLIC TOURISM EDUCATION SYSTEM**

Tertiary Public Education in Greece is divided into (a) University Education, which is provided by the Universities, the Polytechnics, and the Hellenic Open University, and (b) Technological Education, which is provided by the Technological Educational Institutes (TEIs). The Universities and the TEIs usually consist of several faculties which in turn are divided into departments. There exist two TEI departments of 'Management of Cultural and Tourism Enterprises', and eight 'Tourism and Hospitality Management' Programs of Study hosted at Business Administration TEI departments. (So far, there is no undergraduate program of studies on tourism or hospitality provided by Universities). On the other hand, tertiary vocational education in tourism is also provided by two 'Higher Education Institutes' supervised by the Ministry of Tourism, i.e., the Advanced School of Tourism Education of Crete (ASTEK) and the Advanced School of Tourism Education of Rhodes (ASTER).

Additionally, tourism education is also provided by several private Institutions and Colleges. The following table presents the map of the public tourism education system at the tertiary level.

**Table 1** Public Tourism Undergraduate Programs

Ministry of Education	
TEIs' Programs of Studies in Tourism and Hospitality Management (Business Administration Departments)	TEI of Athens
	TEI of Piraeus
	TEI of Thessaloniki
	TEI of Crete (Iraklion)
	TEI of Epirus (Igoumenitsa)
	TEI of Western Macedonia (Grevena)
	TEI of Ionian Islands (Lefkada)
	TEI of Thessaly (Larissa)
TEIs' Departments of Management of Cultural and Tourism Enterprises	TEI of Western Greece (Pyrgos)
	TEI of Central Greece (Amfissa)
Ministry of Tourism	
(ASTE)s Advanced Schools of Tourism Education	ASTE of Crete
	ASTE of Rhodes

Source: Ministry of Education, 2013

The TEIs offer a four year broad academic program in tourism management which includes a semester of placement and thesis preparation, whereas the program of studies at the ASTEs is more practice-oriented and focused on hotel management. The latter consists of 3 academic years of course work and nine months of practical training. However, the programs of the TEIs and the ASTEs exhibit many similarities. In all cases, the academic year consists of two semesters, each with thirteen full weeks of coursework and two weeks of examinations. Moreover, requirements for graduation include the successful examination in about 40 subjects, compulsory and electives, the preparation of a thesis and participation in an industrial placement program. The current, updated TEI's curricula contain between 43 and 58 subjects (including electives) while ASTES's curricula contain 43 subjects. Many of these subjects are identical or cover the same area of study. However, there also exist major differences between the programs of study of the TEIs and the ASTEs. The most important difference is related to the academic recognition of the degrees offered. Namely, although the ASTEs are accredited as higher educational institutions and their graduates have the same professional rights with the graduates of the

TEIs, academically the degrees offers by the ASTEs are not considered equivalent. In particular, ASTEs graduates are not accepted in Master's and Doctoral programs offered by Greek Universities. Actually, in order to overcome this difficulty the graduates of the ASTEs that wish to pursue postgraduate studies can register, for two more semesters of course work and thesis composition, in a Tourism and Hospitality Management department at a TEI, and earn the TEI's degree.

Another difference is related to the industrial placement scheme incorporated in both the TEIs and the ASTEs curricula. Namely, the students of the ASTES have to complete three months supervised placement at the end of each academic year exclusively in hotel companies (5 star or 4-star and 3-star hotels under certain restrictions) while the students of the TEIs can choose between hotel companies, travel organizations or public sector organizations related to tourism (e.g. GNTO) and they are placed for six months during the last semester of their studies. According to the data obtained by the Industrial Placement Office of the TEI of Crete, 30% of its students are placed in public sector organizations, 50% in hotels & 18% in Tourism Agencies. Evaluation of the existing Industrial Placement systems is among the objectives of this paper.

## **METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH**

Primary data were collected from 4 and 5 star hotels and hotel chains in Crete. Restricting the research to regional hotels, was not considered a limitation, as Crete is one of the most significant tourism destinations in Greece, hosting some of the best luxury hotels, and accepting more than 3 million visitors every year. On the other hand, in Crete there exist both the TEI department of Tourism and Hospitality Management in the city of Iraklion and the ASTE of Crete in the town of Aghios Nikolaos. Both Institutes' senior students realize their internship at Cretan Hotels and quite a few of them find their first work placements in these hotels. Thus, managers of regional hotels were expected to have worked with quite a few of these graduates, and to be more enthusiastic to participate to our

research. At the time of the research there were 60, 5 star and 120, 4 star hotels operating in the region of Crete, and the one third (1/3) of them were included in our sample. Thus, the sample consisted of 60 hotels in total, i.e., 20, 5 star and, 40, 4 star hotels which were randomly selected from the original list. The reasons why luxury (4 and 5 star) hotels were chosen for this study are the following: (a) Luxury hotels are usually the largest with many different departments, employing graduates in various positions and have employed a large number of graduates throughout the years; as a result directors / managers can provide a more thorough opinion of whether graduates are competent enough to match the hotels' needs. The assumption is that when a graduate is well qualified to meet the requirements of a position in the demanding hotel environment of a luxury hotel, they are competent enough to be employed by a smaller, mid-market or budget hotel. (b) The extent to which they employ students for their industrial placement. Small hotels and self-catering establishments are not allowed to participate in the industrial placement programs, while middle-size hotels (3 star hotels with more than 150 beds capacity) do participate but to a lower extent).

The questionnaire of the research was divided in four sections, and consisted mainly by closed-ended questions. In the first section information about the hotel and the person who filled the questionnaire was requested. Specifically, the participants were asked to provide data about their hotel's capacity and star rating, as well as their position in the company and their contact information. The second section included a table to be filled with the number of tourism and other graduates employed in the different departments, i.e. the Rooms Division, the F&B department, Accounting, Sales & Marketing, and other. Next, the managers were asked to characterize the TEIs' and ASTEs' graduates, as 'well', 'under', or 'over' educated for the positions they occupy in the hotel, and furthermore to indicate on a 5-point Likert scale, the degree to which these graduates possess the necessary theoretical knowledge, practical experience, and skills (computer skills, foreign languages, communication, administrative, or other). The third section was intended to monitor participants' opinion on the overall effectiveness of industrial

placement programs (internships) realized by the TEIs and the ASTEs. The participants were asked to report the extent to which they take interns from the Universities, the TEIs, the ASTEs, and/or other vocational and post secondary institutes, and to evaluate internships in general. Next, they were asked to state which scheme of internship (TEIs' one academic semester vs. ASTEs' nine calendar months) they prefer, in terms of the objectives of both the student's training and the hotel's operation. Finally, in the last section of the questionnaire, an open-ended question was asking participants' opinion on how graduates' competencies and education effectiveness could be further enhanced.

The questionnaire was distributed by email to the sixty hotels of the sample in April 2013. At the same time, the directors or the personnel managers of all the hotels were contacted by phone, they were informed of the objectives of the research and kindly invited to participate in the study.

## **THE RESULTS**

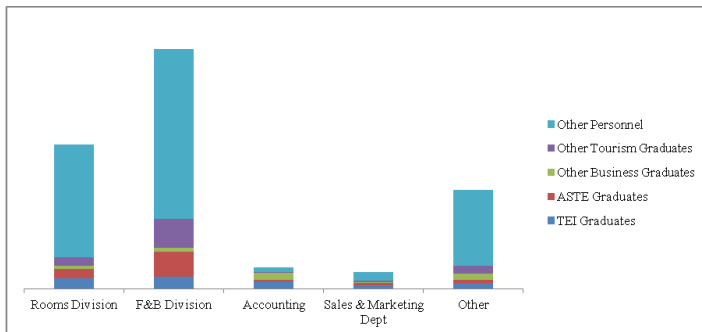
Thirty two filled questionnaires were collected, a number that corresponds to a 53% response rate. Fourteen of them (44%) were from 4-star hotels, and eighteen (56%) from 5-star hotels. Evidently, 5 star hotels' managers were more helpful and the response rate for the category was 90%, while the response rate of 4-star hotels was 35%. With respect to capacity, only 13% of the participated hotels could be classified as fairly small hotels, having a capacity of less than 200 beds, 40% of the hotels of the research had between 200 and 500, 20% between 500 and 700, and 27% had more than 700 beds.

### **Hospitality Industry's Demand for Tourism Graduates**

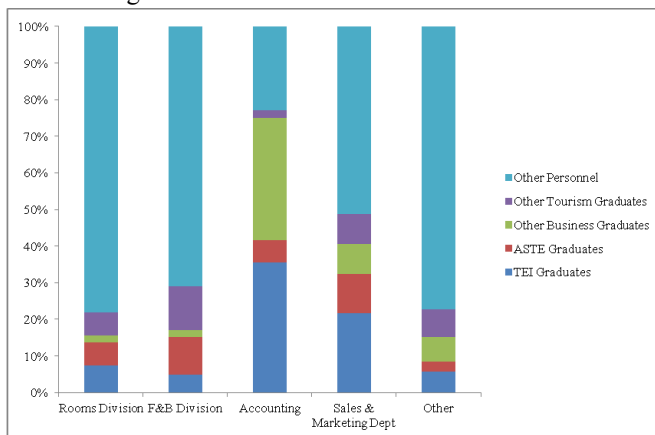
The managers were asked to report the number of ASTE and TEI graduates employed in their major departments (Rooms Division, F&B, Accounting, Sales & Marketing). Our intention was to investigate how this number compares to the number of (a) graduates from other Business

and Finance Schools, (b) tourism graduates of private institutions (private colleges), and (c) other personnel employed. Unfortunately, the findings were discouraging. In around 2500 employees, only a small percentage (15%) were TEI or ASTE graduates (7% and 8% respectively) whereas 9% were graduates from private tourism education institutions, and 4% were graduates of business or finance departments. The vast majority (72%), of the personnel of the 4 and 5 star hotels of the research had only secondary school or lower qualifications, or had not tourism education or training whatsoever. Furthermore, Figure 1 exhibits the number of employees of different educational backgrounds employed in the four major hotel departments. Apparently, the Rooms Division and the F&B Division are the two larger hotel departments with respect to the staff size, and the vast majority of their personnel, specifically more than 80% of the staff of the Rooms Division and 70% of the staff of the F&B Division did not have any tourism education or training (Figure 2). This is a clear indication that until today, hotel managers/owners have not yet realized the importance of having highly qualified front-line personnel. Figure 2, presents the distribution of the personnel in each one of the major departments according to their educational background. It appears that the ASTE graduates outperform the TEIs' in the F&B Division while TEI graduates slightly outperform the ASTEs' in the Rooms Division. On the other hand, as one would expect, TEI tourism graduates represent the majority of employees in Sales & Marketing as well as Accounting departments. Actually, Accounting departments were staffed almost exclusively by TEI tourism and business graduates. Furthermore, the majority of the higher education tourism graduates (both TEI and ASTE) work in the F&B department followed by the Room Division, the Accounting and the Sales & Marketing departments. Finally, the majority of F&B workforce comes from private tourism-related educational institutions, followed by ASTEs' graduates, whereas, graduates from all types of tourism-related institutions compete almost evenly for a position in Rooms Division departments.

**Figure 1** Hotel employees according to their educational background



**Figure 2** Distribution of Employees in each Department according to Educational Background



## Education Effectiveness

The following table presents hotel managers' opinion on the effectiveness of the education provided by the TEIs & the ASTEs' to their graduates. 75% of the managers find that these graduates are considered well educated in relation to the job positions they occupy. Moreover, both their theoretical and their practical knowledge and training are considered

from ‘enough’ to ‘very much’ satisfactory by more than 82% of the managers, although 19% of them apparently require more practical training. On the other hand, 31% of the managers reported that the graduates do not have any or have only ‘a little’ computer and foreign languages skills, and 50% of the participants stated that graduates lack communication skills which are considered very important in the sector. Furthermore, when participants were asked to state, in an open-ended question, their opinion on how graduates’ competencies and education effectiveness could be further enhanced, they stressed out that in order to further improve the academic curricula, faculty should also teach certain ‘soft skills’, such as: responsibility, professionalism, decision making skills, team working, ability to develop positive customer relations, critical thinking, and love of the profession.

**Table 2** Satisfaction with Graduates’ Education and Skills

Overall Level of Education	
	Percent
Under-educated	25%
Well-educated	75%
Theoretical Knowledge	
A little	6%
Enough	38%
Much	56%
Practical Knowledge & Training	
A little	19%
Enough	44%
Much	25%
Very Much	13%
Computer Skills	
Not at all	6%
A little	25%
Enough	44%
Much	19%
Very Much	6%
Foreign Languages	

Not at all	6%
A little	25%
Enough	44%
Much	6%
Very Much	19%
<b>Communication Skills</b>	
Not at all	19%
A little	31%
Enough	13%
Much	25%
Very Much	13%

## **Industrial Placement**

Industrial placement (internship) is a degree requirement in all public tourism programs of study in Greece. Participants in this research were asked to state whether during the last three years they had accepted any interns in their hotel and if so, from which Institutions, and of which educational level. It turned out that all the respondents had hired interns during this period. In particular, seven out of ten of the hotels had accepted interns from the ASTESs at some point during the last three years, while three out of 10 hotels had recruited an intern from a Technological Educational Institution. Additionally, 56% had accepted trainees from Vocational Training Institutes (post secondary, two year training schools) and half of the hotels had employed students from Secondary Vocational Tourism Schools as practitioners. Therefore, it turned out that all hospitality employers that participated in the research systematically take advantage of the industrial placement program, since they hire interns from all different tourism education institutions. Moreover, all the respondents had positive perceptions about industrial placement, and interestingly, the 9-month placement scheme of the ASTEs (three months at the end of each academic year, during the summer season) was considered preferable by 80% of the participants,

compared to the 6-month placement of the TEIs. However, hotel managers underlined that placements should start earlier in the season (ASTE placements start July 1), or even be extended by a month, to allow time for the students to adapt and for their supervisors to train them and treat them as students and not just as workforce.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

In an attempt to highlight the most important findings of the research one has to point out that although the majority of the hotel managers find that both the TEIs and ASTEs graduates are well educated for the positions they occupy, half of them stated that graduates lack ‘communication’ as well as other ‘soft skills’, which are considered very important in the sector (Christou & Eaton, 2000; Zehrer & Moessenlechen, 2009). Participants emphasized that academic institutions should teach the pursue of innovation, creativity, enthusiasm along with a clear understanding of the nature and the importance of the job. Additionally, managers highlighted the need for more foreign language teaching in the programs of studies, emphasizing on new markets’ languages (e.g. Russian), while modules aiming to enhance students’ computer skills, particularly on handling the different hotel management applications, were also considered to be of importance.

Moreover, it was suggested that education providers keep a close and effective cooperation with the tourism bodies, in order to keep track of the new developments in the tourism business, and update the academic curricula constantly to fit the hospitality industry’s needs. This is in accordance with previous studies that suggested the establishment of closer links between tourism curricula and the industry (Diplari & Dimou, 2010; Huang & Lin, 2011; Nolan, *et.al.*, 2010).

The main limitation of the study is that the response rate was significantly lower than expected, considering the close cooperation between the authors' institutions and the Cretan hoteliers. This was probably due to the fact that the research was carried out during the beginning of the summer season in Crete.

Issues that require further investigation are (a) the hoteliers' view on how cooperation between education and industry could be enhanced and how the development of employability skills could be incorporated in academic curricula, (b) a more in-depth research on the effectiveness of industrial placement, as viewed by employers, academic institutions and students, (c) the reasons hospitality employers prefer to hire unskilled personnel and (d) comparisons between TEIs' and ASTEs' graduates, in terms of employability competencies, hierarchy positions at the hotels, etc. The current study could indicate the areas that need to be improved in future curricula.

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

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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.*

**Keywords:** *ecotourism, Greece, management body of protected area, ecotourism enterprise*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Tourism is a critical issue for the developmental course of Greece and currently more relevant than ever before, because of its spatial and environmental dimensions. The new development planning for the period 2014-2020 has placed tourism among the main axes of the development strategy and acknowledged its very significant contribution towards the effort of the recovery of the Greek economy. In addition, certain reasons are intensifying the necessity for temporal diffusion of tourism and the development of new tourism products (intense seasonality, the rise of new competitive destinations that also offer “sea and sun”, the consequences of the economic recession etc).

Ecotourism is a main form of the sustainable tourism model (and not only a special form of alternative tourism), given that it covers, under certain conditions, some of its forms (nature tourism, adventure tourism etc.). Furthermore, Greece has a great diversity, uniqueness and authenticity of environmental resources, which vary by type of territory (mountain areas, wetlands, insular/ coastal areas) and may support the ecotourism activity throughout the year. In this context, ecotourism is considered to have potential and also shapes prospects, in order to provide a solution to the issues of the less developed regions of the country.

This research study, starting from the above ascertainments and assessment, attempts to contribute to the exploration of the key factors concerning the development and organization of ecotourism in Greece: ecotourist demand and supply, ecotourism planning, protected area management bodies, tourist enterprises engaging in the field of ecotourism.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: CONCEPTUAL APPROACHES AND DEVELOPMENT CHARACTERISTICS OF ECOTOURISM**

Ecotourism has emerged through the development of the environmental movement (since the 1970s). Environmental sensitivity, in conjunction with the increasing resentment towards the conventional – mass tourism, has led to the choice of ecotourism as an alternative form of tourism that is characterised by greater environmental and social awareness. Moreover, mainly since the 1980s, there have been many examples of less developed countries that have depended their development on ecotourism as a means for conserving their rich natural heritage, on one part, and for economic growth, on the other part.

According to the official definition given by the International Ecotourism Society, the first world-wide organization for ecotourism, ecotourism is now defined as "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education" (The International Ecotourism Society, 2015).

Fennell, in his paper titled "Ecotourism", cites at least 14 different definitions of ecotourism and formulates his own definition, which is based on those that are, in his opinion, the most significant elements of the phenomenon and the need to ensure accuracy in these principles. Therefore, the definition given by Fennell is as follows (Fennell, 2001:73):

Ecotourism is a sustainable form of natural resource-based tourism that focuses primarily on experiencing and learning about nature, and which is ethically managed to be low-impact, non-consumptive, and locally oriented (control, benefits, and scale). It typically occurs in natural areas, and should contribute to the conservation or preservation of such areas.

The main characteristics identifying real ecotourism are as follows (Honey, 2008):

- It involves travel to natural destinations, which are usually under some kind of protection (at the national, international, communal or private level).
  - It minimizes impact by using either recycled materials or plentifully available local building materials, renewable sources of energy, environmentally and culturally sensitive architectural design, regulated number and mode of behaviour of tourists, etc.
  - It builds environmental awareness through education, for both tourists and residents of nearby communities. Essential to good ecotourism are well-trained, multilingual naturalist guides with skills in natural and cultural history, environmental interpretation, ethical principles and effective communication.
  - It provides direct financial benefits for conservation; namely the environmental protection, research and education through a variety of mechanisms, including park entrance fees, tour company, hotel, airline and airport taxes and voluntary contributions.
  - It provides financial benefits and empowerment for local people. The local community must be involved with and receive income and other tangible benefits (e.g. infrastructure) from the conservation area and its tourist facilities.
  - It respects local culture. This is not easy, especially since ecotourism often involves travel to remote areas where small and isolate communities have had little experience interacting with foreigners. Part of being a responsible ecotourist is learning beforehand about the local customs, respecting dress codes and other social norms and not intruding on the community unless invited.
  - It supports human rights and democratic movements.
- Assessing the various definitions formulated to determine ecotourism, Diamantis (1999) concludes that most of them include three common elements:
- Ecotourism is natural-based. The main issue is that ecotourism takes place in both protected and non-protected areas, and that it has certain similarities with natural-based tourism.

- Sustainable management. Ecotourism should abolish the “tourism-centered” syndrome and adopt the “nature-centered approach in order to reflect sustainability rather than tourism principles.
- Education-interpretation. The different types of environmental education/ training programmes have highlighted a number of issues. The critical issues with these programmes is that they have to reflect the needs and the demands of both stakeholders and consumers.

Another interesting approach is that of Yeo and Piper from the field of social disciplines, which addresses the issue of defining ecotourism as an ethical and, actually, political issue. It cites characteristically (Yeo and Piper, 2011:12):

To answer the question "what is ecotourism?" is not to simply to say something about what in fact is counted as or called ecotourism but rather what, normatively speaking, should be counted or called ecotourism. The answer to this question matters not just for statistical purposes but also for policy purposes insofar as policy seeks to shape, manage and control the growing ecotourism industry.

Moreover, while the first conceptual approaches were focused on the experience a tourist searches for, which is natural-based, the most recent definitions place emphasis on the various principles that are related to the notion of sustainable development, since it is increasingly acknowledged by industry and governments that natural-based tourism may be sustainable in the long-run only if ethical and preventive management, from the ecotourist supply aspect, is applied (Blamey, 2001).

Concluding, the analysis of the definitions results in four main pillars on which the ecotourism construction is based:

1. Interest in the nature and contribution to its protection.
2. Benefits for the local society.
3. Promotion of education and interpretation.
4. Sustainable management.

Lastly, this study adopts a fifth pillar, which is considered by certain authors (such as Blamey, 2001; Fennell, 2001; Hill and Gale, 2009; Honey, 2008), but not by the majority, as essential to determining ecotourism; this is the small scale, arguing that, if ecotourism is not

maintained at that scale, then the impacts of mass tourism, which is interwoven with the large scale, will gradually emerge.

## **CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECOTOURISM IN GREECE**

### **Methodology**

Given that there are no researches and/or studies on the qualitative and quantitative characteristics of ecotourism in Greece, its spatial organization, its development capacities and restrictions, it is considered necessary to supplement the knowledge about the said research question with field study. In this context, the methodological approach applied consists of primary research also, following the exploration of the theoretical framework through literature review.

Specifically, the field study attempts to highlight the key features of:

- ecotourist demand (number of ecotourists, spatial and time allocation per protected area and month);
- ecotourist supply (protected natural areas and their allocation in the Greek territory);
- ecotourism planning (special environmental assessments, joint ministerial decisions/ presidential decrees designating and demarcating protected areas, management plans);
- the protected area management bodies involved in the ecotourism development process;
- tourist enterprises engaging in the field of ecotourism.

Target-populations have been selected so as to serve the research purposes and to answer to the questions posed by it. These are:

**A. The 28 Management Bodies (MBs) of Protected Areas (PAs) in Greece**, given that ecotourism takes place in natural areas and these areas are the primary field of its activity. The MBs have been, since their establishment by virtue of Law 2742/99, the institutional body having exclusive competence to administer and manage protected areas.

**B. Tourist enterprises** (tourist agencies, training schools, and any other provider of services related to ecotourism activities) engaging in alternative forms of tourism in Greece, placing emphasis on ecotourism. However, given that the Greek Tourism Organization has no structured database relating to enterprises exclusively or largely engaging in the said form of tourism, a database has been created using data from multiple information sources. The number of enterprises stood at 58.

**C. Public, private and professional bodies carrying out ecotourism-related activities** (Ministry of Tourism, Greek Tourism Organization, WWF Hellas, Hellenic Ornithological Society, Association of Greek Tourism Enterprises, Hellenic Association of Travel and Tourist Agencies etc.)

**D. Tourism experts**

A specific group of informers consisting of experts in matters of ecotourism and tourism in general.

**Table 1:** Field Study Identification Details

Target-Population	Sample	Data Collection Techniques	Timeframe	Research Purpose
Management Bodies of protected area	Full	Literature and online research – Structured interview	May-December 2012	Exploration/Description
Tourist enterprises engaging in the field of ecotourism	Full	Literature and online research – Structured interview	May-September 2012	Exploration/Description
Bodies carrying out ecotourism-related activities	Representative	Semi-structured interview	May-September 2012	Exploration/Explication
Tourism experts	Representative	Semi-structured interview	May-September 2012	Exploration/Explication

**Source:** data processed by the authors

## **Evaluation criteria of the 28 Management Bodies (MBs) of Protected Areas (PAs) in Greece**

At this phase, the research was aimed at exploring some of the main parameters formulating the basic characteristics of the development and organization of ecotourism in the Greek territory. Within the above context, four criteria have been set for the comparative evaluation of the 28 MBs.

The first criterion that has been set is **the recognition of the environmental importance of the PAs**. The environmental importance of the PAs is documented through the comparative (between all 28 PAs with MBs) and composite (at national and EU/ international level) presentation of the framework (not only the legal but also the scientific one) recognizing the environmental value of a part of or the total PA that is under the competence of the MB and stipulating its protection (the geographical allocation of the PAs with MB is shown on the following map).

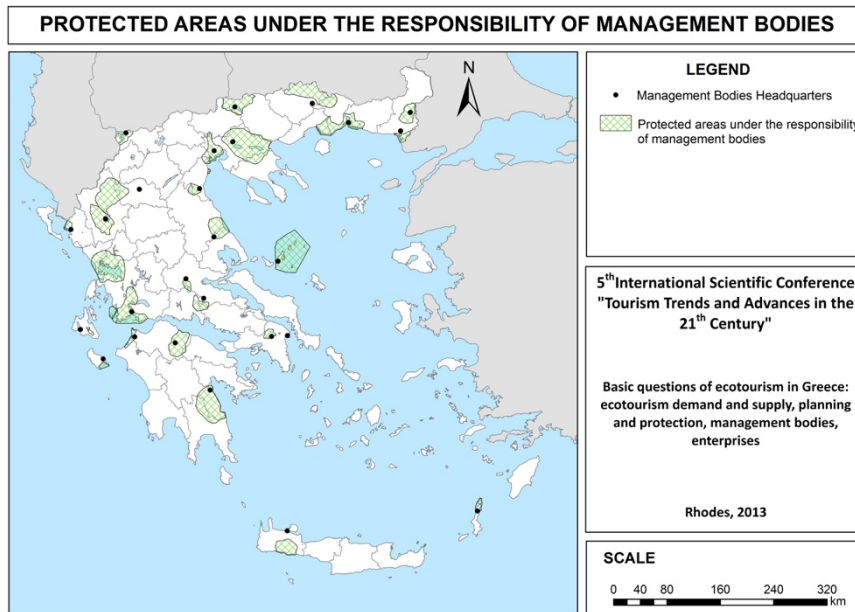
The second criterion is **the progress made in planning the PAs and, subsequently, their protection prospects**. One of the essential conditions for the development of ecotourism, as defined above, is that it must be governed by specific principles and implement a specific strategy pursuing clear objectives (organization, protection, management). Namely, the second basic evaluation criterion is the progress made in the planning, in this case environmental/ spatial planning, which is established by law and dictates the manner in, and the conditions under, which tourism may develop. Moreover, the progress made in the planning is subsequently translated into prospects for the protection of the PAs, which entails long-term quality of the PA's environment and, therefore, greater capacities for ecotourism development.

Moreover, the evaluation comprises of **the facilities and activities provided by the MBs**, based on the institutional framework governing them and the last one criterion is **the tourist demand**. As revealed also by the literature review, it is very difficult to isolate the demand for

ecotourism, because there is, first of all, a disagreement relating to what is defined as ecotourism and which are its characteristics. Therefore, the assumption made by the research is that ecotourists are those who have visited the areas of highest environmental importance in Greece with a MB, using the data recorded in the information centers of these Bodies and in the forest directorates.

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**Map 1:** The geographical allocation of Protected Areas (PAs) under the responsibility of Management Bodies (MBs)



## **Findings from the primary research on the 28 Management Bodies (MBs) of Protected Areas (PAs) in Greece**

The field study carried out revealed that the importance of these areas has been recognized by both the national legislation (national forests, national parks, etc.) and the EU and international legislation. Such an example is the Samaria canyon, which is the only canyon in Greece that has been awarded a Eurodiploma by the Council of Europe. Moreover, the Mount Olympus (4,000 ha) and the area of Samaria (4,850 ha) in Greece have been designated Biosphere Reserves. Four areas in Greece have been designated Geoparks to date, two of which belong to PAs with MBs and are the Helmos-Vouraikos National Park and the area of the Vikos-Aoos National Forest.

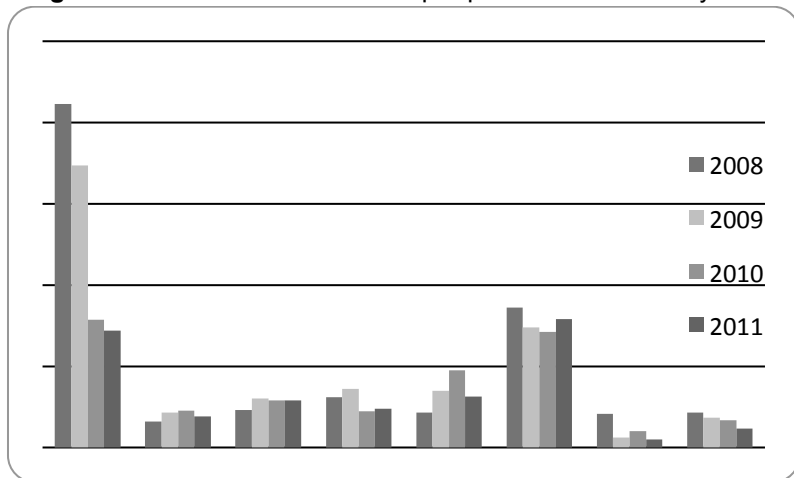
Furthermore, regarding the planning process of these areas, the majority of the PAs with MBs has an approved Special Environmental Assessment (SEA) (25 out of the 28 PAs). A Joint Ministerial Decision (JMD) or Presidential Decree (PD) has been adopted for the demarcation and designation for most of these areas (19 out of the 28 PAs), while since today no Management Plan (MP) has been approved.

In addition, most MBs have established information centers, organize training and awareness programs in cooperation with other competent public or private bodies, as well as conferences, seminars, workshops and other informational events for promoting the management objectives and achievements. The active Bodies with regard to promotion, support, organization and implementation of ecotourism programs are the following: the MBs of the National Park of the Evros River, the National Park of the Koronia-Volvi Lakes, the National Park of the Estuaries of the Axios – Loudias – Aliakmonas rivers, the National Park of the National Marine Park of Zakynthos, the National Park of Northern Pindos, etc. It is noted that WWF Hellas established in 1994 in the National Park of Dadia the first organized ecotourism system in Greece.

Finally, major problems that the MBs have to deal with are the lack of staff, the lack of financial resources, etc., that are reflected in the organization and operation of these Bodies. Certainly, this is a basic

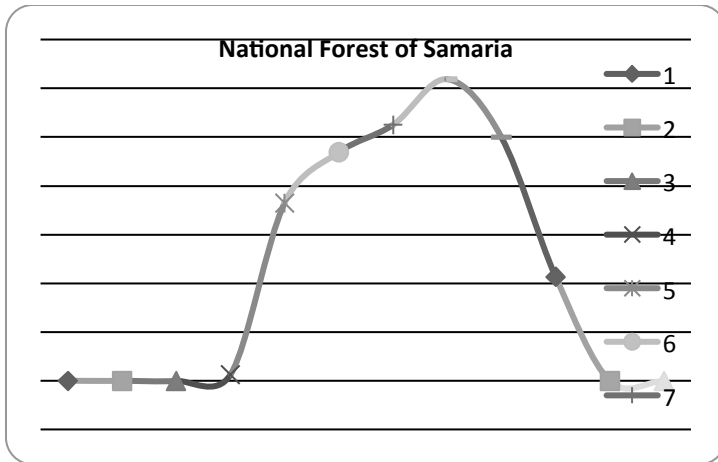
reason that they are not keeping tourist traffic data. As regards those that have provided such data, it is observed that the protected area with the highest number of visits is the National Forest of Samaria, with 135,000 tourists in 2011, followed by the National Forest of the Mount Olympus, with approximately 115,000 tourists. However, it must be stressed out that no safe conclusions may be drawn regarding the demand, since the National Forest of Samaria is the only PA in Greece where tickets are paid for visits and, therefore, the number of visitors is controlled, while the National Forest of the Mount Olympus features a central guard post, through which most visitors enter the national forest, being the central entrance to it, and, therefore, that number approximates the actual demand. This is not the case in the other PAs with MB, since the data come from the visitors' records of the information centers, which means that a person may have visited the Prespes lakes, for example, without having passed through the information center first and, therefore, he has not been recorded.

**Diagram 1:** Number of ecotourists per protected area and year



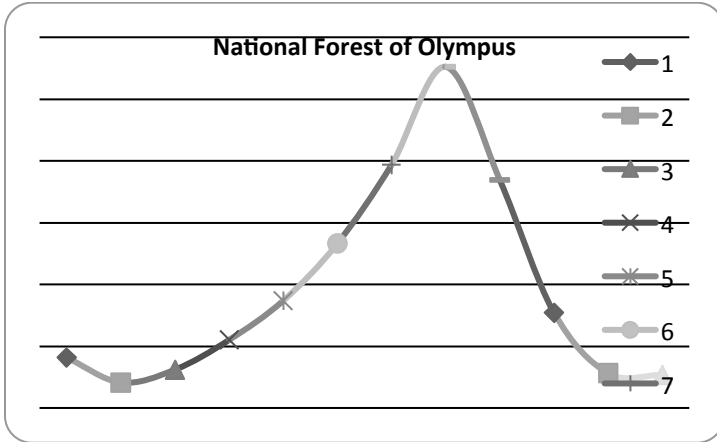
**Source:** field research, data recorded in the information centers of MBs/ in the forest directorates

**Diagram 2:** Number of ecotourists per protected area and month:  
National Park of Samaria and Lefka Ori Forests



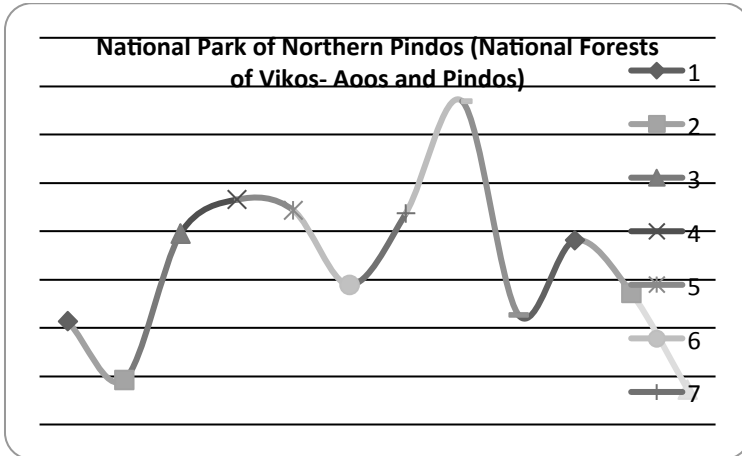
**Source:** field research, data recorded in the Forest Directorate of Chania

**Diagram 3:** Number of ecotourists per protected area and month:  
National Park of Olympus Mountain



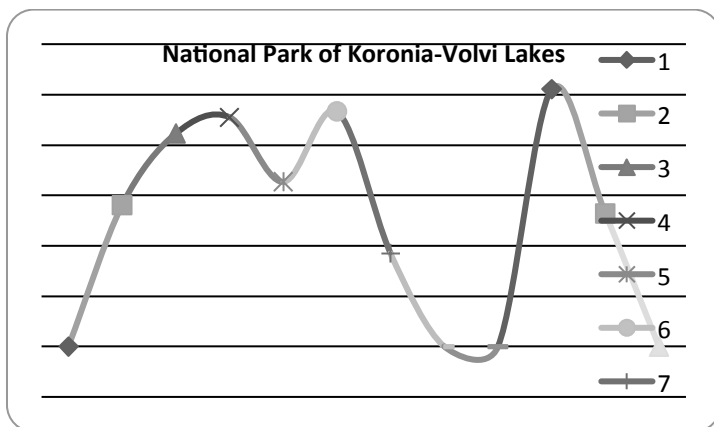
**Source:** field research, data recorded in the information center of MB

**Diagram 4:** Number of ecotourists per protected area and month: National Park of Northern Pindos



**Source:** field research, data recorded in the information center of MB

**Diagram 5:** Number of ecotourists per protected area and month: National Park of Koronia- Volvi Lakes



**Source:** field research, data recorded in the information center of MB

It is also observed a fall in the number of visitors in 2011 as compared to the 2008 data, i.e. at the beginning of the economic recession, with the exception of the National Park of the Nestos River Estuaries - Vistonida Lake - Ismarida Lake, the National Park of the Koronia - Volvi Lakes and the National Park of the Prespes Lakes (diagram 1).

As regards the profile of visitors, the main categories of visitors are: students at primary and secondary schools, persons participating in organized tours, members of mountaineering associations, individual Greek or foreign tourists with special interest in nature.

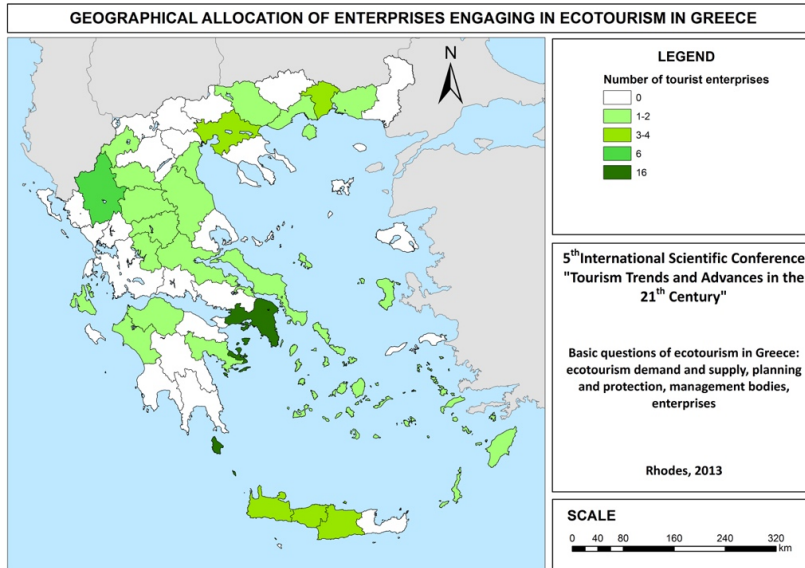
Finally, it is concluded that ecotourism, depending on the environmental resources of each area, may be exercised throughout the year. For example, the Samaria canyon is open for visits from April to October and is mostly visited in August, since that is the time when the highest tourist demand is recorded in the greater area. In other cases, such as the National Park of Koronia- Volvi Lakes, the highest tourist demand is recorded during the spring and autumn months, etc (diagrams 2 - 5).

## **Evaluation criteria of the 58 Tourist Enterprises engaging in ecotourism in Greece**

The following criteria have been set for the comparative evaluation of the 58 tourist enterprises:

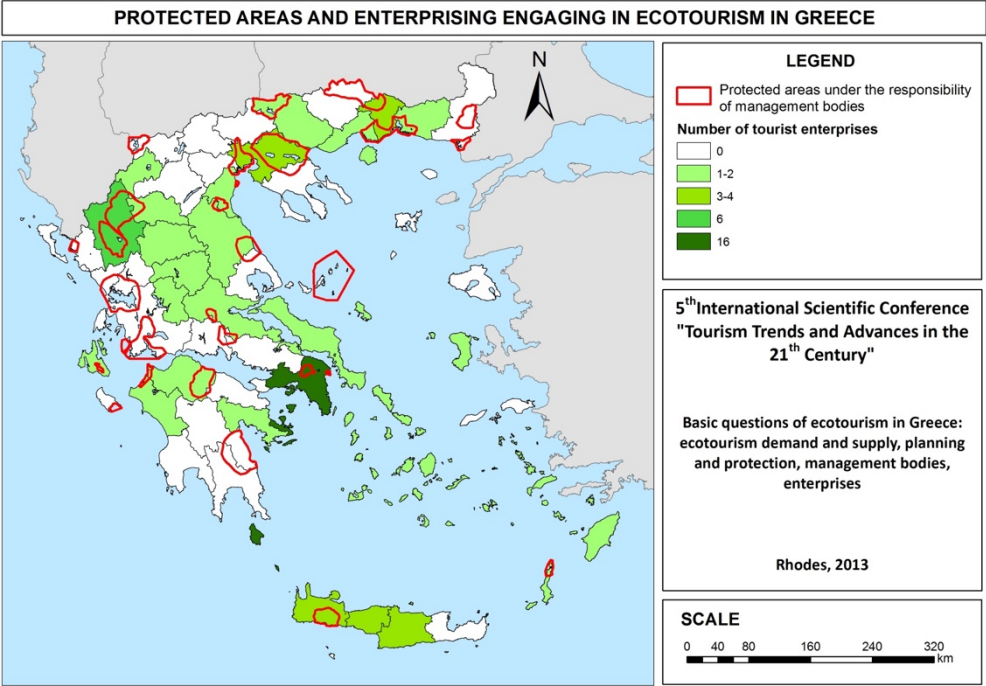
1. The geographical allocation of enterprises engaging in ecotourism (which have been verified to currently operate). This allocation is shown on the following map (map 2).
2. The legal form of the enterprises and their year of establishment.
3. The proportion of tourist agencies in the total number of enterprises.
4. The object of the enterprises.

**Map 2:** The geographical allocation of enterprises engaging in ecotourism in Greece



**Source:** field research

**Map 3:** Protected areas and enterprising engaging in ecotourism in Greece



Source: field research

## **Findings from the primary research on the 58 Tourist Enterprises engaging in ecotourism in Greece**

The field study carried out revealed as regards the geographical allocation of enterprises, that the largest proportion of them are headquartered in the Prefecture of Attica (16 enterprises or approximately 28%), followed by the Prefecture of Ioannina with 6 enterprises (10%). **From the** survey deduced also, as expected, the correlation (high or low) of services / activities offered by these enterprises to natural resources (map 3). For example, significant correlation of these two key components of the ecotourist supply occurs in the case of Ioannina. This happens because in the Prefecture of Ioannina located the largest part of the National Park of Northern Pindos as well as the Eco-Development Area of Pamvotis Lake and the National Park of Tzoumerka, Peristeri and Arachthos Gorge.

Relating to the legal form of the enterprises, half of them are companies (approximately 45%), while approximately 28% of them are sole proprietorships. It's also worth noting that the specific enterprises have been mostly established after 1990 (more than 40%), while approximately 28% of the enterprises asked have been established after 2000. This is in line with the opinion that ecotourism, in its wider sense, appeared in Greece in the 1980s (approximately 9% of the enterprises were established in the 1980s), as most forms of alternative tourism did, but mostly developed in the 1990s.

The percentage of legally operating tourist agencies in the total number of tourist enterprises does not exceed 52%, while a large percentage of the enterprises are classified as "other enterprise", which is usually a sports center, a training school, but they also provide, in practice, the services of a tourist agency (i.e. transportation, transfer, accommodation of individual persons or groups of persons).

Lastly, as regards the scope of activity of these enterprises, more than 50% of them provide the services laid down in the law - provision of any kind of tourist agency services (elaboration and execution of excursion

and tour plans, mediation for booking accommodation, mediation for booking tickets, etc.). More than 40% of the enterprises have stated that they may provide any service according to the demand in cooperation with relevant tourist agencies – partners. It has been, also, identified that 17% of the enterprises are specialized in one activity only (e.g. rafting).

## **CONCLUSIONS**

From the literature review inferred that the question of the definition of ecotourism covers a major part of the literature. For example, Fennell (2001) recognizes 85 definitions of ecotourism and finds that dimensions, such as conservation, ethics, sustainability, education and benefits to the local community, tend to dominate in the more recent analysis (Weaver and Lawton, 2007).

Concerning the relation of ecotourism to other similar forms of tourism, there is a subtle distinction in the conceptual definition of three forms of tourism which some researches tend to address as one, due to numerous difficulties. These forms are: ecotourism, nature tourism and adventure tourism and this happens because all three of them usually take place in natural areas of environmental significance. In Greece there is an additional confusion with agrotourism as well.

Moreover, it is worth mentioning that the largest part of researches in the literature is covered by case studies related to the ecotourism destination, namely the protected areas of less developed countries. There are almost no researches on the qualitative and quantitative features of ecotourism in Greece. In addition, it is proven that case studies on ecotourism pertain, in their vast majority, to public protected areas.

As regards the basic findings from the primary research on the Protected Areas with Management Bodies in Greece has to be mentioned that even though the institutional framework strengthens the MBs, this is rendered impossible, in practice, due to the serious and chronic lack of economic and human resources.

The evaluation relating to the execution of their competences shows that some Bodies are much more active than the others. This does not

happen only when some Bodies have been established earlier (e.g. the MB of the National Marine Park of Zakynthos), but also because some areas featured a relevant infrastructure which has been reinforced by the establishment of the Body (e.g. the Society for the Protection of the Prespes Lakes facilitated the work of the MB of the National Park of Prespes).

Concerning the planning in PAs in Greece is assessed as incomplete, fragmented and, in certain cases, even non-existent, which largely restricts protection capacities. Moreover, even in PAs where there are plans, there are no appropriate mechanisms for their implementation, control and follow-up. In particular, even though the elaboration of the Management Plans has been an obligation since 1999, no MP in the PAs has been approved to date.

Relating to the enterprises, many of them are referred to as “ecotourist”, but they feature very few or none of these characteristics, which means that ecotourism is used to attain economic objectives, by promoting the quality of the environment as a means for attracting tourists and not for conserving the natural capital (a few cases are excepted).

In addition to the above, it must be understood that each Protected Area is unique and special, its ecological value and its carrying capacity per zone must first be recognized by the planning and, subsequently, the conditions/ criteria for its management must be set. For that reason, it is necessary to promote specific and substantial institutional and structural changes that will lead to the creation of a coherent and operating National System of Protected Areas, which will cover not only the areas that currently fall within the competence of MBs, but also all areas that have been included in the ecological Natura 2000 network.

Setting as a prerequisite the rational planning and management of ecotourism in PAs, the potential socio-economic benefits from the development of ecotourism in Greece are as follows:

- Economic diversification, especially in mountainous, remote and rural areas and strengthening of the local economy.
- Increase in the direct and indirect employment.

- Increase in the demand for local products (e.g. ecological/ organic) and services (support to local producers and local entrepreneurs).
- Enhancement of the environmental conscience/ ethics both of the local residents and of the tourists.

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## SOCIAL MEDIA AS A MARKETING TOOL FOR GREEK DESTINATIONS

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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.*

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JEL Classification:

## **INTRODUCTION**

The emergence of new tourism destinations, the change in the motivations and preferences of tourists, and the intense competition in a rapidly and radically changing global environment, have forced destinations to seek more innovative marketing strategies in order to gain a competitive advantage. Moreover, Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) are under increasing pressure to demonstrate cost effectiveness and evidence the additional value which accrues from their marketing interventions. This pressure is exacerbated further by the continuing global economic crisis, its impact on their public spending resource allocation, and the subsequent drive for value-for-money. If DMOs cannot demonstrate this added value, they will face further budget reductions and the curtailment of their activities (Morgan et al., 2012).

On the other hand, destination marketing practices are greatly influenced by advances in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) due to the fragmented and information intensive nature of destination products (Cobos et al., 2009). Online information is now one of a primary influences on consumer decisions in nearly all major markets. Technological changes also impact on the way that destinations manage and market themselves. ICTs have changed the tourism industry in an unprecedented way, and to a degree that has not been seen in any other sector (WTO and ETC, 2008). In addition, one significant development in the ICTs are social media, which gain prominence as an element of DMOs marketing strategy, offering them the opportunity to reach a global audience with limited resources (Hays et al., 2013). In fact, the emergence of Web 2.0 and social media – two popular buzzwords today (Leung et al., 2013) – has resulted in an explosive increase of not

only travel-related content, but also applications and technology for effective destination marketing (Lee and Wicks, 2010; Sigala, 2009). In a marketplace where consumers become more demanding, distribution is more transparent and supply is increasingly competitive, keeping pace with the challenges will determine destinations' competitive positioning (WTO and ETC, 2008).

In an effort to contribute to the expanding literature and knowledge on social media strategies used by DMOs, this paper aims to explore the usage of social media among municipalities in Greece for destination marketing purposes. In recent years, Greece found itself in the midst of a deep economic crisis. At the same time, tourism is seen as the driving force behind country's economic recovery. However, Greece faces strong competition from countries characterized, by either enhanced quality and high differentiation tourism products (e.g. Spain) or from lower cost (e.g. Turkey, Egypt, Tunisia). Greece offers the same product as its competitors and claims a share of the same tourist markets (mainly tourists from countries of NW Europe). For these reasons, an important factor in maintaining the competitiveness of the country is an integrated, modernized and cost effective marketing strategy of the Greek tourism product. Consequently, the use of social media by municipalities in Greece for destination marketing purposes is of great importance. Subsequently, the social media strategy of the Municipality of Ierapetra – 'Visit Ierapetra' – is analyzed and presented, with the aim to identify social media usage patterns 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.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

According to Bornhorst et al. (2010: 572), a tourism destination is “*a geographical region, political jurisdiction, or major attraction, which seeks to provide visitors with a range of satisfying to memorable visitation experiences*”. Destinations are multi-dimensional. The

destination product is an amalgam of a diverse range of attractions, activities, people, scenery, accommodation, amenities, and climate, offering an integrated experience to consumers (Buhalis, 2000; Pike, 2008). Destinations are the most difficult tourism sector to market, because of their numerous stakeholders and complex product offer (Matloka and Buhalis, 2010). DMOs are usually regarded as the main bodies held responsible for the destinations marketing (Buhalis, 2000). Gretzel et al. (2006: 116) define DMOs as “*non-profit entities aimed at generating tourist visitation for a given area*”. A DMO may belong to one of the following types (Pike, 2008):

- National tourism office (NTO). The entity with overall responsibility for marketing a country as a tourism destination.
- State tourism office (STO). The organization with overall responsibility for marketing a state, province or territory as a tourism destination, in a country that has a federal political system.
- Regional tourism organization (RTO). The organization responsible for marketing a concentrated tourism area as a tourism destination.
- Local tourism administration/Local tourism association (LTA). The organization responsible for marketing a small tourism area as a tourism destination. It may be a local government authority or a form of cooperative association of tourism businesses.

Regardless its type, size and structure, the role of a DMO is to enhance the long term competitiveness of a destination, by enhancing destination image, increasing industry profitability, reducing seasonality and ensuring long term funding (Pike, 2004). Towards that direction, the marketing and promotion of the destination to potential visitors is vital. However, there is no end of ways, in which a destination can be promoted, and in every destination community there is a diverse range of opinions on the tactics that should be employed (Pike, 2004). A considerable body of studies has emphasized that adoption of social media and other Web 2.0 tools, is one of the most important and effective ways for tourism enterprises and DMOs to enhance their competitiveness. According to Lee and Wicks (2010), there seems to be a general

consensus that social media can play a vital role in marketing and promoting tourist destinations. The main types of social media sites are media-sharing sites (e.g. Flickr, YouTube), virtual worlds (e.g. Second Life), blogging (e.g. Travelblog) or microblogging (e.g. Twitter), social bookmarking and voting sites (e.g. Delicious, Digg), review sites (e.g. TripAdvisor), social knowledge sharing sites (e.g. Wikitravel), and social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn). Building on the foundation of Web 2.0, social media applications have facilitated unprecedented growth in human interaction in modern times (Lange-Faria and Elliot, 2012).

The emergence of social media has already started revolutionizing the tourism industry (Matloka and Buhalis, 2010) and various authors have highlighted the potential contribution of social media to a wide range of strategic and operational destination marketing issues, including the use of social media for brand awareness, reputation management, e-CRM, e-marketing, word-of-mouth effects and so on (Hamill and Stevenson, 2012). Social media offer DMOs with a tool alternative to traditional marketing to reach a global audience with limited resources and high returns. They provide an ideal platform to communicate with users and interact with them to gain more information about their interests, preferences, needs, wishes and demands (Maurer and Wiegmann, 2011). Hamill et al. (2012) summarise the potential business benefits for DMOs from proactive social media engagement under five main headings: market/customer knowledge and insight, engagement and reputation management, enhanced customer experience and loyalty, sales/marketing effectiveness, efficiency and return on investment (ROI), and finally, operations/internal processes.

A study regarding the response of DMOs to 'Travel 2.0' – a paraphrase of the term Web 2.0 in the travel and tourism sector – by Hamill et al. (2008), identifies three main clusters of the DMOs Web 2.0 adoption level: 'Non-Starters', that are DMOs with no or very limited use of Web 2.0 technologies, 'Cautious Adopters', representing some basic but limited progress and 'Progressive Adopters' that encourage interaction and user generated content (UGC) in the official portal site. Towards this direction, Milwood et al. (2013) evaluated social media

adoption among DMOs in United States and Switzerland. They found that while U.S. DMOs in recent years have begun to introduce various social media tools to their websites, Swiss DMOs appear to have been more cautious as they implemented comparatively less social media tools. It seems that the organizational framework of the DMOs plays an important role in social media adoption, as in some cases not only doesn't support but it inhibits the use of such tools. Hays et al. (2013) explored the usage of social media among the DMOs of the top 10 most visited countries by international tourists. They found that the majority of the examined DMOs are not currently utilizing social media to their full effectiveness when it comes to the ability to interact and engage with consumers. Moreover, they argue that social media is still not widely recognized and/or respected as a vital tool in marketing strategies, and thus is frequently underfunded and/or neglected.

Another study by Munar (2012) provides insights into social media practices and strategic considerations used by DMOs. It examines a theoretical model of generic social media strategies for destination management and applies qualitative methods to analyze the social media initiatives of DMOs of the Nordic countries. Her study provides empirical evidence of emerging social media strategies among DMOs and confirms the growing importance of these new media. Stankov et al. (2010) produced a primary assessment of the European National Tourism Organisations (NTOs) Facebook activity by examining their official presence on the network (nearly half of them had no Facebook account). Their research showed that most of NTOs have been slow to respond to the marketing opportunities brought by Facebook, as they do not use all the advantages that are offered by this form of user-generated content. In their research, Zouganeli et al. (2011) were also examined the way European NTOs adopt social media for their marketing. Using content analysis in their Facebook pages, they found that NTOs are struggling to fit in the new communication environment and to change their communication mentality. Chernysheva et al. (2011) focused on Mediterranean tourism destinations, with the aim to find how they use Facebook for destination branding. Their results suggest that only five

countries had a link for social network in their official website, in order to promote their national brands, while the majority of the countries didn't maximize the utility of Facebook as an important marketing tool.

In addition, Lange-Faria and Elliot (2012) provide a review of the literature on social media use by DMOs. Their main conclusion is that a growing number of travellers are influenced, by user generated content, presenting a number of challenges and opportunities to DMOs. They argue that the world has dramatically changed since the dawn of the Internet, moving from one where a destination could create a web page and use it in the same fashion as one might an online brochure; to one where users generate their own content. Matloka and Buhalis (2010) were also explored in their study emerging destination marketing opportunities originating from the development of user personalised content (UPC) tools regarding customised information that addresses travellers' personal needs and preferences. According to Sigala (2009), many city destination organizations, nowadays, have incorporated social networking features into their e-business model and strategy in order to further enhance communication with customers and benefit from the electronic word-of-mouth. For example, Yayli et al. (2011) examined the way European DMOs are leveraging Twitter to reach potential visitors by content analyzing their 'tweets'. Their main conclusion is that Twitter provides countless opportunities for DMOs to interact with customers first hand, and even tap on influential users who can create an even bigger impact for their brand.

To ensure that social media efforts will be effective and deliver high ROI on project spend, Hamill and Stevenson (2012) suggest that particular attention should be paid to measuring the '4Is' of social media performance both for individual social media channels and across all social media generally:

- Involvement – the level of customer involvement in various social media channels e.g. YouTube views, numbers participating in online communities, time spent, frequency, etc.
- Interaction – actions taken by online community members e.g. read, post, comment, review, recommend.

- Intimacy – the level of affection or a version shown to the brand; community sentiments, opinions expressed etc.
- Influence – advocacy, viral forwards, referrals and recommendations, social bookmarking, retweets etc.

However, while there is a growing body of research on social media use by the national tourism organizations (NTOs), the literature regarding the use of social media by municipalities focuses mainly on the issue of “e-government” and the interaction between municipalities and their citizens (Agostino, 2013; Bonsón et al., 2012; Guttormsen and Sæbø, 2013; Jones and Jones, 2010; Jørgensen, 2011; Kaigo and Tkach-Kawasaki, 2012; Klang and Nolin, 2011; Sandoval-Almazan et al., 2015). Consequently, more knowledge is needed to explore the level of social media usage by local municipalities for tourism destination marketing purposes.

## **METHODOLOGY**

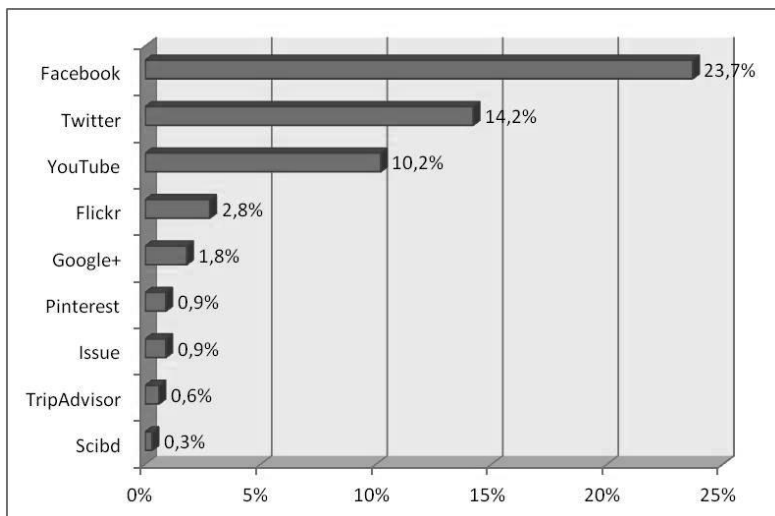
The study of this paper focuses on the use of social media by Greek municipalities and the research process that was adopted includes several steps. Firstly, all the official web pages of Greek municipalities (325) were accessed, in order to find which – if any – social media links were available. This was done because the sheer number of pages in social networks using the name of the region of the municipality or claiming to be the region’s main representative page is overwhelming. Hence, only through a social media link on the municipality website one can ensure that this page is the official one. Secondly, the research focused on the dominant social network, namely Facebook. All the available Facebook pages were visited and content analysis was applied in order to identify and record some structural features of them, such as the name of the page, date of creation, number of fans, etc. Data was collected by two researchers cross validating each other’s data. The research took place in the period April-May 2013. Subsequently and as a case study, the social media strategy of the Municipality of Ierapetra – ‘Visit Ierapetra’ – is analyzed and presented, in order to identify social media usage patterns

that could serve as good practices for other destinations and DMOs, especially for other municipalities in Greece. In order to meet this objective, semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted with four members of the team responsible for the 'Visit Ierapetra' project, in order to gain a wide range of information about their social media marketing activity. The four interviews took place during May 2013.

## **FINDINGS**

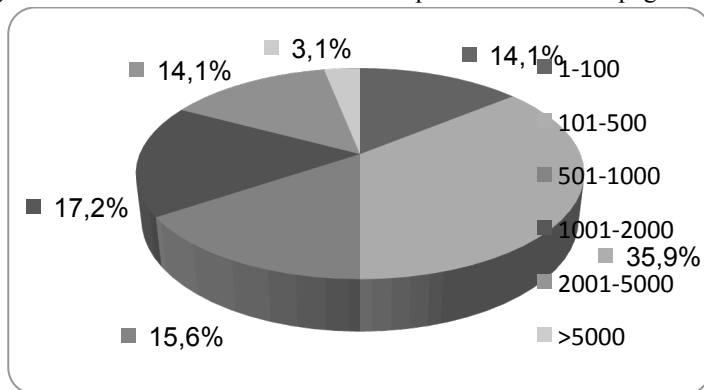
As mentioned above, the first focus of the research was to explore the existence of an official presence of Greek municipalities on social media. From the 325 official web pages of Greek municipalities, only 77 of them provided a link to their Facebook page (23.7%), 46 had an account on Twitter (14.2%) and 33 municipalities (10.2%) had their own channel on the video sharing platform YouTube (see Figure 1). These three social media platforms seem to be the most popular for exploitation by municipalities. The usage of other social media is limited and its percentages are extremely low: 2.8% of the municipalities have an account on Flickr, 1.8% on Google Plus, 0.9% on Pinterest and Issue, 0.6% on TripAdvisor and just one municipality has a page on Scribd (0.3%).

**Figure 1** Social media usage by Greek municipalities



The number one social network is Facebook. For this reason, the research was focused on the analysis of the presence of the 77 municipalities on this site. Facebook offers different choices for creating a profile, such as personal profiles and pages. Personal profiles are for individual, non-commercial use. On the other hand, pages offer businesses, organizations and brands more features than regular profiles. The organizations can customize their pages by adding applications, posting stories, photos and videos, hosting events and more. Only the official representative of an organization or a business is permitted to create a page. Users can interact with organizational pages and can become fans of a page instead of becoming friends with other users. Pages provide insights to help their administrators understand how people are interacting with the page. Taken that DMOs are organisations promoting their destination brand it follows that a ‘page’ is the right choice. Nonetheless, 13 of the 77 municipalities (16.9%) have not yet realized the difference and have chosen to use a personal profile instead of a page. That is of course against the terms of use and consequently the other 64 pages (83.1%) considered valid and analyzed.

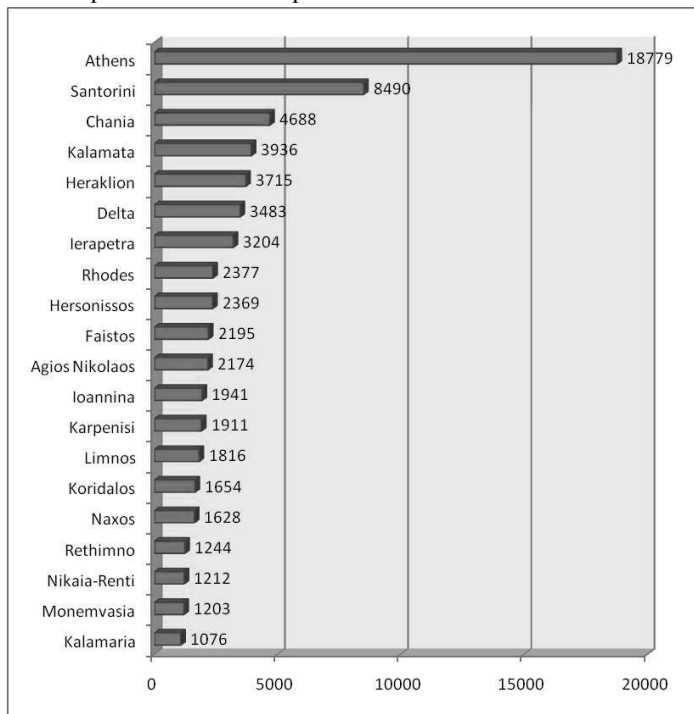
**Figure 2** Number of fans in Greek municipalities' Facebook pages



Undoubtedly, the number of fans in a Facebook page defines the size of the online community build around a destination. In the case of the Greek municipalities this size varies from very small communities (16 fans) to larger ones (18,779 fans) (last measured in 28/05/13). As one can see on Figure 2, half of the municipalities have less than 500 fans, a number significantly low. Only the 3.1% of the municipalities has managed to attract more than 5,000 fans. However, the authors have to highlight that these numbers are growing each day. Figure 3 illustrates the top-20 municipalities according to their number of fans. Athens is a clear winner of Facebook fans while Santorini is in the second-place. The number of fans, however, is quite low in relation to the actual popularity of most destinations, showing a clear lack of social media strategy by the municipalities. Moreover, there are some unofficial pages for the same regions that have much more fans than the official pages. It is also surprising the fact of the absence from this list of both some big cities of Greece (e.g. Thessaloniki, Patra) and some famous tourism destinations (e.g. Kos, Corfu, Mykonos). Obviously the number of fans seems not to correlate with the population of the municipality or the number of tourists that actually visit the destination (perhaps with the exception of Athens and Santorini). There are examples of small towns, which are not among

the popular tourism destinations in Greece that have managed to climb to the top ten destinations with the more fans (e.g. Ierapetra).

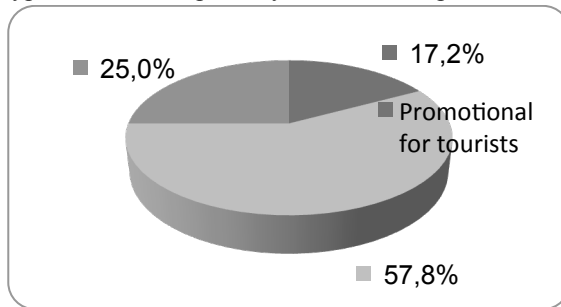
**Figure 3** Top-20 Greek municipalities based on number of Facebook fans



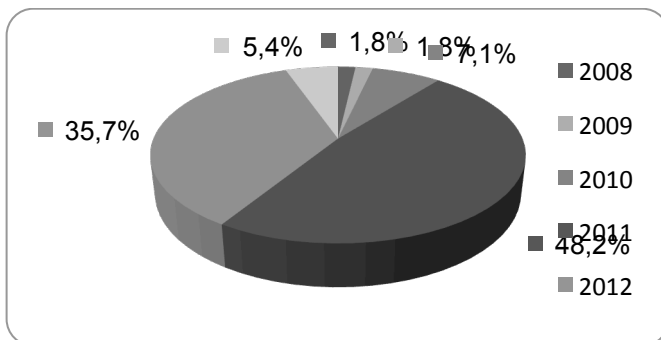
In addition, most of the municipalities use the name ‘Municipality of ...’ for their Facebook page or accompany their name with more official terms. This can be attributed to the fact that Facebook is still an unknown terrain for many tourism marketers, who are trying to grasp the do’s and don’ts of the new trend. Other municipalities exclusively use their region name (e.g. Rhodes) or a combination of the region name with words like ‘visit’ (e.g. Visit Loutraki), ‘travel’ (e.g. Travel Tripolis) or different variations (e.g. Breathtaking Athens), a clearly marketing approach. At

this point, one should underline another important note. We do know that an online community cannot be considered as a homogenous sum of people. Researchers noted that a significant part of the municipality community comes from the destination residents, at least at an initial stage. With this in mind, two other findings can also be explained: 1) content posted in the Greek language, and 2) bilingual posts (English plus Greek language). In fact, the research showed that only 13% of the municipalities keep a different page for tourists and locals. The majority of them (87%) have a common page both for tourists and residents. As a result, the 57.8% of the content published by the municipalities in their pages is informative for locals, 17.2% is promotional for tourists, and the remaining 25% is a mix of tourist and local information, a faulty practice since the target groups needs and interests are very different (Figure 4). It is important to mention that at this early phase of Facebook adoption by municipalities, the travel-related content is primarily promotional, with the goal to raise brand awareness and thus aiming at the pre-trip stage.

**Figure 4** Type of Facebook posts by Greek municipalities



**Figure 5** Year of Greek municipalities' Facebook page creation



Finally, considering that the oldest municipality Facebook page was created in 2008 (Figure 5), it is obvious that we are talking about a relatively recent trend that goes back no longer than six years. However, about half of the municipalities (48.2%) created their pages in 2011, while another 41.1% joined Facebook in the last two years. These numbers show that social media marketing exploitation by municipalities in Greece is something really recent and new – but also rapidly growing.

### THE CASE OF ‘VISIT IERAPETRA’

The coastal town of Ierapetra is located on the southeast part of Crete. It is the fourth most populous town in Crete with 16,139 inhabitants (2011). Its economy is based mostly on agriculture (olive oil, vegetables, and fruits) and secondarily on tourism. The average annual temperature of 19.7 °C (67 °F) enhances these activities. Apart from the excellent climate, the area is famous for its geomorphology, together with the rich natural, cultural and social resources. Compared with other famous tourism destinations in Crete (e.g. Chania, Heraklion, Rethymnon, Hersonissos, Malia, Elounda, Agios Nikolaos) is one of the least known destinations on the island. Its tourism development is based mainly on the 3S model (sea, sun, sand). In 2013, tourist arrivals in the wider area of Ierapetra reached 127,000, a number that is considered small compared

with the 3,335,500 tourists who in total visited Crete in the same year (SETE, 2014).

‘Visit Ierapetra’ is the official tourism e-marketing campaign of the Municipality of Ierapetra. It was decided to incorporate ‘visit’ in the name of the campaign to denote the organization focus and respond to the shift in recent years away from the more bureaucratic sounding names that are representative of municipality divisions (Pike, 2008). The campaign is the outcome of the collaboration between the tourism board of the Municipality of Ierapetra and the Department of Commerce and Marketing of the Technological Educational Institute of Crete. This cooperation was established in July 2012 with the aim to utilize e-marketing tools (especially Web 2.0 applications), in order to enhance awareness and improve perceptions and images of Ierapetra as a tourism destination within the target markets (Germany, UK, France, USA, Italy and the rising markets of Russia and Israel). The Municipality of Ierapetra, as many other municipalities in Greece, faced public sector cuts in their funding and budget reductions for tourism promotion. As a result, the tourism board of the municipality decided to reduce traditional promotion actions that are expensive (e.g. participation in tourism exhibitions, production of brochures, etc) and focus on alternative cost-effective ways of promotion. Following the redesign and relaunch of the municipality tourism website (<http://www.ierapetra.gr>), the time was right to support this with a proactive social media marketing strategy. At this point it is important to mention that the main body responsible for the promotion of Crete as a tourism destination is the Region of Crete. Nevertheless, in the island of Crete there are many municipalities that directly compete with each other as tourism destinations as they usually targeting the same markets. That means that each municipality, represented by its local tourism administration has its own marketing goals (which may differ or be the same as those of the Region and other municipalities), has its own budget for promotion and develops its own tourism campaign. In this context, the overall objective of the project was to develop and implement a proactive, integrated and coordinated online marketing strategy – one that fully leveraged emerging social media

opportunities. Based on the above, the following key strategic objectives were agreed:

- Build brand awareness - discovery of a relative unknown destination in Crete.
- Show the beauty of the area: beaches (many big and small crystal-clear beaches) – about 45km of beach area in total, nature (gorges etc), town (attractions, life, nightlife), taste (local specialties, products, raki, food), events (festivals, concerts, especially during summer).
  - Raise and maximize positive e-Word-of-Mouth about the area.
  - Attract more visitors from abroad (inbound tourism).
  - Attract more visitors from Greece and Crete (domestic tourism)
  - Attract more visitors from abroad that are currently visiting some other parts of Crete.

Towards achieving these goals, a number of social media profiles were created across different platforms, such as Facebook, Flickr, Pinterest, Youtube, Twitter, Foursquare etc. It was decided that most weight would initially go on Facebook, as it is the most popular social network to date (eBizMBA, 2014). It is important to note that most of the other social media accounts were on trial basis and depending on initial results, more weight will be given in the future on the most promising ones of these. Maintaining many social accounts is a very time-consuming process, so it is virtually impossible to give the same attention in all of them.

## **The importance of photography**

Photography is the most shareable item on social media (Ipsos, 2013) and one of the most powerful media (along with video) to showcase a destination to potential visitors. It was therefore crucial for the success of the project, the use of high quality material to publish across media. Initially, there was some research on the archive of photography owned by the municipality, but the results were rather disappointing. Most available photography was either old, low-resolution, not available in digital format or had unclear copyright. It was obvious that the project

could not rely on this material and therefore new photos had to be acquired. Also, it was decided that most photography should be under Creative Commons license to encourage distribution and spread (Creative Commons, 2013). To acquire high quality photographs at the minimal cost, the people responsible for the project teamed up with skilled amateur photographers of the area that offered their material voluntarily. Acquired photography was used across all social media.

### **The marketing strategy on Facebook**

The profile on Facebook is located in [facebook.com/visitierapetra](https://www.facebook.com/visitierapetra). The main publishing strategy included use of high-quality photography, watermarked with the location information (“*area of Ierapetra, Crete*”). Posting of photos (or stories) was performed 1 to 3 times per day (morning, noon and late evening). Furthermore, collaboration was launched with well-established (with many fans/likes) Facebook pages with relevant content in order for them to re-post (share) content to their fans, thus distributing the material to a much wider audience. This was one of the most important aspects for the success of the campaign, as it is very difficult to initially establish a good fan base at the beginning of a new page. Teaming up with existing pages of related topics can have a benefit to both parties, as they are usually looking for content that a DMO can provide and they will publish it to their wide fan base. Providing a link to the DMO’s page when they post its content, is usually enough for acquiring a respectful amount of fans with every post.

One very important decision was whether there would be one Facebook profile for everything that had to do with the municipality, both tourist and local information. It was clear that a common profile for both tourists and citizens would probably cause a number of serious problems. The main concern was the possibility the profile to end up a place of argument and expression of distress of the local population, mainly due to a general hostility towards the municipality and the elected officials. Also the target groups of tourists/visitors and locals are very different and it was concluded that mixing up tourist and municipality information could

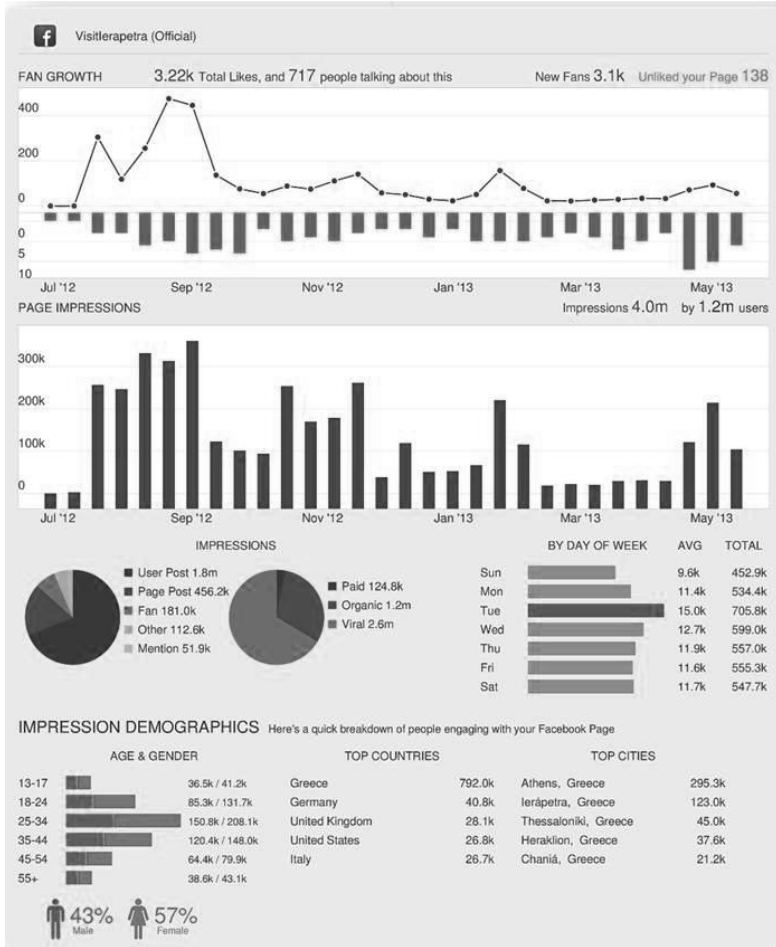
only cause confusion and problems. Therefore, it was decided that there should be two separate profiles, one for municipality issues and one for tourist information.

The focus of this study is clearly on the tourist information profile which shares only tourist-related information. Also, it was very important for the main language to be English, along with Greek and other language whenever it was possible. An interesting finding after a year of service, and studying the comments of the posts, is that although there were many residents of the area fans of the page, they rarely posted any negative comments, but instead they were proud for the beauty of their area, and clearly understood the purpose of the profile. Their help in spreading the content was actually very important, as they were very frequent “sharers” of content.

## **Results**

By using social media, Ierapetra achieved in the first year (July 2012 – May 2013) hundreds of thousands impressions of advertising content to potential visitors around the world. Achieving this in any other traditional advertising form would be much more expensive, and particularly difficult to achieve it in all these countries (Greece, Germany, UK, USA, Italy, France, Israel etc.). It is also noteworthy the continuous availability of highly useful statistics that are available through Facebook insights (Figure 6) and other social media analytics, showing preferences and interests of potential visitors along with experiences of those who already visited the area. Furthermore, although paid advertising to gain new fans was used very little, due to budget limitations, the results were very promising and the cost very low. Finally, collaborating with well-established profiles of similar topics resulted to greatly augmenting the impressions to millions, at no additional cost.

Figure 6 'Visit Ierapetra' Facebook Statistics



## CONCLUSION

Social media are gaining prominence as an element of DMOs marketing strategy at a time when public sector cuts in their funding. This require for them to seek greater value in the way that marketing budgets

are spent. Tourism organizations that do not adopt social media will lack a competitive advantage. However, what could be more detrimental than not understanding or adopting social media practices is using such practices in a poor manner (Hays et al., 2013). As Shao et al. (2012: 96) mention: *“the social media wave is only gaining in momentum and drowning in it is a real danger for many DMOs”*. In fact, social media pose both opportunities and challenges for DMOs.

The results of the primary research conducted in the study of this paper confirm the findings of the literature review about the limited and slow progress made by DMOs, in responding to the marketing opportunities brought on by social media. Despite the importance of keeping up with technological developments, most municipalities in Greece seem not to be familiar with the new Web 2.0 technologies. The results showed that social media usage among Greek municipalities is still very limited and largely experimental. Greek municipalities are only just beginning to understand and appreciate how they can use social media to promote themselves. Undoubtedly they could be considered as ‘non starters’ or ‘reluctant adopters’. The low levels of technology adoption by the Greek DMOs confirmed also by Sigala (2013) who found Greece to be very slow and delayed in the development and adoption of successful destination management systems (DMS) at national, regional and local destination levels.

A successful social media presence requires an understanding of mechanisms of these sites. Jorgensen (2011) argues that social media must be managed by skilled people, but municipalities do not necessarily have social media experts employed who can ensure a beneficial presence. In addition, municipalities have other aspects on top of this to consider as they are public organizations. It seems that marketers are still searching for ways to commercially exploit social networks potentials and as a result they are still holding back and sticking to well known promotion models (Slivar, 2009). It is more than clear that most municipalities need to rethink their current approach and take substantial action if they are to fully exploit the potential of social media in the future (O’ Connor, 2011).

This study attempts to create knowledge that will help destinations to improve the effectiveness of their e-marketing strategies and plans, enabling them to make the best possible use of social media in marketing, and ultimately to be more competitive in the global marketplace. The case of 'Visit Ierapetra' is an excellent example of how a local administration can achieve effective destination marketing with a limited budget. Municipality of Ierapetra in response to the new economic situation formed in Greece in recent years decided a shift from traditional ways of marketing to alternative cost-effective ways of promotion by exploiting social media. In this way, municipality achieved the diffusion of its promotional material to hundreds of thousands potential visitors in its target markets. Although no one can say if these online viewers will evolve into actual visits and bookings – visitor surveys could probably give an answer to that – it is recognized that the project has successfully achieved some of its key goals and objectives, especially in relation to brand awareness and e-Word-of-Mouth raise. With growing recognition of the potential of social media, it can be expected that more and more municipalities in Greece and other local tourism administrations and DMOs will engage in the future with social media for their destination marketing. While the low levels of technology adoption by the Greek DMOs do not allow the complete replacement of traditional marketing channels by e-marketing and social marketing (at least not yet), these new networks could work complementary with other marketing channels creating positive effects to tourism destinations.

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

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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.*

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**Key Words:** *Tourism, Tourism Destination, Image of Tourism Destination, Island Destination, Tourism Demand, Tourism Supply*

### INTRODUCTION

The development of a tourism destination depends mainly on its ability to satisfy a set of basic criteria in order to attract and retain both

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tourists willing to visit the destination and tour operators willing to promote it (Tsoka, Angelis and Dimaki, 2011). Obviously, no uniform standards exist. Hence, every destination, in order to remain attractive should find out the standards prevailing each time and try to meet them (Kotler et al., 1999).

A literature review reveals that very few studies on the factors affecting the image of a tourism destination attempt to compare the perceptions of both tourists and tour operators, in order to find out the common factors which are crucial for the success and sustainability of a tourism destination. More precisely, only 3 out of 142 such studies, conducted from 1973 to 2000, take into account both the demand and the supply side (Pike, 2002).

Our objective in this paper is to explore the factors affecting the image of a tourism destination for both tourists and tour operators, compare them and identify the common factors i.e. those considered important by both groups as well as the specific factors i.e. those considered important by one group only. The common factors will determine what we shall be referring to as the Basic Image of a tourism destination. This Basic Image together with the factors affecting each of the two groups only will determine what we shall be referring to as the Specific Images of the destination as perceived by the demand and the supply side respectively.

The paper consists of four sections. After this brief introduction the second section introduces the concept of a tourism destination's image and distinguishes between Basic Image and Specific Images. The third section presents the methodology used to identify the factors affecting both the Basic and Specific images of an island destination. Finally, the fourth section summarizes the conclusions and makes suggestions for further research.

## **THE CONCEPT OF A TOURISM DESTINATION'S IMAGE**

### **Defining the Term Image**

The term image has been used in a variety of meanings. Image is the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions. It is the total impression an entity makes on the minds of people and has great influence on the way people perceive things and react to them (Dowling, 1998; Dichter, 1985).

Marketing literature agrees that Image is important in this process and identifies different types of images, including projected and received place images (Kotler et al., 1993). Projected place images are defined as the sum of ideas and impressions of a place that is available for people's consideration. Those impressions are received by individuals and influence them during the process of creating their own personal image of a region, according to their own needs, motivations, previous experience, preferences and other personal characteristics (Ashworth and Voogd, 1990; Gartner, 1993; Bramwell and Rawding, 1996).

### **Defining a Tourism Destination and its Image**

Tourism destinations have been defined in different ways. Some of the most widely accepted studies define a tourism destination "as a package of tourism facilities and services, which like any other consumer product, is composed of a number of multi-dimensional attributes" (Ritchie, 1993) or "as an amalgam of products and services available in one location that can draw visitors from beyond its spatial confines" (Murphy, Pritchard and Smith, 2000).

The definitions of the image of a tourism destination seem to follow a similar pattern, as far as variety is concerned. In an early attempt image is defined as "an attitudinal concept consisting of the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a tourist holds of a destination" (Crompton, 1979). Later studies have shown that tourists' evaluation of a tourism destination image "comprised cognitive, affective and personality dimensions" (Hosany et al., 2006). Especially in the case of islands "improved modern transportation, in particular air transport, is crucial for the determination of the image tourists hold for the destination, as they are only accessible by air and sea" (Bardolet and Sheldon, 2008).

Recently, the awareness of current and potential conflicts between economic growth, social progress and preservation of the environment has led to the concept of sustainability. Sustainable tourism destination “is a complex term that has emerged from the need to develop tourism destinations in a sustainable manner, and therefore the need to recognize the efforts to develop destinations accordingly (Foh Lee, 2001). In general “the end result of the adoption of sustainability strategies must include measures for the conservation and protection of environment, as well as land use planning in general. If these strategies are to have a positive impact on the environment, they must incorporate a regulatory framework in relation to the environment” (Rodriguez et al, 2008). Factors related to sustainability seem to play a crucial role in the determination of the Image of a tourism destination, especially in the case of islands (Santana-Jimenez & Hernandez, 2011), and should be taken into consideration in any relevant research.

Moreover, many studies have indicated the great importance of measuring the Image of a tourism destination in order to develop tourism. According to Selby and Morgan (1996) “the conceptualization and measurement of place image can create new opportunities for destinations seeking to develop tourism. Place image techniques can be used as a policy analysis tool, enabling strengths and weaknesses of the product and its naïve images to be assessed”. Along the same lines, Bigné et al. (2001) stated that “image is a key factor in the hands of destination managers. It is a direct antecedent of perceived quality and satisfaction and of the intention to return and to recommend the destination. It is also a key factor in influencing the choice of holiday destination. Destination managers should therefore not delay in taking a serious approach to their image”.

### **Introducing the Concepts of a Tourism Destination’s Basic and Specific Image**

The growth or decline of a tourism destination depends on its power to «pull» both tourists willing to visit it and tour operators/travel agents

willing to promote it; this pulling power depends on what we call the Image of a tourism destination. Tourists and tour operators/travel agents choose a given destination on the basis of their perception of the destination's relative attractiveness (i.e. of its relative advantages or disadvantages). Their choice is therefore a function of a multitude of factors economic, social and environmental. At each time instant the destination "sends out" its image and depending on its impact on the people (both tourists and tour operators/travel agents) the destination may be considered attractive or non attractive.

One may argue that since people "receiving" the image of the destination belong to various distinct groups (i.e. tourist and tourism professionals) and are sensitive to different factors; the impact of the destination's Image on the members of each particular group will be different (Kotler et al., 1999). Whilst this argument is plausible literature and evidence suggest that all groups react similarly to a basic set of factors; more precisely, a set of minimum standards, largely common to both groups, must be satisfied if the destination is to be considered as a potential choice by any of them. Admittedly, no uniform standards exist. Hence, every destination, in order to be/remain attractive, should determine the standards pertaining each time and try to meet them (Kotler et al., 1999).

To reconcile these two views we refine the concept of a destination's Image by introducing the following two concepts: Basic Image and Specific Image. The Basic Image of a given destination measures the degree to which the destination satisfies a set of basic criteria, common for both tourists and tourism professionals. A destination satisfying those criteria is considered by both groups as worth a closer examination and as a potential final choice.

The Specific Image of a given destination, as perceived by a particular group of people, measures the degree to which the members of that particular group consider the destination as their best final choice. This Specific Image, however, although a function of specific factors appealing mainly to members of that group, is primarily a function of the Basic Image.

## **FACTORS AFFECTING AN ISLAND DESTINATION'S IMAGE**

The main objective of this paper is to identify the common factors i.e. those which affect both the demand and the 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.

Towards this end the following three steps are followed

- In the first step, we undertake a literature review and set up an extensive list of factors, affecting a tourism destination's image.
- In the second step, a field research study is carried out to test the significance of all variables, included in the extensive list, in defining the tourism destination's image in the case of an island, as perceived by European tourists and tour operators. This leads to a reduced list of factors.
- Finally, in the third step Principal Component Analysis is applied on the factors of the reduced list in order to:
  - Group them into components.
  - Identify the components which are common for both tourists and tour operators.
  - Identify the components affecting one group only.

Those three steps are presented in detail below.

### **Literature Review**

Many researchers (Beerli and Martin, 2004; Baloglu and Brinberg, 1997; Baloglou and McCleary, 1999; Baloglu and Mangaloglu, 2001; Chon, 1991; Echtner and Ritchie, 1993; Chi and Qu, 2008; Murphy et. Al., 2000; Lin and Huang, 2009; Crompton, 1979; World Tourism Organization, 1985; Fodness, 1994; Bansal and Eiselt, 2004) have tried to define the most important factors that turn a region into an attractive

tourism destination. An extensive literature review has revealed a great variety of factors affecting the image of a tourism destination.

Our first step in this study is to set up a list of the most commonly used of those factors and classify them into three groups: economic, social and environmental factors as shown in Table 1. Each of the forty seven factors included in this Table will be a respective variable in the quantitative analysis that we follow and its significance in affecting both the demand and the supply side, or only one of them or none of them will be tested.

**Table 1** Variables affecting the Image of a Tourism Destination

<b>Economic factors</b>	<b>Social factors</b>	<b>Environmental factors</b>
Economic development	Quality of life	Beauty of the scenery and landscape
Cost / Prices	Gastronomy	Feeling close to the nature
Value for money	Social interaction (language barriers)	Unpolluted and unspoiled environment
Quality of services	Hospitality of local residents	Hygiene and cleanliness
Tax regime	Customs / Local way of life	Atmosphere
Regulatory framework	Political Stability	Traffic
Technological Level	Safety	Climate
Currency	Religion	Overcrowding
Promotion	Cultural attractions (i.e. concerts, theaters, festivals e.tc.)	Beaches
Accessibility (i.e. availability of flights, ferries etc to the destination)	Historical attractions (i.e. museums, historical buildings, monuments e.tc.)	Sense of isolation
Geographical Location		Sense of escaping from the ordinary environment
Information availability		
Tourist Infrastructure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accommodation infrastructure</li> <li>• Food and beverage services</li> <li>• Sports facilities</li> <li>• Other outdoor activities</li> <li>• Shopping facilities</li> <li>• Nightlife / Entertainment</li> </ul> (Recreational Activities) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theme parks</li> </ul>		

Transportation (i.e. metro facilities, buses e.tc.)		
General infrastructure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health services infrastructure (i.e. hospitals, doctors etc)</li> </ul> Telecommunications infrastructure (i.e. fast internet connections e.tc.)		
Proximity to the place of tourist's residence		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proximity to any big city</li> </ul>		
Availability of tour packages		

### **Field Research**

To test the significance of each of the 47 variables, presented in the previous section, in affecting an island destination's image a field research has been conducted using a random sample of 500 sampling units (i.e. 400 tourists and 100 tour operators/travel agents) from the 31 European countries (i.e. Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden, United Kingdom, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Croatia). The sample includes also a number of tourists and tour operators/travel agents from Turkey and Russia, as those countries have a critical role in the European tourism map.

The demand side sampling units have been approached by personal contact in the departures' area of the Athens International Airport from the 24<sup>th</sup> of November 2012 to the 9<sup>th</sup> of December 2012. The outbound flights schedule was used as a sampling frame. The supply side sampling units have been approached by e-mail, from the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May 2012 to the 11<sup>th</sup> of June 2012. The sampling method used in both cases was stratified random sampling. The proportion of each country's population over the total European population was used in order to determine the number of tourists from each country, to be included in the sample. Similarly, the proportion of the number of tour operators / travel agents operating in

each country over the total number of tour operators / travel agents operating in Europe, was used in order to determine the number of travel professionals from each country to be included in the sample.

Two questionnaires have been designed in order to collect the data from tourists and tourism professional respectively. Each questionnaire consists of five units and tests the effect, on the participants' choice of tourism destination, of the 47 variables presented in the previous section, each of which represents a respective characteristic of the destination.

The first unit, which differs between the two questionnaires, uses 4 closed questions to collect the participants' demographic data. The remaining four units are identical in both questionnaires they use closed questions and a five point Likert scale (1-5) in measure the important of each variable, where 1 indicates a variable of low importance and 5 indicates a variable of high importance. More specifically, the second unit uses 16 questions in order to test the importance, on the participants' choice of destination of characteristics related to the destination's its overall development, such as economic development, price levels, currency, accessibility, health infrastructure. The third unit tests the importance of features related to the destination's tourism infrastructure, such as accommodation, historical attractions, using 11 questions. The fourth unit tests the importance of social factors, such as political stability, security, religion etc., using 8 questions. Finally, the fifth part uses 12 questions in order to test the importance of environmental features, such as beauty of the scenery, unpolluted environment, overcrowding.

The participants were asked to answer the questions trying to recall what attracts them to visit an island destination, if they were tourists, or to promote an island destination if they were tour operators / travel agents. It should be mentioned that tourist is defined as any person that has travelled at least once in his / her lifetime, as the survey examines the variables that determine the image of a tourism destination before visiting the destination, i.e. during the decision – making stage. As Beerli and Martin (2004) mention there are differences between the images perceived by the tourists before and after the visit to a destination.

The collected data were processed and Tables 2 and 3 summarize the twenty most important variables affecting the image of an island destination for tourists and tour operators / travel agents respectively, in a descending order of their mean level of significance, as given by the questionnaire's respondents. As it can be seen the majority of those factors are common for both groups. Nevertheless, there are also some specific factors, highlighted in the Tables, which seem to be important only for the tourists or the tour operators / travel agents respectively.

**Table 2.** Top 20 Variables determining the Image of an Island Destination  
 - The case of Tourists

Variables	Mean level of significance
Natural beauty of the scenery	4,40
Sense of security	4,35
Quality of services	4,35
Value for money	4,34
Hygiene and cleanliness	4,25
Accessibility	4,18
Sense of escaping from the ordinary environment	4,11
Ambience	4,09
Accommodation infrastructure	4,02
Historical attractions (i.e. monuments, museums, historical buildings e.tc.)	4,00
Unpolluted and unspoiled environment	3,96
Prices	3,95

Hospitality of the residents	3,90
Beaches	3,87
Feeling close to the nature	3,87
Information availability	3,84
Political stability	3,83
Local gastronomy	3,77
Climate	3,71
Local way of life (i.e. the existence of special customs and traditions)	3,69

**Table 3** Top 20 Variables determining the Image of an Island Destination - The case of Tour Operators / Travel Agents

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Mean level of significance</b>
Value for money	4,62
Quality of services	4,52
Prices	4,51
Accessibility	4,44
Beaches	4,43
Accommodation infrastructure	4,41
Natural beauty of the scenery	4,33
Hygiene and cleanliness	4,32
Sense of security	4,18

Unpolluted and unspoiled environment	4,17
Food and beverage services	4,10
Information availability	4,09
Climate	4,09
Sense of escaping from the ordinary environment	4,09
Ambience	4,04
Health services infrastructure	4,02
Feeling close to the nature	4,02
Nightlife	3,95
Promotion	3,95
Local gastronomy	3,95

Looking at the variables included in Tables 2 and 3 the following comments may be made.

- Variables like theme parks and shopping facilities which were important a few decades ago (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993) seem to have lost most of their influence.
- Similarly variables expressing the socioeconomic dimension of the destination, such as economic development, technological level and quality of life, seem also to have lost some of their importance, compared to the results of earlier studies (Chi & Qu, 2008).
- On the contrary environmental variables, such as natural beauty of the scenery and unspoiled environment, seem to have gained in importance, compared to the results of earlier studies (Bansal & Eiselt, 2004).

- Finally, most of the location related variables, such as proximity to the place of tourists' residence, proximity to any city center and geographical location, have not found to be important; on the contrary variables expressing the destination's isolation, such as feeling close to the nature and sense of escaping from the ordinary environment, seem to have gained in importance, compared to the results of earlier studies (Bansal & Eiselt, 2004).

### **Grouping of the Variables**

The variables presented in the previous section have been further analyzed in order to find out those which are important for both groups and hence determine the Basic Image of an island destination and those which are important for one group only and hence, together with the Basic Image, determine the Specific Images of an island for tourists and tour operators / travel agents respectively. Exploratory Factor Analysis has been used for each sample in order to group the variables playing a crucial role into respective components in the formation of a tourism destination's image. As Field (2004) mentions "there could be variables that correlate highly with a group of other variables, but correlate very badly with variables outside of that group. These variables with high intercorrelations could well measure one underlying variable, which is called a 'factor' or a 'component'".

However, before running the Exploratory Factor Analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy and the Bartlett's test of Sphericity have been applied in order to check its suitability for the given case. Tables 4 and 5 summarize the results of these tests for the tourism demand and tourism supply samples respectively.

#### **Table 4** KMO and Bartlett's Test – the case of Tourists

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	,798
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Approx. Chi-Square	2064,183
df	190
Sig.	,000

**Table 5** KMO and Barlett's Test – the case of Tour Operators / Travel Agents

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	,698
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Approx. Chi-Square	1343,552
df	190
Sig.	,000

Barlett's test is highly significant for both samples ( $p < 0,001$ ) and indicating that factor analysis is an appropriate method. Moreover, KMO statistic is greater than 0,5 for both groups and indicating that the data collected are sufficient and can support a valid factor analysis.

Having completed the two tests we proceed with factor extraction. Principal Component Analysis has been used as an extraction method for both samples and six components have been extracted for both tourists and tour operators / travel agents with eigenvalues greater than 1. Tables 6 and 7 summarize the total variance explained by these six components for each sample. The cumulative percentage column indicates that the components extracted explain approximately 62% of the total variance for the sample of tourists and approximately 77% of the total variance for the sample of tour operators / travel agents.

**Table 6** Total Variance Explained – the case of Tourists

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4,826	24,128	24,128	4,826	24,128	24,128	2,850	14,251	14,251
2	2,619	13,095	37,223	2,619	13,095	37,223	2,305	11,525	25,776
3	1,415	7,074	44,297	1,415	7,074	44,297	2,104	10,522	36,298
4	1,352	6,760	51,057	1,352	6,760	51,057	1,919	9,595	45,893
5	1,103	5,516	56,573	1,103	5,516	56,573	1,907	9,533	55,426
6	1,065	5,326	61,899	1,065	5,326	61,899	1,295	6,473	61,899
7	,886	4,429	66,328						
8	,834	4,172	70,501						
9	,777	3,885	74,386						
10	,699	3,493	77,879						
11	,628	3,140	81,019						
12	,596	2,979	83,997						
13	,570	2,852	86,850						
14	,520	2,602	89,452						
15	,455	2,273	91,725						
16	,408	2,039	93,764						
17	,390	1,948	95,712						
18	,329	1,643	97,355						
19	,286	1,428	98,782						
20	,244	1,218	100,000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

**Table 7** Total Variance Explained – the case of Tour Operators / Travel Agents

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	8,671	43,355	43,355	8,671	43,355	43,355	4,541	22,706	22,706
2	2,400	12,002	55,358	2,400	12,002	55,358	3,343	16,713	39,419
3	1,906	9,529	64,887	1,906	9,529	64,887	3,059	15,294	54,713
4	1,513	7,563	72,450	1,513	7,563	72,450	2,699	13,495	68,208
5	1,232	3,406	75,856	1,232	3,406	75,856	2,245	6,161	74,369
6	1,002	1,602	77,458	1,002	1,602	77,458	1,850	3,089	77,458
7	,701	3,504	80,962						
8	,633	3,163	84,125						
9	,592	2,959	87,084						
10	,448	2,239	89,322						
11	,384	1,922	91,244						
12	,328	1,641	92,885						
13	,299	1,493	94,378						
14	,232	1,160	95,538						
15	,197	,983	96,520						
16	,167	,837	97,357						
17	,159	,796	98,154						
18	,150	,749	98,903						
19	,107	,533	99,435						
20	,087	,565	100,000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Once the components have been extracted, factor rotation has been carried out in order to calculate the factor loadings and thus facilitate to improve the components' interpretation. As the underlying factors are independent, orthogonal rotation and more precisely the varimax method has been chosen, since it tries to load a smaller number of variables onto each factor, thus resulting in more interpretable clusters of factors (Field, 2000). As Stevens (1992) suggests, factor loadings less than 0.4 should be omitted, because only loadings greater than 0.4 represent substantive values. Tables 8 and 9 summarize the results of factor rotation for each sample. The twenty variables initially tested for each group have been reduced to seventeen, as three variables loaded less than 0.4 in all the factors extracted for each sample. The two of those variables availability of enough information of the destination and local gastronomy, are common for both groups. The third variable is political stability in the case of tourist and advertising promotion of the destination in the case of tour operators.

**Table 8** Factor Rotation – the case of Tourists

<b>Demand Side - Rotated Component Matrix<sup>a</sup></b>						
	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Feeling close to the nature	,801					
Natural beauty of the scenery	,796					
Unpolluted and unspoiled environment	,744					
Ambience	,616			,443		
Sense of escaping from the ordinary environment	,556					
Political stability						
Sense of security		,791				
Hygiene and cleanliness		,692				
Accessibility		,519				
Information availability						
Value for money			,885			
Prices			,777			
Quality of services			,692			
Local way of life (i.e. the existence of special customs and traditions)				,748		
Hospitality of the residents				,641	,504	
Historical attractions (i.e. monuments, museums, historical buildings etc.)				,632		
Local gastronomy						
Accommodation infrastructure					,595	
Beaches						,907

Climate						,593
Extraction	Method:	Principal	Component	Analysis.		
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.						

**Table 9** Factor Rotation – The case of Tour Operators / Travel Agents

Supply Side - Rotated Component Matrix <sup>a</sup>						
	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Unpolluted and unspoiled environment	,779					
Sense of escaping from the ordinary environment	,769					
Natural beauty of the scenery	,670					
Ambience	,619					
Feeling close to the nature	,560					
Accessability		,856				
Sense of security		,553				
Hygiene and cleanliness		,537				
Promotion						
Information availability						
Prices			,791			
Value for money			,683			
Quality of services			,627			
Health services infrastructure				,796		
Nightlife				,731		
Food and beverage services				,646	,413	
Local gastronomy						

Accommodation infrastructure					,867	
Beaches						,857
Climate						,571
Extraction	Method:	Principal	Component	Analysis.		
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.						

Looking at Tables 8 and 9, we can see five common components, containing variables affecting an island destination's image as perceived for both tourists and tour operators / travel agents and one specific component containing variables affecting the destination's image as perceived by each of the two groups respectively. Based on the type of variables included in each component, a name has been selected for each of those components.

Table 10.1 summarizes, for the tourism demand group, the labeled factors, the variables included in each of them and their mean level of significance as shown in Table 2.

Table 10.2 ranks the factors of the previous group in a descending order of their variables' mean level of significance.

Tables 11.1 and 11.2 are similar to Tables 10.1 and 10.2, but for the tourism supply group.

**Table 10.1** Factors affecting the Image of an Island Destination  
 – The case of Tourists

1 Natural Environment	Mean level of sig	2 Reacha bility	Mean level of sig	3Val ue for Mon ey	Mean level of sig	4 Local Attract ions	Mean level of sig	5 Tourism Infrastru cture	Mean level of sig	6 Beach es	Mean level of sig
Natural beauty of the scenery	4,4 0	Sense of security	4,3 5	Qual ity of servi ces	4,3 5	Historic al attractio ns (i.e. monum ents, museu ms, historic al building s etc)	4	Accomod ation infrastruct ure	4,0 2	Beach es	3,8 7
Sense of escaping from the ordinary environm ent	4,1 1	Hygiene and cleanline ss	4,2 5	Valu e for mon ey	4,3 4	Hospita lity of the resident s	3,9			Clim ate	3,7 1
Ambienc e	4,0 9	Accesibi lity	4,1 8	Price s	3,9 5	Local way of life (i.e. the existenc e of special customs and traditio ns)	3,6 9				
Unpollut ed and unspoiled environm ent	3,9 6										
Feeling close to the nature	3,8 7										
	<b>4,0 9</b>		<b>4,2 6</b>		<b>4,2 1</b>		<b>4,0 0</b>		<b>4,0 2</b>		<b>3,7 9</b>

**Table 10.2** Factors' Ranking – The case of tourists

Ranking	Factor	Mean level of sig
1	Reachability	4,26
2	Value for Money	4,21
3	Natural Environment	4,09
4	Tourism Infrastructure	4,02
5	Local Attractions	4,00
6	Beaches	3,79

**Table 11.1:** Factors affecting the Image of an Island Destination – The case of Tour Operators/ Travel Agents

1 Natural Environ- ment	Me- an leve- l of sig	2 Reach- abili- ty	Me- an leve- l of sig	3 Valu- e for Mon- ey	Me- an leve- l of sig	4 General Infrastruc- ture	Me- an leve- l of sig	5 Tourism Infrastruc- ture	Me- an leve- l of sig	6 Beach- es	Me- an leve- l of sig
Natural beauty of the scenery	4,33	Accessibility	4,44	Value for money	4,62	Food and beverage services	4,10	Accommodation infrastructure	4,41	Beaches	4,43
Unpolluted and unspoiled environment	4,17	Hygiene and cleanliness	4,32	Prices	4,51	Health services infrastructure	4,02			Climate	4,09
Sense of escaping from the ordinary environment	4,09	Sense of security	4,18			Nightlife	3,95				
Ambience	4,04	Promotion	3,95								

Feeling close to the nature	4,02									
	4,13		4,22		4,57		4,02		4,41	4,26

**Table 11.2** Factors' Ranking – The case of Tour Operators / Travel Agents

Ranking	Factor	Mean level of sig
1	Value for Money	4,56
2	Tourism Infrastructure	4,41
3	Beaches	4,26
4	Reachability	4,22
5	Natural Environment	4,13
6	General Infrastructure	4,02

The five factors, common for tourists and tour operators / travel agents, are Natural Environment, Reachability, Value for Money, Tourism Infrastructure and Beaches. The variables included in them are important for both groups and determine the Basic Image of a tourism destination. On the other hand, Local Attractions and General Infrastructure are the specific factors for tourists and tour operators / travel agents respectively; therefore together with the Basic Image they may determine the Specific Images for each group respectively.

However before deciding whether to use these specific factors in defining the respective Specific Images for the two groups, the Mann Whitney Non Parametric Test has been applied so as to find out which of the variables included in them have statistically significant different means between the two samples and hence should be taken into account in the definition of the Specific Images. A Non Parametric test has been chosen as the Kolmogorov – Smirnov test of normality indicated that the

respective data do not follow the normal distribution (Sig < 0,05). Tables 12 and 13 summarize the results of the Mann Whitney test for the specific variables affecting tourists and tourism professionals. As it can be seen Historical Attractions, Health Services Infrastructure, Nightlife and Food and Beverage Services, are the only variables with statistically significant different means between the two samples. Hence, the first variable will be used for the definition of the Specific Image for the supply side whereas the last three variables will be used for the definition of the specific image for the demand side.

**Table 12** Factors affecting the Tourists – Mann Whitney Test

	Hospitality of the residents	Local way of life	Historical Attractions
Mann-Whitney U	13399,500	14427,000	11304,500
Wilcoxon W	16969,500	17997,000	74494,500
Z	-1,484	-,484	-3,618
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,138	,628	,000
a. Grouping Variable: Group of participant			

**Table 13** Factors affecting the Tour Operators/ Travel Agents – Mann Whitney Test

	Health Services Infrastructure	Nightlife	Food and Beverage Services
Mann-Whitney U	10780,000	8232,500	11385,000
Wilcoxon W	77575,000	71778,500	74931,000
Z	-4,689	-6,868	-3,928
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000
a. Grouping Variable: Group of participant			

## **CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Many earlier studies have tried to determine the factors affecting the Image of a tourism destination, but most of them have focused on the factors attracting tourists and have almost ignored the factors which may attract a tour operator/travel agent so as to promote the tourism destination. The present paper attempts to bridge the gap between the demand and the supply side in the case of an island destination. More specifically, it has identified the common factors affecting both tourists and tour operators / travel agents but also the specific factors affecting each group only. Natural Environment, Reachability, Value for Money, Tourism Infrastructure and Beaches were found to be the common factors. On the other hand, Local Attractions appeal mainly to tourists whereas General Infrastructure appeals mainly to the tourism professionals. Obviously, each of these factors contains a number of variables; those variables properly measured and scaled provide a composite measure for each factor.

The paper's findings seem to fully support the use of the concepts of Basic and Specific Image and their definitions as given in this paper. Indeed the findings seem to suggest that there exists a set of variables affecting both tourists and tour operators which maybe used to define the destination's Basic Image. In addition to them there also exists a number of variables affecting each group separately which, together with the Basic Image, maybe used to define the destination's Specific Images. Summarizing we can say that the Basic and Specific Images of an island destination as defined in this paper, may prove very useful managerial tools for the destination's authorities. By monitoring all factors, common and specific, affecting those images and taking all the appropriate measures to sustain and improve them, a problem free development of the destination can be ensured.

At this point, it is also worth mentioning that all location related variables, such as distance from the place of residence, proximity to any city center and geographic location of the destination, were not found to

be important for any group. This confirms earlier research findings (Crompton, 1979) indicating the limited importance of location and geographical discontinuity on an island destination's image and eventually its success. On the contrary, factors expressing the isolation of the destination, such as feeling close to the nature and sense of escaping from the ordinary environment, seem to have gained in importance, compared to the results of earlier studies (Bansal & Eiselt, 2004).

An area of further research could be to test the factors affecting the Image of the tourism destination for both demand and supply side, by selecting not a European but a global sample. Another area of further research would be to elaborate on the factors affecting the Image of a tourism destination for alternative types of tourism such as conference tourism, health tourism, agricultural tourism, cultural tourism etc.

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

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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 /*

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*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.*

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**Keywords:** *special interest tourism, wellness, wellness tourists' typology, wellness tourism product typology, motivation*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Greece, a traditional sea and sun destination, mainly dependent on mass tourism development became significantly vulnerable against the global tourism market crisis in the last 5 years. In 2012, Greece held 2,9 % of the European Market and 1.5 % of the Global one, with 15,5 mil. tourists visiting Greek destinations resulting in 10 bil. euros in tourism receipts. The crisis vortex has influenced the competitive advantages of Greece positioning it in the 17<sup>th</sup> place in Global arrivals' classification and 23<sup>rd</sup> in terms of receipts (losing almost 6 positions since 2000) (SETE, 2013). In addition to that, the problem of seasonality is persistent (56% of arrivals concentrated in July-September period) enhancing the pressure upon resources and raising cumulative carrying capacity and sustainability issues (as far as local economies, societies, the environment and culture are concerned).

Under such stagnating circumstances, Greece seeks for a way of rejuvenating, differentiating and upgrading in quality a “tired” tourism product with considerably strong competitors. Sustainability issues rise not only because the previous model in economy terms is failing, but also because the demand side of the market is increasingly seeking to be persuaded about the sustainable character of the development in visited destinations, focusing in special interest tourism in a way that travel industry can “subsume” the identity of an experience industry (Opaschowski, 2001 as found in Trauer, 2006:183).

More tourists seek for an optimal experience within the time constraints of their holidays (Trauer, 2006) that will offer material and

immaterial qualities as well as emotional stimuli. The modern, multi-motivated, experienced and better informed tourist (Tsartas, 1996) is trying to satisfy increasing and multiple needs during the travel experience relating more and more to the Special Interest Tourism (SIT) phenomenon within a broader “sustainability” and “responsible /ethical tourism” framework (Vasileiou and Tsartas, 2009)

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***Special Interest Tourism (SIT)***

WTO in 1985 has defined SIT as “the provision of customised leisure and recreational experiences driven by the specific interest of individuals and groups”. Additionally, it is derived that SIT can be distinguished by the existence of a special and dominating motive/interest (or group of motives) - as far as demand side is concerned - and by the development of special infrastructure at a destination - as far as the supply side is concerned. Finally, SIT is often considered as active tourism during which a person engages in a cultural, artisanal or leisure activity or sport in order to develop his/ her personality (WTO, 1985, Kokkosis and Tsartas, 2001).

SIT, due to its nature -whether it is seen as an alternative to saturated mass tourism development strategies (Farsari and Sotiriades, 2012), or as a special product driven from special motives and resources- it can fundamentally be connected to sustainability issues, serving long term tourism planning and respecting carrying capacity, mostly because it can develop in human scale, in accordance to the environmental and social structure.

### ***Wellness Tourism (WT)***

WT is considered to be the sum of all relationships and phenomena resulting a journey and residence of people whose main motive is to preserve and promote their physical, mental and psychological health and their social prosperity. They stay in a specialised resort which provides the appropriate know-how and individual care. In addition they require a comprehensive service package comprising physical fitness, beauty care,

healthy nutrition, relaxation, meditation and mental activity/ education and environmental sensitivity and social contacts (Mueller & Kaufmann, 2001). WT is considered to be a part of a more active lifestyle. The nature of demand for WT/spa tourism is changing as important social factors are changing, with worsening living conditions in polluted metropolitan areas, unhealthy life styles, increasing stress and ageing of the earth's population, but also increasing awareness on ecology, life and health improvement (Kaspar, 1990).

The wellness industry encompasses everything from spa, food and nutrition, complementary and alternative medicine, to active-aging, and fitness, to workplace wellness, medical and wellness tourism (WTW, 2013)

The global spa/ WT industry has increased exponentially in both volume and value, corresponding with the upward trend for health and wellness products in the last 20 years (ISPA 2012, Global Spa Summit, 2009). This is over time thoroughly confirmed by the fact that modern tourists tend to highly prioritise the need for wellness/ spa/ health treatments. Eurobarometer survey (2013, p. 6) states that 12% of the European travellers define wellness/ health treatments as a main reason for travelling. Despite the spike in demand, the industry remains highly fragmented (Mintel, 2007) with a plethora of products claiming the ultimate wellness experience within a confusing array of brands, treatments and formats it expands towards two directions: a) investing in luxurious facilities and treatments to attract the elite of the tourist market. b) investing in a new breed of discount spas, spa resorts, signature spas and spa chains are offering treatments at comparatively lower prices in order to attract middle or lower class tourists or younger ones (teenagers etc.) The latest trends in the international WT market indicate that WT organisations are seeking and testing new distribution channels (i.e. through intermediaries such as specialised tour operators, specialised webpages/ portals, consortia or voluntary chains etc.) in order to achieve lower cost, better and quicker access to the target market, increased sales, reduction of the business risk (ISPA, 2011, SETE, 2012, Cohen and Bodecker, 2008). In some cases though, many tourism destinations and

companies choose the direct delivery of their products in order to have a more effective overall control over their product with minimised cost.

Due to its nature the WT market can relate to mass tourism or SIT development, either as a new high quality product that will act complementarily to the core products or as a core product, especially in destinations such as traditional spa towns.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The paper presents results of a doctoral thesis' research, focusing in Special Interest Tourism and in particular in the Greek Wellness Tourism Market. It aims: i) To identify the main characteristics and typology of a major part of the supply side of the Wellness tourism market in Greece. In particular, it examines the strategies of 4\* and 5\* hotels in Greece in terms of a) structuring the offered wellness tourism product, b) relating it with other special interest tourism or mass tourism activities/ markets. ii) 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 for an enriched and competitive tourism product. iii) 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. iv) To present some of the most important problems the Greek wellness tourism market encounters that must be addressed in order to escape from the crisis vortex and minimize its effects, re-inventing its competitive advantage, away from its stagnating stage.

Because of the topic of wellness being complex, multidisciplinary and new for tourism, the study (part of a PhD research) is a combination of three types of research. It is descriptive, causal (explanatory) and at a degree it is an exploratory (and rather evaluative) one (Veal, 2006:3, 36-37). The triangulation (interdisciplinary) methodology is being used as convergent validation was necessary in order for the "criterion of validity to be met" and there is integrity as far as the drawn inferences are concerned (Schwandt, 1997, p.163), avoiding any personal or methodological biases and enhancing study generalizability (Decrop, 1999).

Quantitative research was used to quantify aspects of social life and to describe phenomena through statistically processed data. It can provide tools for measurement, causality between variables and phenomena, generalisation, and in some cases replication of findings (Veal, 2006:22-27, Schwandt, 1997:129-131). It is also important to use a methodology that will allow the researcher to describe the social phenomena by forming ontologies and relationships between them. The tools for this can be supplied by qualitative research.

The tools (qualitative and quantitative) selected include a) interviews with 14 key informants b) a structured questionnaire for 72 wellness hotel (4\*-5\*) managers from several destinations in Greece and c) a structured questionnaire for the 369 wellness tourists visiting 4\*-5\* wellness resorts. The research took place in 2008-2009 in traditional destinations such as Macedonia (Chalkidiki and Thessaloniki), Crete, Dodekanese, Cyclades, Lefkas, Athens and Central Greece, where 66% of the hotel supply is concentrated.

The SPSS (IBM statistical package) was used to analyse the data gathered from the cluster of the surveys, descriptive and statistical analysis was established, in particular univariate (means, percentages), bivariate (chi-square) and multivariate (factor) analysis. The NVIVO software was used in order to form a synoptic picture of the key informants' statements.

## RESULTS

### *Wellness Tourism Product typology (as seen from the supply side)*

<b>WT Services offered ...</b> Mainly as a complimentary product to mass tourism or SIT packages.	10% at an exclusively WT resort 50% as part of a mass tourism package 40% complimentary to other SIT services
<b>Offered WT Services (% of hotels)</b> Resorts invest mainly in aesthetic pampering, hydrotherapy, sport and massage facilities following the most popular trends in the international market- (already tested SIT trends) (Global Spa Summit, 2009).	90% Aesthetic pampering 25% Thalassotherapy 67% Healthy diet Hydrotherapy 14% Clima-therapy 65% Day spa treatments 10% Medical

<p>As far as the SIT is concerned the fact that alternative treatments are gaining ground, improves the notion that the supply side is “responding” to the expansion of special interest focused in experiences’ market. In general resorts invest in responding in dominating and rising trends/ services which relate to a plethora of SIT activities</p>	<p>64% Sports Services                  activities 6% Preventive                  39% Massage care                  31% 4% Balneary                  Alternative Center                  treatments</p>		
<p><b>Offered SIT Services</b>                  The offered SIT services correspond firstly to traditional / recognised resources (such as Culture, Nature, Sports and Religion) with which Greece has an established image/ brand in the tourism market, and secondly to rising trends (such as Conference, Business, Adventure Tourism)</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">                     18, 2% Cultural tourism                      0,6% Eco-Tourism                      11,3% Trekking                      21,4% Conference                      Tourism                      13,2% Religious Tourism                 </td> <td style="width: 50%;">                     18,2% Sports Tourism                      1,3% Agrotourism                      1,3% Mountain tourism                      5,3% Adventure Tourism                      1,3% Casino Tourism                      3,8% Business Tourism                 </td> </tr> </table>	18, 2% Cultural tourism 0,6% Eco-Tourism 11,3% Trekking 21,4% Conference Tourism 13,2% Religious Tourism	18,2% Sports Tourism 1,3% Agrotourism 1,3% Mountain tourism 5,3% Adventure Tourism 1,3% Casino Tourism 3,8% Business Tourism
18, 2% Cultural tourism 0,6% Eco-Tourism 11,3% Trekking 21,4% Conference Tourism 13,2% Religious Tourism	18,2% Sports Tourism 1,3% Agrotourism 1,3% Mountain tourism 5,3% Adventure Tourism 1,3% Casino Tourism 3,8% Business Tourism		
<p><b>Hotel Strategies relating to SIT</b>                  - Collaboration with other SIT organisations                  The findings prove the fact that SIT can encourage the creation of networks and clustering, engaging maximum number of stakeholders in a common goal, a fact that is one of the basic principles of sustainability, diffusing profits in the local community</p>	<p>39% No collaboration                  42% Collaboration with other SIT specialized companies                  19% Collaboration with specialized local authorities</p>		
<p><i>Source: Author's fieldwork</i></p>			

Resorts offering WT services in Greece follow the international trends with a certain delay (in order to safely recognize an established international dynamic). Out of 144 4\*-5\* wellness resorts (Hellenic Hotel Chamber, 2007), 72 (46% 4\* and 54% 5\*) agreed to participate in the survey, answering close-ended questionnaires. Table 1 above presents in summary the most important findings (as frequencies).

***Wellness Tourists' Typology***

***a) Demographics- Consumer behaviour***

The demographic profile and the consumer behaviour profile of the wellness tourists in Greek resorts follow the international market. In particular, it addresses mainly to middle aged people of higher education and economic status. The dynamics of the market focus in new younger age groups seeking signature treatments and new experiences as well (Smith and Puczko, 2008). In general, a complex enriched experience is sought with a personal seal to the chosen services. But they still remain a fragile market, a fact enhanced by the global economic crises: according to Eurobarometer (2011) 27% of European travellers state that the first group of activities they would reduce most to save money would relate to beauty/ wellness treatments. Table 2 provides a summary of the basic Demographic and Tourists' consumer behaviour characteristics.

For reasons regarding the triangulation of results and ensuring the interdisciplinary approach to the research findings, it was considered as fundamental to perform the qualitative research including academics- key informants relating to various disciplines of tourism and coming from several academic institutions of Greece (Universities and Technological institutions). These academics were specialists in the anthropology of tourism, tourism development, tourism marketing, tourism economics, new technologies, tourism geography and law.

The key informants participating in the qualitative research were individuals who had in-depth knowledge and experience in matters related to the development of special interest tourism, wellness tourism, sustainable tourism development, tourism research and education, the characteristics of tourism supply and demand and the trends at international and national level.

The key informants fully met the research process validity criteria (Schwandt, 1997: 78) as they have specific characteristics such as:

- They have a special relationship with the issues involved,
- They have specialized knowledge (at doctorate level) through their studies which they can present eloquently and clearly
- They belong to the category of "Shapers" regarding structures associated with the issues of the research, each one from their own perspective

- They have a unique perspective on social activities in tourism
- They can serve as guides in search of characteristics examined and structures / correlations developed
- They are confident and trusted advisors

Based upon the statements derived from the interviews with the key informants, diagram (1) (produced with the help of software NVIVO QSR INTERNATIONAL, v.10) presents the characteristics of the wellness tourist behaviour as perceived by the key informants.

In general, according to key informants, the behaviour of wellness tourists is demanding and is characterised by the use of a wide spectrum of SIT and WT services/ products, with high levels of consumption. They are experienced tourists with special motivation, though sometimes they can present package-tourism behaviour.

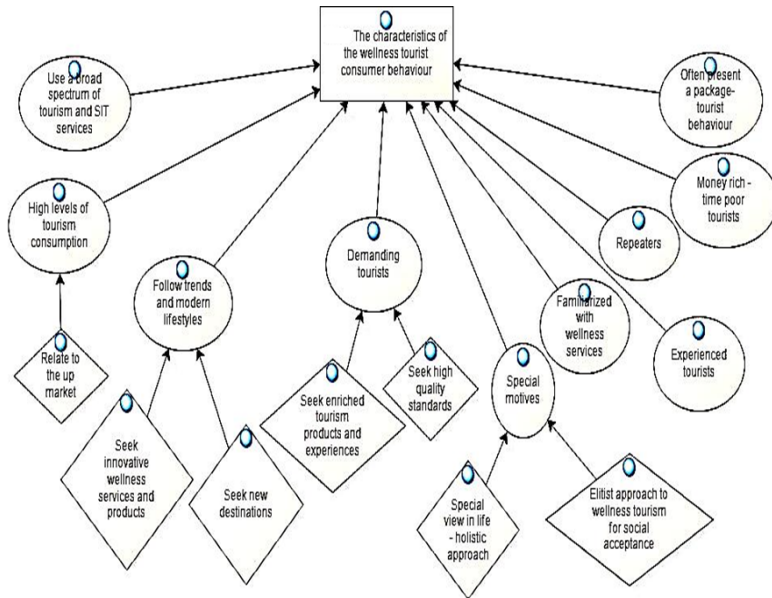
<b>Table 2. Demographic profile and consumer behaviour of wellness tourists in Greek 4* &amp; 5* hotels</b>
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Characteristic (sample: 369 tourists)	%		Consumer Behaviour	
<b>Sex</b>			<b>Duration of vacations</b>	45,3% stay 8-14 days 36,3% stay one week
Male	32			
Female	68			
<b>Age</b>			<b>Frequency of visiting wellness facilities in everyday life</b>	37% have 3-6 visits/year
18-24	6,2	21,7		
25-34	24,7			
35-44	26,6			24% prefer hotels and 23% specialized spa centres
45-54	15,4		<b>Types of facilities visited</b>	
55-64	4,6			
65-74	0,8			
75 and over				
<b>Country of Origin</b>			<b>Services wellness tourist choose during vacations</b>	18% seeks ways for relaxation  Aesthetic pampering appears to be among the most popular services (85%) followed by Massage (72,9%) and Hydrotherapy (68%) Alternative treatments have a dynamic (27,8%)
Greek tourists	33			
<b>International Tourists</b>	67			
Great Britain	7,6			
U.S.A.	2,7			
France	3,8			
Switzerland	1,9			
Canada	1,1			
Slovenia	,3			
Germany	16,8			
Italy	5,1			
Russia	10,8			
Spain	,8			
Netherlands	8,9			
Belgium	1,4			
Boulgaria	,3			
Other	5,4			
<b>Highest Qualification in Education</b>			<b>Loyalty to wellness tourism</b>	8,5% Would limit the spectrum of services to enjoy and 27,4% would try another type of SIT vacations
Preliminary school	0,5		<b>Reaction to market changes (price increase)</b>	
Junior high school	4,6			
High school degree	20,1		<b>Loyalty</b>	31% are repeaters
College degree	34,4			
University degree	23,0			
Master's degree	12,7			
PhD	4,6			
<b>Occupation</b>			<b>Characteristics of a wellness trip</b>	Organised by a tour operator (53,5%) and through internet (27,4%) 45% Travel with their life partner 75% state WT is part of a mass tourism package
Higher Education Student	7,3			
Unemployed	0,8			
Full time home care	10,0			
<b>Working</b>	68,6			
Retired	13,0			
Other	0,3			
<b>Annual Income (in euros)</b>			<b>Relation to Special Interest Tourism Activities</b>	81,3% state their vacations combine other SIT activities Tourists state that they combine WT with cultural tourism (26%) and sea tourism (19,2%)
Up to 5.000	6,8			
5.001 -10.000	5,7			
10.001 - 20.000	15,2			
<b>20.001 – 30.000</b>	23,3			
30.001- 40.000	19,5			
40.001- 50.000	10,6			
50.001- 60.000	9,8			
60.001 and more	9,2			

Source: Author's fieldwork

Diagram 1. The characteristics of the wellness tourist consumer

behaviour



**Source:** Author's fieldwork

**b) Motivation**

Literature review (Mintel report, 2007, ISPA, 2009, Weiler and Hall, ed., 1992 etc.), pilot survey and key informants' research lead to the development of 14 motivating items. Factor Analysis (principal component analysis) was used for grouping these items in factors according to the importance attributed by the tourists to statements relating to motivational issues. The Kaiser-Meyer-Okin (KMO) test resulted in a value of 0,764 confirming the sampling adequacy (Mooi and Sarstedt, 2011) and the Bartlett's test of sphericity resulted in 0,000 confirming that the variables were related and the factor analysis was suitable for detection (Mooi and Sarstedt, 2011). In addition, the reliability analysis through Cronbach's Alpha (C.A.) coefficient resulted in 0,700, confirming the overall internal consistency of tested items. All factor loadings scores were higher than 0,5 indicating a good correlation

between items and the factor group to which they belong (Mooi and Sarstedt, 2011). Table 3 provides a synoptic image of the major 3 Factors determining the motivation of wellness tourists in Greece, following the analysis of Maslow (1970), Crompton (1979) and Iso-Ahola (1980) on peoples' needs, and the trend that consumer visits to spas usually incorporate one of the following drivers: a) Indulgence (pleasure, fun, appealing to the senses), b) Escape (i.e. relief from the pressures of social life), c) Work (individual work related to self-improvement, i.e. physical, mental, and emotional) (Smith and Puczko, 2008). In addition the findings present one more factor relating to the need of the spa visitors to be accepted by their social peers, following the trends in order to acquire an improved social status.

<b>Table 3. Factor analysis results with Varimax Rotation- Wellness Tourists' Motives</b>			
<b>Factors /Components</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Need to be accepted - Communitas- Following trends</b>	0,825		
Following trends	0,761		
Improves social image and status	0,742		
Social peers (friends etc.) choose wellness tourism	0,667		
• Interesting advertising	0,556		
• Improving appearance			
<b>Need to Actively Improve Quality of life</b>		0,733	
Helps Improving one's health		0,696	
The quest for wellness services is the most important motive travelling		0,650	
WT Provides an optimistic aspect of life		0,646	
WT provides with the necessary knowledge for being most responsible and effective		0,635	
Wellness is a Continuous, every day effort for a better quality of life		0,525	
WT helps acquiring balance			
<b>Need for Escape-Relaxation- Indulgence</b>			0,725

<b>(Self-reward)</b> WT is a indulging, pleasant break from a pressuring everyday life Escape from monotonous reality WT provides calmness and depressurization			0,717 0,658
<b>KMO= 0,764 (p=0.000)</b> <b>Eigenvalues (&gt;1)</b> <b>% of common variance</b>  <b>% of cumulative variance = 51,851%</b> <b>Cronbach's Alpha (C.A.) coefficient (for all factors C.A.: 0,700)</b> (Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.)	3,058 19,759  19,759 C.A. 0,771	2,683 19,034  38,793 C.A.0,739	1,518 13,058  51,851 C.A.0,572
<b>Source: Author's fieldwork</b>			

### ***Major Problems of the Greek Wellness Tourism Market***

According to the managers' responses the major problems harriving the Greek wellness tourism market mainly relate to the insufficient promotion of the central and local authorities (72% referred to that) as a result of poor planning and developing central tourism policy. In addition half of them recognise that the infrastructure is not adequate for extended visits of wellness tourists in terms of being able to earn the title of a "wellness tourism destination" with high qualifications. Although important investments have taken place in several facilities, this cannot be said for destinations as a whole. The legal framework in terms of defining the product and bureaucratic issues is an important impediment (30%) to a smooth operation and investment attraction.

What is interesting is that managers state that wellness tourism in its modern form is difficult to relate to the traditional spa/balneary tourism (8%) even though there are plenty of spa towns and facilities longing to be renovated. This may be explained by the fact that there is an absence of wellness tourism culture in the Greek market. The image prevailing for spa tourism focuses in poor facilities with elder people- a fact that is slowly changing. In addition it may be an indication of how poorly

managers deal with long term planning in sustainability terms for a more sustainable, complicated, enriched product, while surrendering in mass tourism packages. (Vasileiou and Tsartas, 2013)

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In Greece it would be inaccurate to refer to wellness tourism as an autonomous product serving a niche market or to engage in developing niche markets without reforming institutions or social and market structures that serve mass and special interest tourism structures. These structures need to be re-interpreted and re-invented in a way that would serve the special interest tourism and sustainability principles taking “full account of tourism development’s current and future economic, social and environmental impacts” (UNEP/WTO, 2005), while addressing the needs of stakeholders.

Greece has a long history in therapeutic tourism (balnearies, spas etc.), with traditional spa towns offering an interesting amalgamation of wellness and healing tourism product, but it cannot be considered as a wellness tourism destination. It is safe to say that it makes its early steps in the introduction stage of the wellness tourism market.

In terms of policies to be adapted, the Greek tourism market should avoid the homogenisation of the wellness tourism product and invest in its enrichment, differentiation and upgrading in order to appeal to the demanding, modern, multi-motivated global tourist with individualised services (brand- signature treatments, revived spa-towns).

Most importantly, the related legal framework should be established and clarified in order to support new investments, secure the quality standards of the Greek wellness tourism product and allow the formation of synergies between stakeholders in a local, national, private and public level.

Wellness tourism provides an excellent excuse/ base for investing in a complex product, either complementarily to the core mass tourism product (to upgrade and differentiate it) or as a core product depending on the destination’s resources. The vast possibilities of combinations (as indicated in the surveys’ findings) can ensure a new dynamic for the Greek tourism product, engaging more members of the community (either

as employees or as investors), validating its comparative advantages and transforming them into competitive ones (Vasileiou and Tsartas, 2013).

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

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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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**Keywords:** *gastronomy tourism, local products, breakfast, tourist experience, hotels, Greece*



## INTRODUCTION

The connection between tourism and gastronomy is very strong. Not only tourists have to eat when they travel in order to cover their biological needs, but also gastronomy contributes to tourists' quality of experience, thus it can mark the overall travel experience. In 2007, the Travel Industry Association (TIA) emphasized the importance of gastronomy tourism, estimating that 17% of the leisure travel market or 27 million individuals engage in some form of gastronomy activity while travelling (Smith and Costello, 2009). There are a huge number of food-related activities that tourists can develop during their travel, such as: restaurant dining, food festivals, factory tours, farmer's markets, educational seminars, farm visits, etc., just to mention few of them.

Travel for the taste of food is represented in literature by several terms such as: food tourism, cuisine tourism, culinary tourism, gastronomy tourism, and taste tourism. It seems that gastronomy tourism is not easy to define, as a number of authors have attempted to give their own definition (Boniface, 2003; Hall and Mitchell, 2005; Ignatov and Smith, 2006). Even so, the common points between all conceptual approaches are two: first, gastronomic activities can be the primary but also the supporting motivation for travel, and second, gastronomic activities must be unique and memorable.

Etymologically, the word *gastronomy* is derived from Greek *gastros*, meaning stomach, and *gnomos*, knowledge or law. The classical definition of gastronomy is that it is the study of good eating (Scarpato, 2002). The term gastronomy tourism was first proposed in 1998 by Long to express that tourists can experience other cultures via food. By consuming, preparing and presenting food, tourists can actively construct their own unique experiences (Long, 2004). According to Wolf (2002), gastronomy tourism defined as “*travel in order to search for, and enjoy prepared food and drink.... unique and memorable gastronomic experiences*”.

Until recently, food as a tourist attraction was considered as a secondary resource. Currently, however, food tourism has been identified as a primary activity and forms a concrete segment of the tourism industry. As a result, many tourist destinations have begun to focus on their local food and cuisine as an important element and pull factor in the promotion of their destination (Kivela and Crofts, 2005).

On the contrary, in Greece that has an internationally known cuisine, gastronomy does not form a significant element of the Greek tourist product. The variety of dishes, the simplicity of cuisine techniques, the delicious flavors and the high nutrition value of raw materials, have put the Greek cuisine on the map of the most famous ones. Additionally, traditional agricultural products, such as olive oil, feta cheese, honey, yogurt, etc., have been adopted from others national or international cuisines. There are two main reasons why Greece has not yet exploited its gastronomic heritage: first, the unstable quality along the spectrum of the gastronomy providers, and second, the shortage of an effective promotional strategy focusing on the gastronomic wealth of Greece. Due to these weaknesses, Greece cannot compete in the field of gastronomy tourism with other destinations in the Mediterranean region which have used their national gastronomy to enrich the tourism product they supply.

The paper is divided into six parts. Following this introduction, section two presents a literature review on research related to the concept of gastronomy and its connection with tourism. Section three briefly presents the ‘Greek Breakfast’ initiative. Section four introduces the methodology of the research, while section five elaborates on the results, presenting both the demographic characteristics of the respondents and their perceptions regarding the ‘Greek Breakfast’ project. Finally, in section six the conclusions of the study are discussed.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

## **Gastronomy tourism: Models of tourist attitudes and Existential Authenticity**

Research over the past years has revealed an alteration in tourist demand trends. It seems that tourists that are not only interested in visiting significant cultural, historical and environmental sites but also in exploring a destination via new elements like gastronomic resources (Corigliano, 2002). Through the literature review, it seems that this ‘new’ connection between tourism and gastronomy is gaining ground, as it has been analyzed in different papers. A number of studies focuses on the relationship between culture and gastronomy (Chuang, 2009; Everett and Aitchison, 2008; Fields, 2002; Long, 2004; Scarpato, 2002). Another group of research examines gastronomy tourism as a niche market segment and its usefulness as a tool in destination marketing (Green and Dougherty, 2009; Hall, Mitchell and Sharples, 2003; Hashimoto and Telfer, 2006; Kivela and Crofts, 2005; Rand and Heath, 2005). Others researchers have analyzed the gastronomy as a pull factor for the attraction of tourists to a destination (Ab Karim and Chi, 2010; Bessiere, 1998; Green and Dougherty, 2009; Hall, Mitchell and Sharples, 2003; Hiller, Belhassen and Shani, 2013) or the gastronomy and its connection to agricultural products and rural areas (Everett and Aitchison, 2008; Lopez and Martin, 2006; Montanari and Staniscia, 2009; Torres, 2002). A significant part of the literature deals with the profile of gastronomy tourists and the tourism experience they ‘savor’ in a destination (Fields, 2002; Hjalager, 2003; Quan and Wang, 2004; Ignatov and Smith, 2006; Kivela and Crofts, 2006; Sims, 2009; Smith and Costello, 2009).

In this fourth dimension of the literature, a dilemma is raised. Some authors believe that all gastronomy tourists are the same: food consists for them either a necessity for their living or something deeper as a means of understanding the cultural and historical features of a region. On the other hand, based on tourist attitudes to food during their travel, some authors have

distinguished them into different groups (Fields, 2002; Hjalager, 2003; Quan and Wang, 2004; Kivela and Crofts, 2006). Fields (2002) categorizes tourists according to their culinary motive to those led by: a) **physical** drives, i.e. a desire to discover new tastes, b) **cultural** drives, i.e. a desire to learn about traditional local food, and c) **inter-personal** drives, i.e. a desire to visit fashionable restaurants.

Similarly, Hjalager (2003) has examined how tourist preferences for food influence their culinary tourism experience. The proposed model is composed of four categories of gastronomy tourists: (a) recreational, (b) existential, (c) diversionary, and (d) experimental gastronomy tourists.

The **existential** gastronomy tourists search for experiences that boost their knowledge about gastronomy. For such tourists food does not only cover their biological needs but mainly satisfies their desire to be in an authentic contact with the local cuisine and peasant food that has been prepared with respect to traditional recipes. For this reason, existential tourists are likely to be found in places where only locals gathered instead of a typical tourist restaurant.

In contrast, for the **experimental** gastronomy tourists, food is part of their lifestyle. At a destination they are attracted by the 'fashion' restaurants with innovative elements in the design, the menu, and the service. They are well informed about the current trends in food, ingredients and recipes, which they adopt as long as there are in fashion. Experimental tourists cannot be characterized by loyalty in food and eating habits. For these tourists gastronomy forms a part of their social image and prestige.

For **recreational** gastronomy tourists, food has not a crucial role when they visit a destination. Actually, they seek for familiar food and drinks as they offer them the safety of their home. They are not willing to taste foreign foods, except from those that are part of their everyday eating habits.

The main characteristic of **diversionary** gastronomy tourists is that they want to escape from the routine of everyday life

by cooking for the family. For this reason, they do not make any effort to try any special food when they are in vacations. The diversionary gastronomy tourists can be found in well-known chain restaurants or rustic places which offer an idyllic atmosphere for socializing with friends.

From the above analysis is obvious that for some tourists gastronomy is the vehicle to come into contact with the culture of a region and to establish a tie with its past, its traditional and its cultural heritage (Fields, 2002). These tourists are usually looking for authenticity in their lives, and more specifically the existential authenticity.

The existential authenticity as a concept derives from the philosophical tradition and deals with what it means to be human, to be oneself, to be happy (Steiner and Reisinger, 2006). Some aspects of the existential authenticity focus on self-identity, individuality, and meaning-making. Heidegger (1996), supports that existential authenticity is experience oriented, thus the existential self is not permanent, it changes from instant to instant. Consequently, we cannot characterize a person authentic or inauthentic all the time. People can only instantaneously be authentic in different situations. For this reason, the distinction between authentic and inauthentic tourists does not make sense. All tourists have can change from being authentic to being inauthentic.

When people project different identities they bring to light different possibilities which lead to different experiences. If people project themselves as ‘they-self’ they will have the same experience as anyone else. But if they project their authentic self ‘my-self’ they will have unique possibilities and a different tourist experience than other tourists. People forced by the conformity of the ordinary life, have the tense to ignore their own possibilities and adopt the common possibilities, thus making the experiences of just anyone rather than their own experiences. Tourism provides activities outside of everyday life, so it can bring to the surface our authentic identity (Steiner and Reisinger, 2006).

According to Heidegger (1996), authenticity has three characteristics: (a) mineness, meaning that individuals have possibilities of their own that are not shared with others, (b) resoluteness, referring to the courage it takes to make one's own possibilities, and (c) situation, referring to special experiences in which tourists find themselves in their unique place in the world, in a unique situation. Within the tourist experience framework, mineness includes a desire to understand the tourist experience by myself rather than to interpret it through others, for instance, tour guide's explanation. The resoluteness, connected with the desire to visit remote places, less popular to tourists, away from crowds. Authentic tourists would regard every experience as a unique situation valuable in itself (Steiner and Reisinger, 2006).

Gastronomy tourism and existential authenticity have a strong relationship. Some people, in order to find meaning in their lives and understand their selves, dig to the past. History gives people their possibilities, which define them. So, gastronomy as part of the heritage of a destination can be a fertile field for finding our place in the world. Gastronomy tourism includes unique activities which lack conformity, such as harvest fruits and tasting local ingredients, thus it offers rare experiences which permit our authentic self to be projected.

Gastronomy tourism is compatible with Heidegger's characteristics of authenticity. The gastronomy experience itself is not a common tourist activity but rather a unique situation. Additionally, tourists have the opportunity to understand by themselves what is going on with the tourist experience.

### **Contribution of Gastronomy Tourism at a Local Level**

According to Butler (1992), alternative tourism offers a number of presumed economic benefits to local hosting communities. Gastronomy tourism is an alternative form of tourism which offers opportunities to communities to integrate tourism and local food systems in order to promote economic

development, responding at the same time to the specific needs of customers/tourists such as the demand for quality food and dining experiences (Kivela and Crotts, 2006; Sims, 2009). As a result, tourist gastronomic experiences build on the cultural heritage of the region (Bessiere, 1998). This form of tourism is strongly correlated not only with the most of the other special or alternative forms of tourism (e.g. cultural tourism, agritourism, civic tourism, etc.), but also with the mass tourism. In addition, gastronomy tourism seems to have high positive impacts on local economy systems in several sectors such as farmers, retail establishments, restaurants, hotels, etc. (Green and Dougherty, 2009).

Many researchers have shown that gastronomy tourism can generate multiplier effects favorable not only for the tourism sector and the tourist destinations but also for tourists themselves (Bessiere, 1998; Everett and Aitchison, 2008; Green and Dougherty, 2009; Kivela and Crotts, 2006; Lopez and Martin, 2006; Quan and Wang, 2003; Sims, 2009; Tikkanen, 2007). In particular, the consumption of the local products and traditional food (culinary cuisine) can enrich tourist experience; provides knowledge about local culture, habits and nature, offers awareness about food/ products preparation or production, gives the opportunity to explore traditions and emphasizes the authenticity of the experience.

In addition, local food and drink products can improve via gastronomy tourism both the economic and social environment of tourism destinations (Torres, 2002). According to Hall, Mitchell and Sharples (2003), there are several practical components to a strategy for local development which can maximize economic and social leverage between producers and tourism industry, such as: reducing economic leakage by using local renewable resources rather than external sources, e.g. use local materials for packaging, recycling financial resources by buying local products and services. An example of the above are hotels and restaurants that purchase and promote local foods and wine or other beverages, use local banks and credit unions, thus adding value to local produce

before it is exported. Moreover, very important is the connection of local stakeholders, the network of confidence between local farmers' and producers' co-operatives, and the development of local marketing networks. In addition, significant element for economic and social reasons is the creation of an immediate relationship between the consumer/tourist and the local producers by selling direct to consumers via farm shops, e.g. by using cellar door or farm door sales, use newsletters, web sites and the Internet, direct mail or organizing local open markets, local events and food/wine festivals. The branding and promotional strategies need to emphasize local identity and authenticity, e.g. place of origin on the label of the products.

In many cases gastronomy tourism gives opportunities for new generations, e.g. jobs and new entrepreneurial ideas, and provides motivation to young people and women not to abandon the countryside (Canavari et al., 2011; Lopez and Martin, 2007). In this context, it provides the correlations and networks between local producers and suppliers and gives to farmers the ability to rethink their production activity taking into account their diversification into new markets and the opportunities to obtain an added value for their products by ensuring that local products and the production methods are not lost in the face of globalization (Mak et al., 2012). Also, food tourism offers an alternative means of local and regional development, with the potential to strengthen identity, encourage the regeneration of local heritage and traditions, enhance the appreciation of rural societies (Everett and Aitchison, 2008), and strengthen the relationships (emotional communication) between local communities and tourists.

Culinary cuisine can rejuvenate the tourism sector, as gastronomy products not only provide reinforcement to the special and alternative forms of tourism - especially to the cultural countryside forms such as: agritourism and mountain tourism - but can also enhance mass organized tourism through the diversification and the enrichment of the tourist experience with elements of local culture. In this way, gastronomy gives the

opportunity to some destinations to surpass the stagnation stage by commencing a new tourism activity (Kivela and Crotts, 2006).

## **Gastronomy Tourism and Sustainability**

Research has shown that gastronomy can connect to sustainable tourism on a number of levels. In particular, local food and drink products can improve the economic and environmental sustainability for the tourism sector and the host community by encouraging sustainable agricultural practices (supporting diversity and ecological practices), supporting local economy (reinforcing local producers in rural areas), improving social life of rural communities, the maintenance of environment and the survival of local communities. Thus, gastronomy helps a destination to build a 'brand' that can help the region by attracting more visitors and investment, and creating a unique/authentic visitor experience that can connect the consumer with the people and places involved in food production. According to Sims (2009: 322), *"By telling the 'story' of food production, it is possible to use the tourist desire for authenticity to encourage the development of products and services that will boost sustainability and promote rural regions to visitors and residents alike"*. In this way, developing a thriving 'local' food industry can generate the kind of all-round benefits for hosts and guests that are sought as part of the drive to promote sustainable development.

Gastronomy tourism can also be central to the formation of regional identities, substantiating the theoretical link between identity and food (heterogenization, local consciousness, local culture), offers an alternative means of local and regional development with the potential to strengthen identity (Mak et al., 2012), enhances environmentally friendly practices, and encourages the regeneration of heritage and local economy. As demand for the 'distinctive' is growing, local produce has encouraged the renewal of traditional festivals, inspired the emergence of educational visitor attractions, reconnected

consumers with the countryside, inspired the retention and development of culinary and agricultural skills, and offered dying traditional industries and small businesses a lifeline. Furthermore, the local food consumption can also become part of the 'peak' experience (Quan and Wang, 2004) because it copes with visitors' demands for more authentic tourist experiences (Sims, 2009).

All in all, under certain circumstances gastronomy tourism can clearly contribute to environmental, economic and social sustainability.

## THE 'GREEK BREAKFAST' PROJECT

The 'Greek Breakfast' project (<http://greekbreakfast.gr/en>) that was initiated in 2010 is an initiative by the Hellenic Chamber of Hotels (HCH) and 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. The chamber's vision for the 'Greek Breakfast' is to render it the connection between tourism, local communities and local produce. This connection is believed to have multiple positive social and economic impacts on the primary and tourism sectors.

Today, breakfast served by hotels in Greece falls mainly in the following three types: continental breakfast, English breakfast, and buffet style breakfast. These types of breakfast fail to differentiate hotels and regions in Greece providing tourists with the same standardized gastronomic experience. HCH's initiative aims to give to hotel guests the chance to experience the gastronomic wealth of Greece and to taste at their breakfast the innumerable Greek products and dishes. The 'Greek Breakfast' is a combination of 'Greek cuisine' - that is a part of the 'Mediterranean Diet' - and of the many local cuisines as reflected in Greek gastronomic destinations. The Mediterranean diet is not just a modern dietary trend but, according to UNESCO, the "*intangible cultural heritage of mankind*" (HCH, 2015). Towards that direction, the 'Greek Breakfast' will be a part of the Greek 'culinary diplomacy',

contributing to the authenticity of the destination and adding value to the hotel product. The aim is to satisfy the hotel customers through the acquaintance with the local products and local cuisine of every destination in Greece. This acquaintance will be gastronomic, but also cognitive and cultural.

The initiative brings together hoteliers, chefs, farmers, producers, representatives of chambers of commerce and local governments of Greek regions. The challenge is for them to agree on a 'local quality pact' that would lead to the adoption of the 'Greek Breakfast' philosophy by hotels. The 'local pact' is the organizational structure set up by HCH in every region of Greece, which seeks to bring together the goods, services, people and the accumulated knowledge of the places, with the aim of highlighting local gastronomy. The main objective of the pacts is the formation of the Local Portfolio of each region. The Local Area Portfolio is composed of tangible and intangible goods, and is enriched by the human resources of each site associated with gastronomy. All culinary data (culinary history, products, foods, recipes, producers, literature, culinary personalities, culinary myths) are recorded in an open information system. Twenty nine portfolios have been completed until today (October, 2015); those of East Macedonia, Thrace, North Eastern Aegean Islands (Lesvos, Limnos) Western Macedonia (West Macedonia, Imathia), Dodecanese (Astipalea, Kos, Patmos, Rhodes), Continental Greece (Epirus, Magnesia), Thessaloniki, Crete, Cyclades (Mykonos, Naxos, Santorini, Sifnos, Tinos, Folegandros), Aegean Islands (Aegina, Skiros), Ionian Islands (Corfu, Zakynthos, Lefkada), Peloponnese, Central Greece (Evia, Fokida), Halkidiki.

The choice of ingredients is designed according to the philosophy of the 'Greek Breakfast' in order to correspond to modern consumer trends in diet (Mediterranean diet, organic products, etc.), highlight the materials and recipes of each individual area as additional local features, and utilize the elements of each area's local culture that are related to the Greek origins and history. A key element in the selection of materials and products

for the 'Greek Breakfast' is representing in a significant percentage (not less than 50%) the productive and cultural identity of regions-destinations, creating both diversification and added-value for the destinations. The local, regional, national and Mediterranean identity and the origin of the materials form the central element and stigma of the 'Greek Breakfast'. Products that compose the 'Greek Breakfast' are to be chosen between specific premium Greek products, e.g. Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) products, Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) products, Traditional Specialties Guaranteed (TSG) products, traditional products and organic products.

The chamber aims to establish the 'Greek Breakfast' throughout all hotels of the country. Today, the project includes 561 hotels (of all classes) and 68 local producers (October, 2015).

## **METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of the research is to investigate the relationship between local gastronomy, tourism and local economy. The research objectives and questions concerned the examination of the contribution of the use of local cuisine and traditional agricultural products by hotel accommodations. This contribution has been analyzed from different points of view, such as: a) tourism enterprises, b) tourist destinations, and c) tourist experience.

The approach of the above objectives took place through a primary survey which aimed to record the perceptions of managers of hotel accommodations which have joined the project 'Greek Breakfast' of the Hellenic Chamber of Hotels, on the program's benefits both from the point of view of companies and destinations (direct estimation) and from the point of view of tourist experiences (indirect estimation).

The survey was conducted via a quantitative approach and for this reason the questionnaire was chosen as the most appropriate tool for data collection. The quantitative survey gives the opportunity to use common questions for all respondents, thus

enabling researchers to classify them and draw conclusions. Furthermore, the questionnaire as a research tool is characterized by high levels of reliability and validity, as researchers have limited influence to the respondents and do not affect their behavior (Bird et al, 1999).

A structured questionnaire was used for the collection of the data, which consisted of 25 questions, the vast majority of which in were close-ended ones (there was only one open-ended question). The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale, dual and multiple choice questions, a nominal scale, etc., and was divided into four sections. The questions of the first section concerned the ‘Greek Breakfast’ project and its contribution to: a) hotel accommodations (image, promotion, cooperation, economic benefits, etc.), b) tourist destinations (at a cultural, economic, social and environmental level), and c) tourist experiences (enrichment, acquaintance with tradition, etc.). The next group of questions concerned the characteristics of the cooperation between hotels and local producers. The questions of the third section aimed to assess the acceptance of the program by tourists (clients of hotel enterprises) but also to provide a total evaluation of the program. The last section of the questionnaire included questions referred to the characteristics of the hotel enterprises.

The research sample included the total number of hotels which have joined the ‘Greek Breakfast’ project until the time period that the survey was conducted. This corresponds to 399 hotel accommodations (HCH, 2015). The questionnaire was sent by the authors to hotel accommodations via e-mail. At first, due to the nature of the survey (electronic transmission of questionnaire) a limited responsiveness was observed, thus the authors decided to resend the questionnaire. During the period March to May 2015 the questionnaire was sent to the respondents three times. Finally, a total number of 110 valid questionnaires were collected, which means a 27, 5% of the total population. Taking account of the nature and the difficulties of the survey, the percentage of the sample is considered as an acceptable one.

The collected data were statistically analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.0. The methodology adopted for the data processing, included:

- Descriptive statistic measures in order to outline the profile of the sample, the elements of the participation in the program, and the perceptions of the managers of the hotel accommodations of the benefits derived from the use of local cuisine products as part of the hotel product offered.
- Non-parametric statistic in order to investigate correlations between the characteristics of the sample and that of the ‘Greek Breakfast’.

## **FINDINGS**

### **Sample’s profile**

As mentioned above, a total of 110 questionnaires were collected. Table 1 presents the demographic information of the respondents. Out of the 110 hotels that participated in this survey, 22 hotels are 5-star hotels (20%), 37 hotels are 4-star ones (33.6%), 33 hotels are 3-star ones (30%), 16 hotels are 2-star one (14.5%), and just 2 of them are 1-star ones (1.8%). Consequently, hotels ranked to the upper classes are dominant in this survey. Furthermore, the vast majority (80%) of the hotels are operating as independent hotels rather than as chain hotels (20%). Concerning the type of hotels, more than half of the respondents (57.3%) are resort hotels, followed by city hotels (26.4%) and rural hotels (16.4%). Of particular interest is the data analysis on the number of beds. Specifically, almost half of the sample’s hotels (46.4%) are small units with 1 to 50 beds, while big units are a minority in this survey. In terms of operation period, the percentages are almost equally divided with 51.8% being ‘seasonal’ hotels and 48.2% being ‘all-year-round’ hotels. When studying the geographical distribution of the hotels, it comes to light that the highest percentages are noted at the Prefectures which comprise the

backbone of the ‘Greek tourism product’, i.e. South Aegean (21.8%) and Crete (17.3%). In the rest of the Prefectures the corresponding percentages are limited.

**Table 1** Respondent’s profile

		N	%
Classification	*	2	1.8
	**	16	14.5
	***	33	30.0
	****	37	33.6
	*****	22	20.0
Ownership	Chain hotel	22	20.0
	Independent hotel	88	80.0
Number of beds	1-50	51	46.4
	51-100	26	23.6
	101-200	14	12.7
	201-300	6	5.5
	301-500	7	6.4
	501+	6	5.5
Type	City hotel	29	26.4
	Resort hotel	63	57.3
	Rural hotel	18	16.4
Period of operation	All year	53	48.2
	Seasonal	57	51.8
Prefecture	Attica	7	6.4
	East Macedonia and Thrace	6	5.5
	North Aegean	4	3.6
	West Greece	5	4.5
	West Macedonia	4	3.6
	Epirus	7	6.4
	Thessaly	7	6.4
	Ionian Islands	6	5.5
	Central Macedonia	8	7.3
	Crete	19	17.3

	South Aegean	24	21.8
	Peloponnese	10	9.1
	Central Greece	3	2.7
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>110</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## **The Greek Breakfast**

The Hellenic Chamber of Hotels introduced the ‘Greek Breakfast’ project in 2010. The vast majority of hotels (70%) participating in this study launched the project during the years 2013 to 2014 (29.1% and 40.9% respectively). The rest of them joined in 2011 (8.2%), 2012 (5.5%) and 2015 (16.4%). Apart from the ‘Greek Breakfast’, other types of breakfast offered to hotels’ customers are mainly the ‘American Breakfast’ (54 hotels), followed by the ‘Continental Breakfast’ (49 hotels) and the ‘English Breakfast’ (17 hotels). A noteworthy point is that, while the majority of hotels offer more than one breakfast choices to their guests, 20 hotels are serving exclusively the ‘Greek Breakfast’. The majority of those 20 hotels are independent small units with a capacity of 1 to 50 beds. Additionally, the dominant breakfast serving method adapted by the hotels is the ‘buffet style’ (70.9%), while other methods such as ‘table d’hote’ and ‘a la carte’ record lower percentages (10% and 6.4% respectively). In most cases, the price of the breakfast is included in the room rate (74.5%). Only 7 hotels (6.4%) do not include the price of the breakfast in the room rate, while 19.1% of the hotels apply both pricing methods – leaving the choice to their guests. Within the framework of the ‘Greek Breakfast’, the products that hotels have included in their menu are special products with a strong connection to the place of their production, such as: Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) products (75 hotels), Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) products (58 hotels), Traditional Specialties Guaranteed (TSG) products (38 hotels) and finally organic products (49 hotels). From this point of view, it seems that one of the main goals of the

Hellenic Chamber of Hotels upon launching of the ‘Greek Breakfast’ project – that of highlighting the materials, products and recipes of each individual area and at the same time corresponding to modern consumer trends in diet (Mediterranean diet, organic products etc.) – has been achieved.

Subsequently, the participants were asked to indicate on a scale from 1 to 5 their perceptions regarding eighteen statements concerning the contribution and the benefits of the ‘Greek Breakfast’. It should be noted that all of these aspects constitute important objectives of the project, as these have been set out by the Chamber. Overall, the participants rated high most of those aspects. Specifically, 93.7% of the respondents found that the ‘Greek Breakfast’ contributed much or very much to the promotion of the local products and local cuisine of each region, 91.8% felt the same for the project’s contribution to the promotion and enhancement of the country’s culinary heritage and identity, 90.9% highlighted the contribution to the diversification and enrichment of the tourist product offered by the country, and 88.2% recognized the important contribution of the project to the exploitation of the cultural gastronomic wealth of Greece. Table 2 provides also the mean evaluation of the eighteen different aspects. It turned out, that –according to the respondents’ opinion- the lowest level of project’s contribution concerned the ‘job creation’, followed by the ‘acquaintance of producers and consumers’, and the ‘achievement of sustainable development’.

**Table 2** The level of contribution of the Greek Breakfast to various aspects

	Not at all	Slightly	Quite enough	Much	Very much	Mean	SD
Creation of a unique and authentic experience for visitors	0.0	2.7	12.7	30.9	53.6	4.35	0.808

Diversification and enrichment of the tourism product offered by the country	0.0	0.0	9.1	32.7	58.2	4.49	0.660
Promotion and enhancement of the country's culinary heritage and identity	0.0	0.0	8.2	30.0	61.8	4.54	0.645
Visits to production premises of local products and familiarization with traditional production method	0.9	1.8	23.6	31.8	41.8	4.12	0.896
Diversification and promotion of specific characteristics and competitive advantage of destinations	0.0	3.6	17.3	40.9	38.2	4.14	0.829
Promotion of local products and local cuisine of each region	0.9	0.0	5.5	26.4	67.3	4.59	0.681
Enhancement of local producers	0.0	2.7	14.5	29.1	53.6	4.34	0.827
Enhancement of local economy	0.9	3.6	19.1	29.1	47.3	4.18	0.930
Acquaintance of producers and consumers	4.5	12.7	29.1	33.6	20.0	3.52	1.090
Stimulation of links between	0.9	6.4	23.6	41.8	27.3	3.88	0.916

hotel businesses and local producers (collaboration between primary and tertiary sector)							
Preservation of traditional ways / processes of production	0.0	4.5	30.0	38.2	27.3	3.88	0.865
In the exploitation of the cultural gastronomic wealth of Greece	0.0	0.0	11.8	37.3	50.9	4.39	0.692
Change of tourism entrepreneurs' attitudes towards quality	0.0	1.8	11.8	34.5	51.8	4.36	0.763
Development of gastronomic tourism and other alternative forms of tourism	0.0	1.8	14.5	39.1	44.5	4.26	0.774
Achievement of sustainable development	0.9	4.5	35.5	38.2	20.9	3.74	0.874
Attraction of more qualitative tourists	0.9	11.8	22.7	34.5	30.0	3.81	1.027
Job creation	3.6	20.0	36.4	23.6	16.4	3.29	1.078
Promotion of a healthy and Mediterranean diet	0.9	1.8	16.4	35.5	45.5	4.23	0.853

The application of ANOVA to investigate the significant effects of the demographic characteristics of the responding hotels (classification, ownership, number of beds, type, period of operation, prefecture) on their ratings of the eighteen aspects of the contribution of the 'Greek Breakfast' (see Table 2), revealed some statistically significant effects in a number of cases. In particular, the *classification* appeared to have some influence on respondents' perceptions of the project's contribution to 'the diversification and enrichment of the tourism product offered by the country' ( $p=0.003$ ), 'the diversification and promotion of the specific characteristics and the competitive advantage of destinations' ( $p=0.037$ ), 'the development of gastronomic tourism and other alternative forms of tourism' ( $p=0.023$ ), 'the achievement of sustainable development' ( $p=0.020$ ), and 'the attraction of more qualitative tourists' ( $p=0.001$ ). In all cases, the managers of 5-star units tend to be more negative than the managers of lower rating hotels (1-star and 2-star). However, this finding is not very reliable because of the low representation of 1-star hotels in the sample (2 hotels). Moreover, the *ownership* seems to affect managers' perceptions of the contribution of the 'Greek Breakfast' to 'the enhancement of local producers' ( $p=0.001$ ), with the managers of chain hotels being more positive than the ones of independent hotels. The *type of hotel* (city, resort, rural) is another factor that appears to influence managers' feelings about the benefits of the 'Greek Breakfast', mainly regarding its contribution to 'the diversification and enrichment of the tourism product offered by the country' ( $p=0.049$ ), 'the enhancement of local producers' ( $p=0.016$ ), 'the exploitation of the cultural gastronomic wealth of Greece' ( $p=0.024$ ), 'the change of tourism entrepreneurs' attitudes towards quality' ( $p=0.015$ ), and 'the development of gastronomic tourism and other alternative forms of tourism' ( $p=0.026$ ). The managers of the resort hotels evaluated these aspects more positively than the managers of rural hotels, who differentiated slightly, whereas the managers of city hotels differentiated even further. Following that, some significant effects ( $p<0.05$ ) were

detected concerning the managers' perceptions of hotels with a different *period of operation* (all-year-round and seasonal). More specifically, the aspects with these significant effects are 'the diversification and enrichment of the tourism product offered by the country' ( $p=0.006$ ), 'the promotion and enhancement of the country's culinary heritage and identity' ( $p=0.011$ ), 'the promotion of the local products and local cuisine of each region' ( $p=0.010$ ), 'the enhancement of local producers' ( $p=0.006$ ), 'the enhancement of local economy' ( $p=0.000$ ), 'the acquaintance of producers and consumers' ( $p=0.036$ ), and last but not least 'the exploitation of the cultural gastronomic wealth of Greece' ( $p=0.002$ ). The managers of seasonal hotels rated these aspects more positively than the managers of the hotels operating all-year-round. Finally, significant effects ( $p=0.040$ ) were recorded in the perceptions of managers from hotels with different *numbers of rooms*, especially as regards the contribution of the 'Greek Breakfast' to 'the development of gastronomic tourism and other alternative forms of tourism'. It is interesting to say that the managers of very small hotels (1-50 rooms) and those of very large units (more than 300 rooms) are more positive towards this aspect than all the other managers representing hotel units with 51-300 rooms.

In the next question, the respondents were asked to evaluate the possible benefits for their hotels from the use of the 'Greek Breakfast' project on a scale from 1 (not important) to 5 (extremely important) (Table 3). In most cases, the perceptions of the managers seem to be quite restrained and neutral. They mention that the most important benefit from their participation in the project is the 'diversification and enrichment of the product they offer' (Mean=4.26), followed by the 'increased customer satisfaction' (Mean=4.23), and the 'improved image and reputation of their enterprise' (Mean=4.15). Other benefits that the respondents recognize as quite important or very important for their hotels are the 'promotion of their hotels through the Hellenic Chamber of Hotels' promotional actions (website, social media, exhibitions, etc.)' (Mean=3.93), the 'competitiveness

reinforcement' (Mean=3.89), the 'attraction of new customers of culinary interest' (Mean=3.58), the 'customer loyalty' (Mean=3.51) and the 'increased bookings' (Mean=3.25). On the other hand, it seems that they do not feel the same about the 'cost reduction' (Mean=2.46) and the 'creation of new partnerships with tour operators' (Mean=2.91), which they rate lower than the other aspects. However, some of the respondents mentioned that it is still early to evaluate the benefits, as they joined the project recently (2015) and for that reason they are cautious in their answers.

Moreover, some significant effects ( $p < 0.05$ ) were detected concerning the respondents' evaluation of various benefits for their hotels by their participation in the 'Greek Breakfast' project (Table 3). Specifically, 5-star units tend to be more negative regarding the 'increased bookings' ( $p = 0.000$ ) and 'customer loyalty' ( $p = 0.026$ ). Independent hotels rate the 'customer loyalty' ( $p = 0.042$ ) higher than chain hotels, while the opposite occurs in the 'attraction of new customers of culinary interest' ( $p = 0.038$ ). The number of rooms also appeared to have some influence on respondents' perceptions of the project's benefits for their hotels, namely 'increased bookings' ( $p = 0.048$ ), 'customer loyalty' ( $p = 0.001$ ), and 'better promotion through the Hellenic Chamber of Hotels' promotional actions' ( $p = 0.006$ ). With regard to 'increased bookings' and 'customer loyalty', all respondents consider these to be quite considerable benefits for their hotels. Nevertheless, it seems that in both cases the managers of the very small units (1-50 rooms) are the most positive (Mean=3.57 and Mean=3.92 respectively), in contrast to the managers of units with 201-300 rooms who have the most negative perceptions (Mean=2.50 in both cases). Furthermore, while all other respondents consider that they can benefit remarkably from the promotion of their hotels through the Chamber's promotional activities, the managers of the very large units of more than 500 rooms disagree (Mean=2.83). A significant difference ( $p = 0.044$ ) was also recorded in the perceptions of different types of hotels regarding the cost

reduction, with rural hotels being much more negative than resort hotels.

**Table 3** The benefits for the hotels from the Greek Breakfast project

	Not important	A little important	Quite important	Very important	Extremely important	Mean	SD
Competitiveness reinforcement	0.0	5.5	27.3	40.0	27.3	3.89	0.871
Image improvement and reputation creation for the enterprise	0.0	1.8	19.1	40.9	38.2	4.15	0.792
Diversification and enrichment of the hotel product offered	0.0	0.0	14.5	44.5	40.9	4.26	0.700
Increased bookings	1.8	20.9	43.6	17.3	16.4	3.25	1.027
Customer loyalty	1.8	16.4	32.7	27.3	21.8	3.51	1.064
Increased turnover	4.5	22.7	45.5	15.5	11.8	3.07	1.020
Cost reduction	26.4	29.1	24.5	11.8	8.2	2.46	1.232
Attract new customers of culinary interest	0.9	13.6	32.7	31.8	20.9	3.58	0.999
Increase customer satisfaction	0.0	1.8	13.6	44.5	40.0	4.23	0.750
Creation of new partnerships with tour operators	10.9	28.2	30.9	19.1	10.9	2.91	1.162
Better promotion of	1.8	10.9	18.2	30.9	38.2	3.93	1.081

the hotel through the promotional actions of the Hellenic Chamber of Hotels							
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### Cooperation between hotels and local producers

One of the major objectives of the ‘Greek Breakfast’ project, as it was set by their initiators, is the promotion of the wealth and authenticity of local agricultural products and gastronomy by uniting hoteliers and local producers. This connection is believed to have multiple positive social and economic impacts on the primary and tourism sector. In this section, the questions to the hotel managers focused on their cooperation with local producers. More than half of the participants (53.6%) argued that they cooperate with the local producers not only for the supply of the necessary raw materials for the ‘Greek Breakfast’, but also for the rest of their hotel’s food services. The participants were then asked to evaluate on a scale of 1 (unsatisfactory) to 5 (completely satisfactory) their cooperation with local producers. The majority of the hotel managers rated this relationship as ‘satisfactory’ or ‘completely satisfactory’ (mean=3.90, std. deviation=0.856). However, most of the participants reported that they face multiple problems in their cooperation with local producers. Such problems are the high prices of the products (reported by 64 hotels), less quantity than required (44 hotels), delivery times (28 hotels), product quality (12 hotels), and other cooperation problems (8 hotels). Only 14 respondents stated that they do not face any problem with local producers. Yet, it is quite interesting that many hotels (46.4%) reported that they their synergy with local producers has moved to the next level, as they cooperating with them for the improvement of the production process and the packaging of their products. Moreover, 47 respondents reported

that they have established in their hotels an exhibition of local agricultural products offered in their ‘Greek Breakfast’. That means that local producers significantly increase the chances of making their products known to visitors.

### **Acceptance of ‘Greek Breakfast’ from customers**

Another interesting subject that was investigated in this research is the level of acceptance of the ‘Greek Breakfast’ by hotel customers, as this will partly affect the success of the whole project. Impressively, the results are very promising as more than half (51.1%) of the sample’s 90 hotels which offer the ‘Greek Breakfast’ to their customers along with other types of breakfast (American, Continental and English) reported that the percentage of their customers who choose the ‘Greek Breakfast’ for their breakfast ranges from 76 to 100%. In 31.1% of the hotels this percentage ranges from 51 to 75%, while in 13.3% of the hotels the percentage falls and ranges from 26 to 50%. The smaller percentages (0-25%) are recorded only in 4.4% of the hotels (4 units). In addition, 56.4% of customers who tasted the ‘Greek Breakfast’ place it now as their first choice. Furthermore, the respondents stated that 73.6% of their clients expressed an interest to purchase products they tasted in the ‘Greek Breakfast’. In conclusion, we can see that on the one side the acceptance of the ‘Greek Breakfast’ among customers is high, and on the other side it has created a secondary demand for local agricultural products. In fact, local producers have earned a very effective ‘shop window’ for their products.

### **Success of the project and proposals for improvement**

In the last section of the survey, participants were asked to express their perceptions of, judgments, or feelings about the overall performance and success of the ‘Greek Breakfast’ project, based on their personal experience so far. It turned out that the majority of them (95.5%) agree that the project achieves its

objectives, as they have been set out by the Hellenic Chamber of Hotels. Nevertheless, while most of the respondents argue that the project is an excellent initiative, they also underlined some critical points where the project falls short. First of all, one main weakness of the project is identified in the control process. As one participant claims: *“There is a lack of control mechanisms. Some hotels joined the project for advertising purposes, without actually serving the ‘Greek breakfast’. There is a need for continuous monitoring and evaluation of the participating hotels”*. Another major problem of the project, reported by many of the respondents, concerns the promotion and advertising of the participating hotels and the overall project by the Hellenic Chamber of Hotels. They suggest that a greater emphasis should be put in the communication of the project to tourism markets abroad, tour operators, inbound and domestic tourists, in order to become an international recognizable brand. *“Nowadays, there is just a simple reference to the ‘Greek Breakfast’, which does not mean anything in the international culinary scene”*, as one of the participants stated. Towards that direction, it seems that there is a lack of synergy between the Hellenic Chamber of Hotels and the Greek National Tourism Organisation, according to another respondent. A third major problem highlighted by many of the participants in the survey is the cost of raw materials. *“It is imperative that suppliers (local producers) lower their prices in order to offer more Greek agricultural products in our breakfast, as we are fighting to keep our high quality standards in our services together with a low operational cost, offering our customers value for their money”* a manager argued. Another participant mentioned the need of a better synergy between suppliers (primary production) and hotels (tertiary production). *“Unfortunately suppliers are taking advantage of the demand for their products by refusing to cooperate in wholesale and preferring retail prices, and also they are not interested in ideas and suggestions of different presentation or packaging of their products in order to become more attractive, easier to carry and more competitive with those of other areas”* he

said. Other identified problems refer to the “*quite complicated process to join the project*” and the need for “*inclusion of the ‘Greek Breakfast’ in a broader culinary context, where the visitor except of the Greek breakfast has the ability to taste local dishes in the tavernas and restaurants, visit local producers, etc. in the nearby surrounding area of the hotel*”. Finally, a reference was also made to the lack of a legislative framework to strengthen the whole effort, as “*anything local or handmade is prohibited by the health service*”. “*There is an imperative need for an immediate change in the law by the Hellenic Food Authority, a pending issue that has existed since 2011*”, a participant commented.

Subsequently, respondents were asked to select among a number of suggestions, the ones they regard as crucial for the future success of the project. 83 of them agreed that the effective cooperation between all stakeholders involved (hoteliers, local producers, local authorities, chambers, local community, etc.) is very important. A good value for money from local producers is also important according to 77 respondents. Furthermore, 69 of them highlighted the need for extroversions and promotion of the project in international tourism markets (participation in exhibitions, conferences, web, etc.). According to 62 participants, the participation in the project by the majority of the Greek hotels is another crucial factor for the success of the project. In addition, 57 participants consider that it is important to educate (via training seminars) the staff working in breakfast about the products and their quality in order to highlight them during their contact to customers. 53 managers also believe that the Hellenic Chamber of Hotels should provide more incentives to convince hoteliers join the project. Finally, some further suggestions include the need for recognition of the project by tour operators, the need for implementation of more strict criteria for the selection of hotels that will participate in the project – “*what is the meaning of the Greek Breakfast in an ‘all inclusive’ hotel?*” a participant wondered – and finally, the need to highlight the Greek PDO / PGI

/ TSG products in Greek restaurants abroad in order to achieve a better branding.

## **CONCLUSION**

Eating is a necessity of life and as that an inextricable part of every holiday experience, in which every tourist takes part independently of their motives and tourist activities. Over the last few decades, food has become the ideal sign of tourism consumption. Typical/ authentic products of local cuisine act as pull factors, motivating tourists to visit a destination. For this reason, a number of regions use gastronomy as a crucial element of their tourism promotional strategy.

The findings of the survey confirm the evidence of previous researches that the development of gastronomy tourism can have significant benefits for both tourists and tourism destinations (Bessiere, 1998; Green and Dougherty, 2009; Kivela and Crofts, 2006; Quan and Wang, 2003; Sims, 2009). From the findings, it comes to light that gastronomy tourism as it embodied in 'Greek Breakfast' project, has a pivotal role to the creation of unique and authentic experiences. It offers to tourists the opportunity to savor traditional food, explore the culinary habits of the local people and increase their knowledge about local food products. In a sense, gastronomy permits tourists to take a glimpse of the past of a region and understand the tradition and its history in a better way. Thus, it can cultivate a strong cultural connection between hosts and guests. Visitors find themselves in a unique place, take part with all their senses in an exceptional – not an ordinary – tourist experience which marks their memories with local tastes. This process is crucial not only for the evaluation of the total tourist experience but also for the evaluation of our everyday life and the effort to find meaning in it (Steiner and Reisinger, 2006).

Moreover, the research revealed that the benefits from the 'Greek Breakfast' project are also crucial for tourist destinations.

For the economy of a destination, this means establishing a strong relationship between tourism and local agricultural production. Gastronomy tourism adds value to local products, supports local producers and encourages them to continue their traditional economic activities, connects local stakeholders, boosts the recycling of financial resources and reinforces the local economies. Moreover, it is obvious from the survey that gastronomy tourism constitutes a destination's competitive advantage, as it is a pull factor that increases both the number and the 'quality' of tourists. There are multiple benefits for tourism enterprises offering gastronomy tourism products and adopting practices like the 'Greek Breakfast' project. First of all, they can offer an enriched and diversified tourism product to their customers, which is a crucial factor for the increase of their satisfaction. Additionally, gastronomy tourism helps tourism enterprises to improve their image, develop a competitive advantage and expand their reputation as innovative and forward-thinking enterprises.

According to the vast majority of tourism enterprises which joined the 'Greek Breakfast', the project has achieved its main objectives. Still, efforts must be made to overcome some issues which slow down its effectiveness. The identified problems of the project are distinguished into two groups. The first one focuses on the relationship between hotels and local producers. As it seems, local producers were not ready to respond professionally to this new activity; as a result problems some problems were faced, which were related to the prices of agricultural products, the delivery times and the inability to offer the required quantity. The above problems could probably be eliminated by the development of a training program in order for local producers to acquire managerial knowledge to deal efficiently with this challenge. The second group of problems is related to the organizational difficulties of the project itself. The main problems have to do with the lack of standardization in each part of the project, the simplification of the access process, the need for a control mechanism, the development of a supportive framework, and the

promotion of the project in the international and domestic tourism market.

As opposed to other Mediterranean countries, until recently Greece, had not used its internationally well-known gastronomy as a tourism promotional tool. The 'Greek Breakfast' project is an attempt to counterbalance this. The project is expected to add value and improve the competitive position of the Greek tourism product. If Greece wishes to build a strong gastronomic identity in the mind of tourists, it must highlight its differences along with its main motivational attraction. In an increasingly look-alike world, food with a strong national or regional identity can become one of the vehicles for achieving this goal.

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# TOURISMOS

*An International Multidisciplinary Journal of Tourism*

## **AIMS & SCOPE**

TOURISMOS is an international, multi-disciplinary, refereed (peerreviewed) journal aiming to promote and enhance research in all fields of tourism, including travel, hospitality and leisure. The journal is published by the University of the Aegean (in Greece), and is intended for readers in the scholarly community who deal with different tourism sectors, both at macro and at micro level, as well as professionals in the industry. TOURISMOS provides a platform for debate and dissemination of research findings, new research areas and techniques, conceptual developments, and articles with practical application to any tourism segment. Besides research papers, the journal welcomes book reviews, conference reports, case studies, research notes and commentaries.

TOURISMOS aims at:

- Disseminating and promoting research, good practice and innovation in all aspects of tourism to its prime audience including educators, researchers, post-graduate students, policy makers, and industry practitioners.
- Encouraging international scientific cooperation and understanding, and enhancing multi-disciplinary research across all tourism sectors.

The scope of the journal is international and all papers submitted are subject to strict blind peer review by its Editorial Board and by other anonymous international reviewers. The journal features conceptual and empirical papers, and editorial policy is to invite the submission of manuscripts from academics, researchers, post-graduate students, policymakers and industry practitioners. The Editorial Board will be looking particularly for articles about new trends and developments within different sectors of tourism, and the application of new ideas and developments that are likely to affect tourism, travel, hospitality and leisure in the future. TOURISMOS also welcomes submission of manuscripts in areas that may not be directly tourism-related but cover a 236 topic that is of interest to researchers, educators, policy-makers and practitioners in various fields of tourism.

The material published in TOURISMOS covers all scientific, conceptual and applied disciplines related to tourism, travel, hospitality and leisure, including: economics, management, planning and development,

marketing, human resources, sociology, psychology, geography, information and communication technologies, transportation, service quality, finance, food and beverage, and education. Manuscripts published in TOURISMOS should not have been published previously in any copyright form (print or electronic/online). The general criteria for the acceptance of articles are:

- Contribution to the promotion of scientific knowledge in the greater multi-disciplinary field of tourism.
- Adequate and relevant literature review.
- Scientifically valid and reliable methodology.
- Clarity of writing.
- Acceptable quality of English language.

TOURISMOS is published twice per year (in Spring and in Autumn). Each issue includes the following sections: editorial, research papers, research notes, case studies, book reviews, conference reports, industry viewpoints, and forthcoming events.

## **JOURNAL SECTIONS**

### **Editorial**

The Editorial addresses issues of contemporary interest and provides a detailed introduction and commentary to the articles in the current issue. The editorial may be written by the Editor, or by any other member(s) of the Editorial Board. When appropriate, a “Guest Editorial” may be presented. However, TOURISMOS does not accept unsolicited editorials.

### **Research Papers**

For the Research Papers section, TOURISMOS invites full-length manuscripts (not longer than 6000 words and not shorter than 4000 words) from a variety of disciplines; these papers may be either empirical or conceptual, and will be subject to strict blind peer review (by at least three anonymous referees). The decision for the final acceptance of the paper will be taken unanimously by the Editor and by the Associate Editors. The manuscripts submitted should provide original and/or innovative ideas or approaches or findings that eventually push the frontiers of knowledge. Purely descriptive accounts are not considered suitable for this section. Each paper should have the following structure:

a) abstract, b) introduction (including an overall presentation of the issue to be examined and the aims and objectives of the paper), c) main body (including, where appropriate, the review of literature, the development of hypotheses and/or models, research methodology, presentation of findings, and analysis and discussion), d) conclusions (including also, where appropriate, recommendations, practical implications, limitations, and suggestions for further research), e) bibliography, f) acknowledgements, and g) appendices.

### **Case Studies**

Case Studies should be not longer than 3500 words and not shorter than 2500; these articles should be focusing on the detailed and critical presentation/review of real-life cases from the greater tourism sector, and must include - where appropriate - relevant references and bibliography. Case Studies should aim at disseminating information and/or good practices, combined with critical analysis of real examples. Purely descriptive accounts may be considered suitable for this section, provided that are well-justified and of interest to the readers of TOURISMOS. Each article should have the following structure: a) abstract, b) introduction (including an overall presentation of the case to be examined and the aims and objectives of the article), c) main body (including, where appropriate, the review of literature, the presentation of the case study, the critical review of the case and relevant discussion), d) conclusions (including also, where appropriate, recommendations, practical implications, and suggestions for further study), e) bibliography, f) acknowledgements, and g) appendices. All Case Studies are subject to blind peer review (by at least one anonymous referee). The decision for the final acceptance of the article will be taken unanimously by the Editor and by the Associate Editor.

### **Research Notes**

Research Notes should be not longer than 2000 words and not shorter than 1000; these papers may be either empirical or conceptual, and will be subject to blind peer review (by at least two anonymous referees). The decision for the final acceptance of the paper will be taken unanimously by the Editor and by the Associate Editors. The manuscripts submitted may present research-in-progress or my focus on the conceptual development of models and approaches that have not been proven yet through primary research. In all cases, the papers should provide original

ideas, approaches or preliminary findings that are open to discussion. Purely descriptive accounts may be considered suitable for this section, provided that are well-justified and of interest to the readers of TOURISMOS. Each paper should have the following structure: a) abstract, b) introduction (including an overall presentation of the issue to be examined and the aims and objectives of the paper), c) main body (including, where appropriate, the review of literature, the development of hypotheses and/or models, research methodology, presentation of findings, and analysis and discussion), d) conclusions (including also, where appropriate, recommendations, practical implications, limitations, and suggestions for further research), e) bibliography, f) acknowledgements, and g) appendices.

### **Book Reviews**

Book Reviews should be not longer than 1500 words and not shorter than 1000; these articles aim at presenting and critically reviewing books from the greater field of tourism. Most reviews should focus on new publications, but older books are also welcome for presentation. Book Reviews are not subject to blind peer review; the decision for the final acceptance of the article will be taken unanimously by the Editor and by the Book Reviews Editor. Where appropriate, these articles may include references and bibliography. Books to be reviewed may be assigned to potential authors by the Book Reviews Editor, though TOURISMOS is also open to unsolicited suggestions for book reviews from interested parties.

### **Conference Reports**

Conference Reports should be not longer than 2000 words and not shorter than 1000; these articles aim at presenting and critically reviewing conferences from the greater field of tourism. Most reports should focus on recent conferences (i.e., conferences that took place not before than three months from the date of manuscript submission), but older conferences are also welcome for presentation if appropriate. Conference Reports are not subject to blind peer review; the decision for the final acceptance of the article will be taken unanimously by the Editor and by the Conference Reports Editor. Where appropriate, these articles may include references and bibliography. Conference reports may be assigned to potential authors by the Conference Reports Editor, though 239

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### **Industry Viewpoints**

Industry Viewpoints should be not longer than 1500 words and not shorter than 500; these articles may have a “commentary” form, and aim at presenting and discussing ideas, views and suggestions by practitioners (industry professionals, tourism planners, policy makers, other tourism stakeholders, etc.). Through these articles, TOURISMOS provides a platform for the exchange of ideas and for developing closer links between academics and practitioners. Most viewpoints should focus on contemporary issues, but other issues are also welcome for presentation if appropriate. Industry Viewpoints are not subject to blind peer review; the decision for the final acceptance of the article will be taken unanimously by the Editor and by the Associate Editors. These articles may be assigned to potential authors by the editor, though TOURISMOS is also open to unsolicited contributions from interested parties.

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Forthcoming Events should be not longer than 500 words; these articles may have the form of a “call of papers”, related to a forthcoming conference or a special issue of a journal. Alternatively, forthcoming events may have the form of a press release informing readers of TOURISMOS about an event (conference or other) related to the tourism, travel, hospitality or leisure sectors. These articles should not aim at promoting sales of any products or services. The decision for the final acceptance of the article will be taken by the Editor.

# TOURISMOS

*An International Multidisciplinary Journal of Tourism*

## NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

### Manuscript Submission Procedure

Manuscripts should be written as understandably and concisely as possible with clarity and meaningfulness. Submission of a manuscript to TOURISMOS represents a certification on the part of the author(s) that it is an original work and has not been copyrighted elsewhere; manuscripts that are eventually published may not be reproduced in any other publication (print or electronic), as their copyright has been transferred to TOURISMOS. Submissions are accepted only in electronic form; authors are requested to submit one copy of each manuscript by email attachment. All manuscripts should be emailed to the Editor-in-Chief (Prof. Paris Tsartas, at [ptsar@aegean.gr](mailto:ptsar@aegean.gr)) and to the Editors (Prof. Evangelos Christou, at [e.christou@tour.teithe.gr](mailto:e.christou@tour.teithe.gr) and Prof. Andreas Papatheodorou, at [a.papatheodorou@aegean.gr](mailto:a.papatheodorou@aegean.gr)), and depending on the nature of the manuscript submissions should also be emailed as follows:

- Conference reports should be emailed directly to the Conference Reports Editor (Dr. Vasiliki Galani-Moutafi), at [v.moutafi@sa.aegean.gr](mailto:v.moutafi@sa.aegean.gr).
- Book reviews should be emailed directly to the Book Reviews Editor (Prof. Marianna Sigala), at [marianna.sigala@unisa.edu.au](mailto:marianna.sigala@unisa.edu.au).
- Full papers and all other types of manuscripts should be emailed directly to the Editors (Prof. Evangelos Christou and Prof. Andreas Papatheodorou), at [e.christou@tour.teithe.gr](mailto:e.christou@tour.teithe.gr) and [a.papatheodorou@aegean.gr](mailto:a.papatheodorou@aegean.gr).

Feedback regarding the submission of a manuscript (including the reviewers' comments) will be provided to the author(s) within six weeks of the receipt of the manuscript. Submission of a manuscript will be held to imply that it contains original unpublished work not being considered for publication elsewhere at the same time. Each author of a manuscript accepted for publication will receive three complimentary copies of the issue, and will also have to sign a "transfer of copyright" form. If appropriate, author(s) can correct first proofs. Manuscripts submitted to

TOURISMOS, accepted for publication or not, cannot be returned to the author(s).

### **Manuscript Length**

Research Papers should be not longer than 6000 words and not shorter than 4000. Research Notes should be not longer than 2000 words and not shorter than 1000. Case Studies should be not longer than 3500 words and not shorter than 2500. Book Reviews should be not longer than 1500 words and not shorter than 1000. Conference Reports should be not longer than 2000 words and not shorter than 1000. Industry Viewpoints should be not longer than 1500 words and not shorter than 500. Forthcoming Events should be not longer than 500 words. Manuscripts that do not fully conform to the above word limits (according to the type of the article) will be automatically rejected and should not be entered into the reviewing process.

### **Manuscript Style & Preparation**

- All submissions (research papers, research notes, case studies, book reviews, conference reports, industry viewpoints, and forthcoming events) must have a title of no more than 12 words.
- Manuscripts should be double-line spaced, and have at least 2,5 cm (one-inch) margin on all four sides. Pages should be numbered consecutively.
- The use of footnotes within the text is discouraged – use endnotes instead. Endnotes should be kept to a minimum, be used to provide additional comments and discussion, and should be numbered consecutively in the text and typed on a separate page at the end of the article.
- Quotations must be taken accurately from the original source. Alterations to the quotations must be noted. Quotation marks (“ ”) are to be used to denote direct quotes. Inverted commas (‘ ’) should denote a quote within a quotation. If the quotation is less than 3 lines, then it should be included in the main text enclosed in

quotation marks. If the quotation is more than 3 lines, then it should be separated from the main text and indented.

- The name(s) of any sponsor(s) of the research contained in the manuscript, or any other acknowledgements, should appear at the very end of the manuscript.
- Tables, figures and illustrations are to be included in the text and to be numbered consecutively (in Arabic numbers). Each table, figure or illustration must have a title.
- The text should be organized under appropriate section headings, which, ideally, should not be more than 500-700 words apart. • The main body of the text should be written in Times New Roman letters, font size 12.
- Section headings should be written in Arial letters, font size 12, and should be marked as follows: primary headings should be centred and typed in bold capitals and underlined; secondary headings should be typed with italic bold capital letters; other headings should be typed in capital letters. Authors are urged to write as concisely as possible, but not at the expense of clarity.
- The preferred software for submission is Microsoft Word.
- Authors submitting papers for publication should specify which section of the journal they wish their paper to be considered for: research papers, research notes, case studies, book reviews, conference reports, industry viewpoints, and forthcoming events.
- Author(s) are responsible for preparing manuscripts which are clearly written in acceptable, scholarly English, and which contain no errors of spelling, grammar, or punctuation. Neither the Editorial Board nor the Publisher is responsible for correcting errors of spelling or grammar.
- Where acronyms are used, their full expression should be given initially.
- Authors are asked to ensure that there are no libellous implications in their work.

## **Manuscript Presentation**

For submission, manuscripts of research papers, research notes and case studies should be arranged in the following order of presentation:

- First page: title, subtitle (if required), author's name and surname, affiliation, full postal address, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address. Respective names, affiliations and addresses of co-author(s) should be clearly indicated. Also, include an abstract of not more than 150 words and up to 6 keywords that identify article content. Also include a short biography of the author (about 50 words); in the case of co-author(s), the same details should also be included. All correspondence will be sent to the first named author, unless otherwise indicated.
- Second page: title, an abstract of not more than 150 words and up to 6 keywords that identify article content. Do not include the author(s) details, affiliation(s), and biographies in this page.
- Subsequent pages: the paper should begin on the third page and should not subsequently reveal the title or authors. In these pages should be included the main body of text (including tables, figures and illustrations); list of references; appendixes; and endnotes (numbered consecutively).
- The author(s) should ensure that their names cannot be identified anywhere in the text.

### **Referencing Style**

In the text, references should be cited with parentheses using the “author, date” style - for example for single citations (Ford, 2004), or for multiple citations (Isaac, 1998; Jackson, 2003). Page numbers for specific points or direct quotations must be given (i.e., Ford, 2004: 312-313). The Reference list, placed at the end of the manuscript, must be typed in alphabetical order of authors. The specific format is:

- For journal papers: Tribe, J. (2002). The philosophic practitioner. *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol.29, No.2, pp.338-357.

- For books and monographs: Teare, R. & Ingram, H. (1993). *Strategic Management: A Resource-Based Approach for the Hospitality and Tourism Industries*. London, Cassell.
  - For chapters in edited books: Sigala, M. and Christou, E. (2002). Use of Internet for enhancing tourism and hospitality education: lessons from Europe. In K.W. Wober, A.J. Frew and M. Hitz (Eds.) *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism*, Wien: Springer-Verlag.
  - For papers presented in conferences: Ford, B. (2004). Adoption of innovations on hospitality. Paper presented at the 22nd EuroCHRIE Conference. Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey: 3-7 November 2004.
  - For unpublished works: Gregoriades, M. (2004). The impact of trust in brand loyalty, Unpublished PhD Tourismos. Chios, Greece: University of the Aegean.
  - For Internet sources (if you know the author): Johns, D. (2003) The power of branding in tourism. [Http://www.tourismabstracts.org/marketing/papers-authors/id3456](http://www.tourismabstracts.org/marketing/papers-authors/id3456). Accessed the 12th of January 2005, at 14:55. (note: always state clearly the full URL of your source).
  - For Internet sources (if you do not know the author): Tourism supply and demand. [Http://www.tourismabstracts.org/marketing/papersauthors/id3456](http://www.tourismabstracts.org/marketing/papersauthors/id3456). Accessed the 30th of January 2004, at 12:35. (note: always state clearly the full URL of your source).
  - For reports: Edelstein, L. G. & Benini, C. (1994). Meetings and Conventions. Meetings market report (August), 60-82.
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