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THE IMPACT OF CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY ON CUSTOMERS

*Gabriela ȚIGU**, *Maria-Cristina IORGULESCU***, *Anamaria Sidonia RĂVAR****

Abstract: *In recent years, academics have shown great interest in studying innovation. However, research of innovation in the hospitality industry is still in its beginnings. Taking this into consideration, after describing innovation in general, the paper presents the main findings on the typology of hospitality innovation, focusing afterwards on the determinants of innovation in hotel organizations. Furthermore, after presenting the importance of innovation-customer relationship, the theoretical framework ends with considerations on technology in the hospitality industry. Given these guidelines, the purpose of the paper is to measure the role of innovation and creativity in the decision to purchase services provided by organizations in the hotel industry. To this aim, a survey was conducted using an online questionnaire distributed to Romanian hotel customers. The pilot study, with 105 respondents, indicates that innovation is one of the factors determining the purchase of hotel services, for the population preferring standardized establishments. Although the study indicates that creativity and innovation in hotel services is important for hotel customer's satisfaction, the respondents are only somehow willing to pay higher accommodation fees in order to benefit of creative and innovative services. Several conclusions have been drawn.*

Keywords: *creativity; innovation; hospitality industry; customers; Romania.*

* Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Piața Romană 1, Sector 1, Bucharest, Romania, gabriela.tigu@com.ase.ro

** Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Piața Romană 1, Sector 1, Bucharest, Romania, cristina.iorgulescu@yahoo.com

*** Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Piața Romană 1, Sector 1, Bucharest, Romania, anamaria.ravar@yahoo.com

ENFORCING SUSTAINABILITY PRINCIPLES IN TOURISM VIA CREATIVE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

*Romana KOREZ-VIDE**

Abstract: *In this paper we argue that present economic, social and environmental challenges of the world economy call upon new tools for achieving a nation's international competitive advantages and sustainability, respectively. In the age when the developed economies have to compete on the strength of their skills base, and when art and culture play an important role in moderating a technocratic vision of the world, culture-based creativity is gaining in significance. Due to these changes and sustainability concerns, cultural tourism is looking for new forms. One of them is creative tourism, which offers self-development possibilities and co-creation experiences to tourists. In the paper we introduce several demand and supply challenges for contemporary cultural tourism as well as several demand factors for culture-based creativity and sustainable development in contemporary societies. By developing a model of sustainable creative tourism, we show how to achieve a suitable balance between the economic, social and environmental aspects via creative tourism development. In the empirical analysis we show that international competitiveness of travel and tourism industry is not only closely linked to its sustainability but it also depends on several other aspects of individual economy's competitiveness and has to be discussed from the systemic point of view.*

Keywords: *sustainability; culture-based creativity; creative tourism; competitiveness; Slovenia; Estonia.*

* University of Maribor, Faculty of Economics and Business, Razlagova 14, 2000 Maribor, Slovenia, romana.korez-vide@uni-mb.si

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY. LESSONS FROM COMMUNITIES SURROUNDING GREAT ZIMBABWE MONUMENTS

Josiah TARU^{}, Simbarashe GUKURUME^{**}*

Abstract: *Tourism players at the Great Zimbabwe monuments have played an important role in communities adjacent to the site. Hotelier, private players and National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe (NMMZ) have heavily social invested in a number of ways to the surrounding communities. The tourism industry has created a vibrant local tourism economy that has improved and diversified the livelihoods strategies of nearby communities. The economic synergies between the industries and local communities have cascades to individuals who have managed to be incorporated into the tourism-related-economic activities. Tourism players have raised awareness and level of knowledge on heritage management and preservation. Through quiz and competition local school have managed to benefit from tourism players in their vicinity. Financially, tourism players have aided the construction of state of the art infrastructure, provided tuition and assistance to the less privileged in the surrounding communities. Traditional leadership has been incorporated in the activities of tourism players, enabling them to get funds to develop their local area and to identify beneficiaries of assistance from local tourism players. Whilst positive contributions of tourism in terms of corporate social responsibility are noted, drawbacks such those of staged authenticity, seasonality of jobs, an economic systems widely governed by external factors are highlighted.*

Keywords: *corporate social responsibility; rural livelihoods; anthropology of tourism; Zimbabwe*

* Great Zimbabwe University, Faculty of Social Sciences, Department Sociology, Social Anthropology and RDR, Box 1235 Masvingo, Zimbabwe, tarujosiah@gmail.com

** Great Zimbabwe University, Faculty of Social Sciences, Department Sociology, Social Anthropology and RDR, Box 1235 Masvingo, Zimbabwe, sgukurume1@gmail.com

NATURE-BASED TOURISM AS AN INTRODUCTION TO ECOTOURISM EXPERIENCE – A NEW APPROACH

*Aleksandra MACHNIK**

Abstract: *Ecotourism, as a core of sustainable tourism is perceived as very difficult to organize and – as very demanding - not especially interesting for an average tourist. In addition, it is often mistaken with green, environmental (nature-based) tourism. According to its definition, there is no need for maximizing the number of ecotourists, however, a problem of how to “create” a more conscious and responsible tourist still remains. Another issue is how to attract people who are looking for something new and exciting to local tourist resources – natural as well as cultural and provide income for local communities.*

In Poland nature is still very valuable and attractive. It is protected in different ways at various levels, but most appropriate for developing sustainable tourism and nature-based tourism are landscape parks. That is why the research was held among tourist visiting areas of some landscape parks in western Poland. Respondents were asked, among other things, about their preferences of spending time during the holidays, opinions on (and knowledge of) nature, natural tourist resources and values, nature protection, nature-based tourism and ecotourism. In addition some theoretical models of ecotourism and nature-based tourism were elaborated, which will be only mentioned in this paper.

Keywords: *ecotourism; nature-based tourism; landscape parks; nature protection; local community*

* Geoecology of Tourism and Recreation, Faculty of Tourism and Recreation, University School of Physical Education, Królowej Jadwigi Street 27/39, 61-871, Poznań, Poland, machnik@tir.awf.poznan.pl

TOURISM PRACTICES AND APPROACHES FOR ITS DEVELOPMENT IN THE UTTARAKHAND HIMALAYA, INDIA

*Vishwambhar Prasad SATI**

Abstract: *This paper examines tourism practices and evaluates its possible future development in the Uttarakhand Himalaya. The various modes of tourism are discussed broadly and suggestions are given suitably for the sustainable tourism development. This study reveals that the pilgrimage tourism that has been practicing here for the centuries may play a promising role in the socio-economic development of the region. In addition, natural and adventurer tourism – mountaineering, trekking, skiing, and river rafting has the tremendous potential as it is already being practiced here. The tourism practices have a significant impact on the economy as many of the small towns, along the roads and at the tourism potential sides, have emerged as the major service centers, providing a rise to the economic development. Meanwhile, it has an adverse impact on the environment of the tourist places, pilgrimage centers particularly. Data were gathered from the primary and secondary sources and through observation after rapid visits of the tourist places.*

Keywords: *Tourism practice; pilgrimage tourism; adventure tourism; economic development; Uttarakhand Himalaya; India.*

* Department of Geography and Resource Management, School of Earth Sciences, Mizoram University (Central). Aizawl – 796004, Mizoram, India, vpsati@mzu.edu.in

WEB-BASED PLATFORM FOR ENHANCING TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

Biljana PETREVSKA, Saso KOCESKI***

Abstract: The aim of this research is to investigate possibilities for supporting tourism development by employing the Web as the leading source of information particularly important in times of increased number of competitors in tourism market. For this purpose, the paper argues that creating personalized recommending system, as a way out in meeting ever-changing tourists' preferences towards different aspects of tourism is very important. So, the research makes an attempt to justify the necessity of designing a web-based tourism portal in order to assist tourists in identification of their ideal holiday through a recommender. The results of this empirical evidence point that the proposed approach provides satisfactory performance since it reports on positive experience as well as accurate recommendations and guidelines. So, the development of such software module being organized as on-line social network (OSN) contribute generally in increasing the awareness for tourist destination, thus boosting tourism development. It assists all interested parties in planning their travel on more intelligent way by generating a personalized list of favorable and tailor-made items. Finally, the research strongly alarms relevant tourism-actors that the time has changed and that on-line experience has shifted from searching and consuming to creating, connecting and exchanging.

Keywords: *tourism; web-portal; OSN; recommenders, Macedonia.*

* Faculty of Tourism and Business Logistics, "Goce Delcev" University, Krste Misirkov bb, Campus IV, 2000 Stip, Macedonia, biljana.petrevska@ugd.edu.mk

** Faculty of Computer Science, "Goce Delcev" University, Krste Misirkov bb, Campus II, 2000 Stip, Macedonia, e-mail: saso.koceski@ugd.edu.mk