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New frontiers in tourism: destinations, resources, and managerial perspectives

Introduction

The recent changes in data availability, new research methods, and fresh conceptual developments based on emotions challenge research in many fields including tourism (Bigné, 2016). We aim to stimulate new research on tourism as reflections of the three guest editors. Considering its challenges and opportunities, tourism research is a highly dynamic activity featured by its multidisciplinary view. Research in tourism is benefited from this cross-disciplinary view, which elicits more vibrant discussion and integrative frameworks. Researchers in each field of specialization in tourism must adopt integrative views in order to capture the real domain of tourism. This holistic view is not incompatible with specialization, but fosters a much richer progress in the discipline. Conferences on tourism typically reflect this multidisciplinary view, where the specializations meet each other. Such interdisciplinary conferences enhance the quality of the discussion and promote readability of future papers across the sub-disciplines of tourism. *EJM & BE* wants to contribute to this multidisciplinary view by attracting papers from the different sub-domains and specializations in tourism.

For instance, to emphasize the interdisciplinary nature of tourism research, the literature suggests that an area should have the following characteristics to be considered as a tourist destination: a variety of natural, social and cultural resources and services, other economic activities, host community, a local council, an active private or public sector (Davidson and Maitland, 1997). As stated earlier, a destination's performance is mainly related to the performance of these elements. When something is wrong with any of these elements, the outcome would be negative which will be reflected back to these elements. In such a case, tourists do not want to come back. The local community's quality of life would be negatively affected due to poor service standards. They would also earn less from the tourism industry. Employees would fear losing their jobs resulting in lower satisfaction with their jobs. Suppliers would earn less. Most importantly, all the cultural, economic, and physical resources would be negatively affected if potential consumers withdrew, as there would be less capital for reinvestment.

In recent years, destinations have faced some crucial questions with respect to maintaining sustainability on the supply side. Destinations must be cleaner, greener, and safer in order to safeguard the life quality of not only holidaymakers but also of the local residents (Kozak, 2004). This is also important to attract investments and promote the development of tourism that will lead to gaining economic benefits and staying tuned to rival destinations. Therefore, the most important issue to be taken into consideration is environmentally sustainable tourism applications (Ratcliffe and Flanagan, 2004). The rapid increase in the number of tourists, the number of buses allocated for tourists, and the crowds and the chaos created by tourism-related traffic, all exert pressure on the cultural, natural and economic resources of tourism (Davidson and Maitland, 1997). All these challenges need



the establishment of strong and efficient managerial approaches to maintain the stability and sustainability of cultural and natural resources.

However, to be successful destination marketing and management requires a strong focus on different stakeholders, among them consumer markets. The exponential growth of data generated by the use of fast paced technology advancements demands critical analysis of Big Data (Amado *et al.*, 2018). This is mandatory if organizations want to assess customer experience, namely, via user-generated content disseminated throughout social media platforms in order to be able to take better decisions (Nave *et al.*, 2018) in managing destination tourism resources and achieve loyalty from tourists.

Contributions

The first contribution presents an analysis of some relationships between a smart destination and the improvement of the tourism experience. In this study, Liberato, Alen and Liberato analyze the tourism experience based on the use of mobile technology in different moments during a trip. The study uses data from a well know tourism destination, Porto, which has advanced technologies such as virtual reality, QR Code, interactive tourists stands and App. The results reveal that internet, smartphones or other mobile devices and applications are critical for the tourism experience.

In the following contribution, Jimenez-Barreto and Campo-Martinez propose and evaluate a model with the destination website quality as a determinant factor to predict users' attitudes toward the web and their willingness to participate in co-creation experiences. First, a content analysis was performed regarding the presence or absence of characteristic elements of the perceived website quality for the official websites of both competitor travel destinations: the Balearic Islands and the Canary Islands, Spain. Second, the study applies a partial least square structural equation. The authors conclude that there is a direct and significant relation between website quality, attitudes toward the web and willingness to participate in online co-creation experiences.

In the third contribution, Fuentes-Medina, Hernández-Estárico and Morini-Marrero investigate the critical success factors and the value chain of emblematic hotels. The authors applied content analysis, text mining and sentiment analysis to 10,362 opinions from all of the hotels of Spanish Tourist Paradores. The study provides word clouds and correspondence analysis by Parador. Their findings show the relevance of location, facilities and personnel as critical success variables for emblematic hotels. They provide useful findings for both, hotel managers and academics in measuring user-generated content.

Next, Parra-López, Martínez-González and China-Martín determine the drivers of the formation of e-loyalty in a tourist destination, providing a model composed of variables that are under the control of the firm along with others that are not fully controllable by professionals. Their findings indicate how e-loyalty can be managed in tourist destinations, as well as the relevance of an important segment for future tourism development. Their model is tested through PLS multi-group analysis.

In the subsequent contribution, Currás-Perez, Stojanovic and Andreu present the effect of the intensive use of social media on brand equity. The study investigates the effects of brand awareness on image, quality, customer value and intention to make WOM. The relationships proposed in the theoretical model were estimated using partial least squares. The results show that intensity of social media use significantly influences brand awareness. In turn, awareness has a positive relationship with cognitive and affective image of the brand, brand quality, customer value and the intention to make eWOM. As for the relationship between the two dimensions of the image, the results show that the affective image derives from the cognitive image.

The last contribution is about cruise tourism from a hedonic pricing approach. In this study, Espinet-Rius, Fluvià-Font, Rigall-Torrent and Oliveras-Corominas use a database

that includes more than 36,000 prices paid by cruise passengers, as well as the different features of cruise ships. They use regression in a semi-logarithmic specification. The results indicate that the main attributes affecting prices are the number of nights of the itinerary, the departure date, the number of days before departure the booking is made, the accommodation type and some facilities, such as casinos, cinemas and swimming pools.

The six scientific articles published in this special issue of *EJM&BE* demonstrate clearly the umbrella challenges faced by organizations responsible for managing tourism resources and destinations. Their contributions link very well with recent studies giving attention to a number of critical research priorities. Indeed, user-generated content in social media is an important asset that needs to be explored on a continuous fashion, namely through the use of data and text mining (Moro *et al.*, 2017). This allows decision makers to assess sentiment analysis from tourists since it is based on information related with tourist experience (Calheiros *et al.*, 2017). In addition, managers can choose a proactive stance as it is then possible to predict tourist behavior as well as to make decisions about the management of tourist brands and pricing (Moro *et al.*, 2018). Last but not least, the evolution of mobile technology and its role in consumers' daily life is fostering new opportunities for destinations and businesses, not only in terms of their use within a multitude of tourist services (Rita *et al.*, 2018) but also with regard to the use of augmented (Paulo *et al.*, 2018) and virtual reality.

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