

EDITOR'S NOTE

Francisco Dias, editor-in-chief

As key stakeholders of the tourism industry are assimilating more and better the basic idea that the excellence in tourism can only be achieved on the basis of a deep understanding of tourists' behavior, the scientific research becomes even more crucial for the success of the strategies implemented by DMO, public organizations and private companies operating in the sectors of tourism, hospitality and recreation.

This Issue includes two articles focused on the important theme of tourist satisfaction, and both were awarded ex-aequo as Best Paper in the ITC'13 – International Tourism Congress (Peniche, Portugal, November, 2013), namely: “Specialization and importance-performance in visitors to a natural history museum: The Canadian Fossil Discovery Centre”, by Malcolm and Ramsey, and “Elaboration of Lithuanian Tourist Satisfaction Index Model”, by Pileliene and Grigaliunaite.

The first article, authored by Malcolm and Ramsey, is anchored on the recreation specialization paradigm, arguing that “participants engaged in a leisure activity are not a homogeneous group and that sub-groups may require distinct management techniques” (p: 9). Using a specialization metric, authors ranged participants from novice (low level) to experienced (high level), according to their prior experience, levels of education and interest, time and economic commitments, travel patterns, and centrality to their lifestyles. This study shows a positive correlation between specialization and the importance-satisfaction among the visitors of the museum.

The second article presents a study conducted by Pileliene and Grigaliunaite, with the aim to empirically validate the Satis-

faction Index Model for Lithuanian Tourists. Whereas tourism is driver of economic growth and one of the leading service industries in many countries, the tourist satisfaction measurement becomes a relevant topic among scholars, due to the fact that satisfaction is considered the main condition for customer loyalty. The close relationship between satisfaction and loyalty is currently highlighted in many customer satisfaction indexes. However, the identification of the determinants of tourism satisfaction remains an underexplored issue. Various authors from all over the world have revealed different determinants and proposed different models of tourist satisfaction indexes (see Table 1, in this Issue, p. 38). Two main reasons can be suggested for this: on the one hand, the diversity of conceptions and methodologies used by researchers and, on the other hand, the fact that people living in different countries can be affected by different determinants of tourist satisfaction, due to many dissimilarities among them, in terms of values, habits, beliefs, cultural heritage, way of life, etc. The study conducted by Pileliene and Grigaliunaite identified four exogenous variables as the determinants of Lithuanian tourist satisfaction: activities in destination, destination marketing, environmental preservation and natural features.

This Issue also presents an interesting study focused on the “Women occupational empowerment in the Omani tourism sector” (p: 53-84), by Afifi and Al-Sherif. According to many United Nations reports, empowering women to participate in the economic development is essential for building strong economies and stable, just societies, but as the authors state in the Conclusion (p: 79), “Despite the fact that there is a plethora of studies which have investigated most of the women related issues such as women empowerment, women in the workplace, role of women in development, research regarding female workforce in tourism is still far behind the other areas”. As main driving forces for women's occupational empowerment in the Omani tourism sector, the authors indicate the following: (1) social changes and society awareness of women's issues; (2) support of the Omani

government and organizations; (3) family and paid-labour supports. On the other side, as restraining forces, Afifi and Al-Sherif highlight the anti-traditions work conditions and the work/family conflict. Moreover, on the basis of the empirical data, this research allows authors to formulate eleven major assumptions to explain why the Sultanate of Oman can be considered one of the leading Gulf countries in terms of gender equality and women participation.

Two articles in this issue are focused on the role of the Internet as an important tool in tourism marketing communication. The first of these studies, titled “Promoting European countries destination image through Twitter”, by Antoniadis, Vrana and Zafiroopoulos, compares the performance of country destination promotion through Twitter. The authors organized an overall performance index of 38 European countries' tourism accounts according to several characteristics and metrics. They “took into consideration five main performance indexes, which measure both the amount of people who follow the accounts, and the amount of people who are actually involved in reading and spreading the information they read, as well as the account activity” (p: 98).

The second study concerned with the Internet is authored by Rafael and Ferraz and titled “Online marketing communication: Evaluation of corporate tourism recreation websites in Portugal”. The authors concluded that “although the Internet is increasingly considered a powerful tool in the communication and interaction process with stakeholders and the websites are an excellent, efficient and effective means communication it would appear that the [Portuguese] tourism recreation companies analysed are not apparently using it to its full potential” (p: 131).

This Issue also presents a paper dealing with the activities labeled as reverse logistics (RL), and both are focused on the state of the art of RL in Czech Republic.

RL covers a large range of activities like recycling, remanufacturing, or repairing to close the loop of material flows in a supply chain. Obviously, RL plays an important role in greening of

companies, because its aim are to retrieve value from reverse flows (such as products scraps, production waste, packaging, returned products, etc.) that would otherwise be lost. But, despite of its high importance, just a tiny quantity of hundreds of papers published on RL have been focused on service industries.

In the article “Reverse logistics as sustainable tool in tourism industry: Scope and motivation”, Radoslav Škapa addresses the following two questions: (1) what the reverse flows in tourism consists of – what are their tangible as well as intangible elements; (2) what are the specific factors and motives for tourism that shape RL in this industry. The findings of an exploratory-descriptive research, based on collected data for 87 firms operating in tourism and travel-related services (hotels, restaurants, travel agencies), show a quite negative picture, as Škapa says in his conclusion (this Issue, p: 154), “the frequency of environmental protection issues in our data was rather low, which is an indirect indication that businesses in tourism don't regard RL logistics as a tool for sustainability”.

As the last article in this Issue, we present a research paper titled “A conceptual exploration of traditional clubs in London”, by Ingram and Basanez. According to the authors, the traditional London club continues to thrive and flourish despite the modern age of technology and electronic communication. However, this topic remains a no man's land in the literature of hospitality management. The authors attempt to cater this research gap by presenting an historical review of the emergence of the club over time. They also analysed the current state of traditional clubs in London, classifying 54 clubs in 9 categories, according to their aims or provenance, namely: arts (including literature and entertainment), education (usually places of higher education), geography (according to region, country or travel), hobbies (activities which may not be regarded as physical sports), political (origins in political ideology), professional (usually for business purposes), services (military or armed services), social (where the main

purpose is meeting like-minded people), and sport (includes cricket and rowing).

A wide range of up-to-date and interesting topics characterize this issue of EJTHR, as it has been happening with the previous ones, ensuring a pleasurable and fruitful reading to those who believe in this project and are definitely contributing to the development of Tourism as an academic field.