

Conclusions: Issues and Challenges for Managing and Marketing Tourism Experiences

The final chapter of the *Handbook of Managing and Marketing Tourism Experiences* summarizes the issues and aspects highlighted, as well as conclusions formulated by authors in previous chapters, and provides suggestions and recommendations for local planners, destination and business managers to successfully design, manage, and market tourism experiences. As discussed earlier, a tourism experience refers to a chain of events. A tourism experience creation begins with an event where an individual experiences (activity) an attraction or business (resources) within a particular context or situation. This event generates a reaction and that reaction results in a memory upon which the individual reflects and creates a new meaning. Ultimately the individual, through this meaning-making process, both increases his or her understanding of the world and of the self as well. Studies suggest that the experience formation takes place in consumers' mind, and the outcome of experience consumption depends on how consumers, based on a specific situation or state of mind, react to the series of encounters that forms an experience.

There is no question that successfully designed, managed, and marketed tourism experiences are critical determinants of a destination/business' success in a highly competitive tourism marketplace. However, creation and delivery of highly successful tourism experiences heavily depends on how well the destination/business managers understand customers' experiential needs, wants and expectations, and how well hospitality and tourism businesses work together to create a memorable experience for

their customers by addressing those experiential needs, wants, and expectations. Considering the fact that hospitality and tourism products are multidimensional, and usually consists of a “series of experiences” achieved through a combination of a diverse array of products and services, it is vital for destination and business managers to understand the importance of the interplay among various suppliers of those experiences. The quality of each experience delivered by a variety of providers is of vital importance to the overall tourism experience quality. From consumers’ perspective, the product they purchase is the total experience, covering the entire amalgam of all aspects and components of the experience, including attitudes and expectations. Accordingly, the overall tourism experience is a “series of experiences” achieved through a combination of a diverse array of products and services; an amalgam of multiple components supplied by a range of businesses. The tourist experience is the result of a process where facilities, services, and attitudes from multiple businesses are configured to produce an experience of value to customers. In other words, tourism experience is a “multi-faceted” and a “hybrid” experience, taking place in phases and tourists use services from more than one organization.

Tourism experiences are “deconstructed” products because they bring together a number of services from a number of individual businesses. In other words, a tourist’s experience consists of a series of services and products, which are offered by businesses that operate separately. Ideally, each of those services a tourist receives from different companies is a value-adding service or a value-adding experience. The value chain of a tourist experience includes a number of players that are involved in offering and delivering all tourism-related services. Furthermore, a series of businesses, interactions, resources, and knowledge streams are involved in the creation and delivery of a memorable tourism experience to the end-consumer. This creates the need for integration of the whole range of supply chain activities because service delivery failures of any businesses involved in the delivery of a tourism experience can have significant negative consequences for the whole system. Any dissatisfactory experience with any service aspect decreases tourists’ satisfaction with their overall tourism experiences. Furthermore, those dissatisfactory experiences may deter the total value of the hybrid tourism experiences offered. As a result, this may decrease the total value of the tourism experience and may decrease the overall satisfaction with tourism experience and may have significant negative influences

on loyalty, which may have a significant impact on financial performance of companies involved in the delivery of tourism experiences. Therefore, it is crucial for companies to make sure that other companies involved in the process provide satisfactory experiences.

From the above discussion, it is clear that planning, design, management, and marketing of experiences for tourism markets constitute a focal challenge for tourism destinations and providers in a highly competitive marketplace. All businesses and organizations involved in have to address challenges and issues of providing high-quality experiences to tourists. This handbook was designed to bridge the gap in contemporary literature by carefully examining management and marketing issues of tourism experiences. Large number of scholars who contributed to this handbook have explored and analyzed the main issues and challenges in the field of tourism experiences from a strategic management and marketing perspective. Furthermore, those scholars have provided critical insights and discussed a number of approaches for planning, managing, and marketing experiences for tourists. Overall, contributions from distinguished scholars in the area have (i) provided a detailed analysis of the main issues and challenges related to tourism experience management and marketing; (ii) presented and discussed analytical frameworks and tools; (iii) explored theoretical and practical approaches for managing and marketing experiences in various tourism contexts and industries; and (vi) discussed and analyzed case studies illustrating approaches adopted, methods implemented, and best practices in addressing related issues.

This handbook examined design, management, marketing, and customers' evaluation of tourism experiences under four main parts. The first part titled "Planning: Design and Creating Tourism Experiences" examined theoretical and practical issues and concerns related to design and creation of tourism experiences. The second part titled "Managing: Organizing and Delivering Tourism Experiences" explored theoretical and practical issues and concerns related to managing tourism experiences within various contexts, industries, and settings. The third part titled "Marketing: Communicating and Promoting Tourism Experiences" focused on theoretical and practical issues and concerns related to marketing of hospitality and tourism experiences within various contexts, industries, and settings. The last part of the handbook titled "Monitoring and Evaluating Tourism Experiences" examined theoretical and practical issues and

approaches related to monitoring the quality of tourism experiences and those experiences impact on travelers post experience behaviors including satisfaction, loyalty, and word of mouth behaviors.

Part I: Planning: Design and Creating Tourism Experiences

The first part titled “Planning: Design and Creating Tourism Experiences” consisted of six chapters focusing on experience-based service design, design of experiences, experience-centric approach and innovation, crucial role and contribution of human resources in the context of tourism experiences, social media and the co-creation of tourism experiences, and creation and marketing of tourism attraction experiences.

A service design path built around various elements such as sensations, emotions, human relations, innovations, and values was presented in Chapter 1. In this chapter, the author provided an extensive review of literature on the topic and utilized the Singapore Airlines web page as a case to investigate the appropriateness of the instructional path discussed in the chapter. The author argued that experience-based service design contains several components, and that this service design should be established within three-steps, namely explore, design, and positioning. Based on the extensive review of the literature, the author highlighted the instructional path for experience-based service design and implementation process. The author suggested that the instructional path can be used to guide business managers/ experience engineers. Author further argued that since the experiences are formed based on a set of emotions, by focusing on creating meanings and relating to the moment aspects of the experience-based service design, destinations and businesses can develop and deliver experiences that meets/exceeds customers’ expectations. With this foresight, the author suggested that an instructional path for experience-based design implementation process should start with trying to understand customers’ expectations and continue with building up the experience scene and focusing on the configuration of the customer interface.

The experience-centric strategy from the perspective of innovation management, its contribution to designing and managing valuable tourism experiences, especially in context of guided

tours were discussed in Chapter 2. The chapter provided an extensive review of the literature on experience-centric approaches and innovation. The author also provided a conceptual discussion on the concepts of experience-centric innovation and experience innovation, particularly the role of experience design and market intelligence in experience-centric service processes. The conceptual discussion was further enhanced by analyzing empirical data from interviews with 11 tour providers. The author concluded that creation of novel experiences through product innovation is the most common type of innovation on frames of guided tours. While the group size is found to be an influential feature of the experience design, imitation is found to be a major threat. The author also explored the role of knowledge management and dynamics of knowledge on experience creation. Tour guides were identified as experiential knowledge collectors and/or creators, thus their role in knowledge management is crucial alongside the market intelligence. In contrast, costumer-driven innovation was not seen by tour providers as a crucial issue in creating memorable experiences.

The importance of human resources in creation and delivery of tourism experiences was discussed in Chapter 3. Authors provided an extensive literature review on issues and aspects of human resources management and its role in tourism experience creation and delivery. Authors also provided micro-cases and examples to illustrate utilization of various human resources management tools and practices. Their findings suggested that human resources play a critical role in overcoming the challenges faced during the creation, management, and delivery of experiences that meet customer expectations. Furthermore, authors argued that managing human resources strategically and enabling employees to develop new skill sets to deliver satisfactory experiences is critical because consumption experience has shifted from the servicescape to the experiencescape environment. Therefore, strategic human resources management is a must for tourism businesses that aim to provide valuable tourism experiences. There is an urgent need for development of tools that can be utilized for experiential intelligence and development of skill sets that can be used to deliver customized tourism experiences to contemporary tourists.

A conceptual model of tourist experiences in a destination was proposed in Chapter 4. The model was developed after reviewing the literature on tourist experiences and exploring a brief case. Authors argue that although there is an increasing

interest in literature on customer experiences, the definition, conceptualization, components, and measurement of tourist experiences are still ambiguous. Measuring the overall experience in destinations is more complex than measuring it for individual service experiences because it extends a period of time and involves a synergistic interaction and consumption of integrated products and services simultaneously. The holistic destination experience model proposed in this chapter emphasized the important roles DMOs, host community, and industry play in the creation of the overall experiencescape. Authors argued that participation of local community in tourism experience delivery is critical for the delivery of a proper destination experience. DMOs also play an important role in the creation of an environment that facilitates the creation and delivery of a satisfactory service experiences. DMOs can play an important role through coordination of various public and private actors, promotion of the destination, investing on infrastructure and lobbying with decision makers. Secondly, DMOs can also encourage and promote cultural events, festivals, arts, and other cultural activities that can improve tourist experience. Furthermore, the level of service provided by the industry acts as a supporting experiential factor for travelers. Authors further argued that both DMOs and individual service suppliers must understand the holistic experiential attributes the destination offers. Destinations should focus on developing new programs that people can experience and learn new things unique to the destination. Activities that involve both locals and tourists and motivate them to explore their talents, skills, and capabilities, increase the level of social interaction both with the locals working in tourism services (e.g., hotels) as well as with locals who are not involved in the tourism industry (e.g., in public transportation) would enhance experiences. Individuals who experience local culture are more likely to have a positive experience. Promotion of local food, local architecture, farmers markets, and other activities that increase interaction with locals would also improve tourist experiences. These can also be used in destination marketing. For example, local food is rarely utilized as a part of destination promotion. Using local clues is much more effective than using the images of beaches or international facilities that can be found pretty much in every destination in the World.

The role and the impact of social media in influencing and shaping tourism experiences was examined in Chapter 5 utilizing a Service Dominant Logic and co-creation approach and concepts

for examining how the social media can influence interactions and participation that represent two major sources of tourism experiences. The author has argued that the social media do not only alter the nature of current experiences but also facilitate the transformation and continuous formation of experiences as well as the formation and creation of new types of tourism experiences. The author further argued that social media assists and facilitates tourism experiences (when tourists share travel resources for assisting others' travel planning processes); enriches and augments tourism experiences (when online travel resources enable tourists to make experiences more personalized, meaningful, imaginative, and emotional); forms tourism experiences (when social media interactions amongst various actors at micro, meso, and macro level enable an iterative co-construction process of experience meaning, understanding, and evaluation); mediates tourism experiences (the virtual experience of a destination); becomes the tourism experience itself (the use of the social media while traveling is the core and major purpose of having a tourism experience, that is, the social media become a tourism experience); empowers tourism experiences (when customers are empowered to participate and engage in the value co-creation processes of the firm, that is, the customer is embedded within the firm's value system); and enables tourism experiences (i.e., the use of social media for creating new types of tourism experiences, e.g., when the customer uses the social media for becoming a tourism entrepreneur providing tourism experiences, e.g., sharing economy, the customer uses the firm's infrastructure and value system for providing – marketing tourism experiences). The author concluded that social media co-created tourism experiences are enabled and supported through interactions and participation that change the major dimensions of the co-creation generating processes.

The current trends toward both creative and experiential tourism in cities in terms of development and marketing of local attractions were explored in Chapter 6. Authors provided a profile of creative tourism in cities through a literature review and further investigated by utilizing of a case study at a local attraction in Toronto, Canada. The choice of a site was one of a creative city and the repurposing of a formerly industrial site for visitation. The study of Evergreens Brickworks has demonstrated the use of market segmentation and product-market match techniques to identify markets and match visitors with experiences. These techniques are of particular importance for attractions

with a local audience that also wish to attract tourists. Authors argued that the visitor segmentation method can help managers to identify the fit between the profile of their attraction to local visitors and tourists, thus identifying the motivations and interests of tourists that might differ and may lead to product innovation. For example, in the case of the Evergreen Brickworks pre-scheduled and bookable activities offered to locals would need to be offered on a different basis in order to be of interest to tourists, who may be one time visitors to the site. Likewise, the product-market match process can identify the suitability of current product offerings for both existing local audiences and visitors, suggesting areas in which products could be modified or indeed created. An example from the Evergreen Brickworks is the identification of the diversity of product elements including a restaurant, sustainability efforts (e.g., innovative energy uses, utilization of heritage and nature within interpretive tours), heritage building, and nature-based activities that can be matched with different visitor segments. The study of the Evergreen Brickworks also demonstrates how a site can employ experiential and creative tourism in an urban setting to differentiate themselves from other local visitor attraction offerings. This is a lesson that could be employed by other local attractions desiring to expand their visitor reach, by attracting tourists visiting their areas. The study of the Evergreen Brickworks also demonstrated the importance of increasing awareness of their sites to potential audiences. Authors argued that the product-market match process can help sites such as the Evergreen Brickworks to profile their unique selling points (USP's) that can be optimized to engage, educate, and advocate, thereby increase visitation and improve the visitor experience.

Part II: Managing: Organizing and Delivering Tourism Experiences

Delivery process and the issues faced in the management of the tourism experience delivery process within various contexts, industries, and settings were addressed in Part II of this handbook. The second part of the handbook features nine chapters that focus on a wide variety of management issues ranging from impact of culture on delivery of experiential tourism, collaboration between tourism operations, authenticity of experiences,

creativity, sustainability, innovation, managing rural and event tourism experiences.

Cultural sensitivity in event design and its impact on ongoing management and tourism experiences was examined in Chapter 7. The author argued the importance of local arts ecologies in creating a unique tourism experience. As long as there is a refreshing diversity of sculptors/artists prepared to present their work at local art festivals, there will be new and different art for participants to enjoy. The author utilized a case study approach and used a new assessment tool, sustainable creative advantage (SCA) to assess SCA for the Sculpture by Sea, Bondi, Sydney 2015. This study was the first to utilize the new SCA assessment tool outside of Hong Kong. Author concluded that the SCA evaluation approach and the results of this application are of interest to academics studying glocality and events, the relationship of curatorial power to content/experience or how such events add to the leisure-escapes in tourism.

The growth of Dragon Boat racing from humble beginnings in 1976 as part of a local tourism strategy by the Hong Kong Tourist Association (HKTA) to position Hong Kong as more distinctive than a destination for shopping or with British colonial history appeal was examined in Chapter 8 as an event that offers unique experiences to visitors. Authors indicated that the initial steps of the HKTA to incorporate Dragon Boat racing as a local strategy for tourism experience distinctiveness has rapidly evolved into a global strategy for developing a world sport. In this case, a special cultural event, élite, and community sport are combined to create a new tourism niche market, and one that tourism managers can capitalize on by ensuring that the distinctive intangible cultural heritage elements of waking the dragon, and putting it to sleep at the end, the decorative dragon heads on the boats and the drumming style remain quintessential ingredients of the total experience. The author, Fleur Fallon, identified three trends emerging from a review of the literature, namely: concern with balancing authenticity and profit-chasing; the phenomenal fast growth of the sport and the challenge to develop and maintain international control and governance; and seeking evidence of health and wellbeing benefits of Dragon Boat racing for breast cancer survivors. The author argued that the cultural legitimacy and authenticity debate may have some merit, but its focus is narrow and detracts from what has been happening in the last four decades in the growth of Dragon Boat racing as an international competitive and community sport. According to the

author, the Dragon Boat racing is alive and well, and honors the original purpose of the Festival for promoting and supporting community, with a focus on health and wellbeing benefits. Since each race begins with some rituals, adapted from the original awakening the Dragon spirit, and with Dragon heads on the bow, plus the rhythmic beating of the drum, intrinsic linkages with the Chinese origin are clearly on display during the event.

Consumer experience within the context of the hotel industry and the impact of collaboration between businesses on providing valuable hospitality experiences in hotel settings was examined in Chapter 9. Authors argued that hotel operators and a destination's visitor attractions often share common strategic aims. Literature suggested that to be successful in the industry, hotel operations must provide a superior customer experience, and this must be done continuously and efficiently. In addition, hotels need to put more emphasis on improving the quality of their experience offerings and ensure that the needs and expectations of their guests are being met. From a managerial perspective, the customer experience has to be planned for, resources deployed, and personnel put in place to implement the plan. Value is a lived experience for the customer and there is generally a trade-off between benefits and costs. In the hospitality industry, customer experience is delivered through a number of vehicles including partnerships, which provide more attractive guest experience opportunities. By entering into a business venture, hotels can also provide extra customer value and may gain a competitive advantage. Authors argued that analyzing and understanding the guest experience as an emotionally and symbolically rich phenomenon, and anchoring it in a common, appealing, significant and distinctive route or theme (for instance, "Grand Tour"), may be a powerful way to combine the various elements and dimensions of the experience. Authors further argued that investment in business ventures and alliances is a good investment in the sense that it constitutes a potential source of sustainable competitive advantage. The main aim of a business network is, in authors' view, to generate business and market diversification. A collaborative platform wisely designed can offer a way of extending, enriching, and deepening the hotel guests' experience, based on endogenous resources. The later and other distinctive elements might be used as a means of diversifying the experience and making it appealing to different individuals within the same market segment. The ultimate aim is to make the experience attractive, pleasant, interactive, diverse, and meaningful.

How the methodology of service blueprinting may contribute to managing and offering high-quality experiences to sport tourists was discussed in Chapter 10. Authors utilized a combination of theoretical tools to develop a finalized services blueprint map for sport events. They argued that observation, diaries, service blueprints, comment management, and FMEA (Failure Mode and Effects Analysis) are a range of corporate research approaches and management tools that can offer new insights into the theory and praxis of service management applications and can improve the sport tourism experiences. Authors suggested that sporting event managers can utilize blueprints to make sure that the sporting events have all of the internal support systems and technological aspects of an event in place, as well as the employee-customer interactions that are required to create a distinctive customer experience. They further suggested observation, diaries, service blueprints, comment management, and FMEA (Failure Mode and Effects Analysis) can act as a range of corporate research elements and management tools that can provide new insight into the theory and the praxis of small-scale sporting event customer and experience focused management applications. The case study presented indicated that synthesis of different tools can offer an alternative approach for services blueprinting improvement-planning procedures that arise from a diary-based selection of comments. These comments can reflect the problematic areas (failures) in different contact points of a service blueprint system. The management of the contact points in this blueprint system can be coordinated more easily, if the management can identify those problematic areas that negatively affect the whole tourist experience. Given that these problem areas play a critical role in planning and organizing the customer quality improvement strategy of the event, the management can build a long-term data pool about the failures and effects with the aim of avoiding similar circumstances and situations that may occur in the future and can affect satisfaction, word of mouth, the tourist experience and tourist loyalty, and hence the sustainability of the small-scale sport event. Authors further argue that the analysis of Services Blueprinting can be combined with other useful managerial tools, like the Failure Mode and Effects Analysis to better manage the contact points, the “moments of truth” of tourist experiences in the sport event service system.

The authenticity of tourism experiences and the commodification of tourism offering were discussed in Chapter 11 by utilizing a case study approach. The author argued that destinations

rely not only on authenticity of their attractiveness but also strive to attract tourists by tailoring experiences that can meet high-order needs of tourists. However, these destinations are under threat by commodification and McDonaldization due to excessive use of resources as a result of mass tourism. As suggested by theories on authenticity, commodification and McDonaldization are critical in understanding dimensions of tourist experiences. Hosting individuals traveling to specific destinations who are trying to satisfy their high-order needs such as authenticity seeking, prestige, and learning requires managers and planners to endeavor to maintain the authenticity of their destination, culture, and events. Indeed, the case study has demonstrated that destinations rely on not only the object authenticity of their attractiveness but also strive to create experiences that would differentiate themselves from their competitors. Authors argued that a competitive edge will be gained by providers who are able to satisfy a consumer's search for personal achievement and transformation. Therefore, it is crucial for the political and developmental agendas to preserve their authenticity rather than develop places, cultures, and communities. Although the authenticity of the tourist experience is of importance, it is more important to ensure that local communities feel comfortable with their role as performers and entertainers. This includes the degree to which they are prepared to allow the commodification of their culture for touristic purposes. In this chapter, the author has argued for greater attention to be paid to the role of authentic experiences in attracting and satisfying individuals. However, the author also suggested that contemporary tourism may appear to be moving into the "post-authentic" age, but authenticity may be lurking beneath the surfaces of post-modern attractions, though in an inverted, and in the eyes of some, perverted guise. Therefore, the ultimate goal for destination managers and planners is to focus on the experiences without compromising on authenticity, uniqueness, and genuineness of the attraction while refraining over-commercialization and McDonaldization of the destination.

Best practices and guidelines for managing experiences within the field of creative tourism were presented in Chapter 12. After examining the best practices in managing experiences, the author proposed some basic guidelines for DMOs and DMCs interested in designing activities that cater to travelers who are seeking for creative tourism experiences. Most of the analyses, examples, and observations presented in this chapter were based on management of the *Creative Tourism Network*® and the approaches

adopted by its members in managing their creative tourism offerings all over the world. The author argued that the emergence of the creative and experiential tourism in general is only the visible part of the paradigm shift that is affecting the tourism industry, involving new challenges and opportunities. The author suggested that the emergence of the creative tourism implies a completely new form of management for both cultural and tourist fields, that can lead to the creation of specific skills and general guidelines to be adapted to different contexts.

A brief overview of green principles associated with developing ecotourism destinations was presented in Chapter 13. Furthermore, green ecotourism destination planning was discussed within the context of the tourists' experience to highlight critical factors necessary for sustainable ecotourism destination development. Authors suggested that even though the green market is still in its infancy, tourists are increasingly demanding green accommodations. Tourists across the globe are much more conscious of their impact on the natural environment and are continuously finding ways to be more environmentally friendly. They are willing to pay higher prices if it means that local labor conditions are fair, products and services provided are organic, the negative impact on the environment is minimized, environmental sustainability is guaranteed, and more funds are used to increase the conservation of natural areas and decrease the footprint of tourists in significant natural tourism attractions. Authors further argued that a green, sustainable ecotourism destination can only be developed if green principles are incorporated from the input phase. The input phase (e.g., building materials and infrastructure systems for water and energy) determines the output phase (e.g., operational materials, activities, suppliers, activities, and marketing) and, subsequently, the level of sustainability. It is therefore crucial to plan for these aspects and the level to which the destination aims to adhere to these aspects, as they are costly. Authors also suggested that ecotourism destinations have to ensure that they are continuously identifying factors that influence the experience of tourists at the destination and manage these factors accordingly to maintain optimum visitor experience which could lead to a competitive advantage. This supports the notion that tourists' experience is based on the perception, expectations, and level of satisfaction whilst visiting the ecotourism destination. Ecotourism destinations have to be proactive in ensuring tourists a memorable experience before, during, and after their visits to an ecotourism

destination. This could lead to a more conscious tourist and support of global sustainability.

Rural tourists' experiences in relation to travel motives and activities performed in rural areas in Cyprus were examined in Chapter 14. Authors also explored tourists' overall satisfaction with rural tourism experience with regard to several physical, social, and symbolic attributes derived from the literature and elicited recommendations that can improve tourists' experiences in rural areas. The author argued that the rural tourism experience is fragmented and largely influenced by tourist motives, expectations, prior experience, and regional characteristics. The rural tourist space can be adjusted, with elements combined, in order to appeal to different market segments. The author suggested that rural tourists differ from other tourists and the need to categorize them into distinctive segments with relation to their motives, degree of interest with specific aspects of rurality, and level of involvement in activities is imminent. The study also reported varying opinions with regard to the rural tourism experience in Cyprus. Specifically, the lack of activities and attractions seems to be a focal point which the tourism authorities need to address if the experience of rural tourists is to be improved. Authors argued that prolonging the length of stay of visitors in the rural regions and enriching the tourist experience depend on the variety of activities and attractions appealing to different groups of tourists. In addition, a better organization and coordination of development and marketing efforts is required among key stakeholders in providing an enjoyable experience to rural tourists. The availability of attractions and facilities is not adequate as the effectiveness of service delivery is pivotal in the tourist experience. Lack of business knowledge and expertise are the key obstacles in the development of rural tourism in Cyprus. Thus, training rural tourism entrepreneurs and providing marketing support are essential tactics that regional tourism boards need to take into consideration.

The relationship between service innovation and experience creation within the context of spas, wellness, and medical tourism was discussed in Chapter 15. Authors examined the relationship between service innovation and experience creation in the context of spas, wellness, and medical tourism with the aim of providing an overview of service innovation theory and models and applying them to the spa, wellness, and medical tourism sectors. Authors argued that the inseparable nature of the spa, wellness, and medical tourism sectors suggests that it is critical to

consider service innovation in the creation of guest experiences. Treatments and therapies depend on close interaction with healthcare practitioners and therapists, and they are essential to the quality of the service delivery. Authors suggested that the models of delivery should include strong elements of co-creation with tailor-made packages and treatments because customers are more and more involved in their own experience creation. Although the research data presented in this chapter suggested that technology might not be as important as operators imagined, “flexible solutions” (e.g., wearables) are becoming more and more sophisticated and can easily be used on holiday as well as at home. Authors argued that tourists are never far from specific medical advice, even when away from home. There are also significant efforts being made to make the medical experience more comfortable and less anxiety-inducing. The servicescape can be of considerable importance for spas, wellness, and medical facilities, and even though the research data presented suggested that design may not be as important as operators thought, the atmosphere of spas and wellness facilities depends very much on highly subjective and intangible elements such as design, light, color, scent, and music. While service innovation factors may not be as important as market orientation, service orientation, or organizational factors, service innovation nevertheless play an extremely significant role in the (co)creation of spas, wellness, and medical tourist experiences.

Part III: Marketing: Communicating and Promoting Tourism Experiences

Conceptual and practical issues related to marketing tourism experiences were discussed in Part III of this handbook. In this part, approaches and communication strategies utilized to market tourism experiences were examined from both theoretical and practical perspectives. This part included a total of six chapters. These chapters specifically focused on marketing and communication strategies designed for marketing tourism experiences, role of social media in experience sharing and communication, the role of internet in marketing tourism experiences, marketing niche tourism experiences such as culinary tourism and sport tourism, and the role of marketing in managing risk perceptions.

Utilizing a case study approach, the role of social media in experience sharing and communication of a gay film festival in one of the most popular world tourist destinations was examined in Chapter 16. The study presented in this chapter was focused on a single gay cultural event of a relatively small scale (2,000–3,000 attendees) organized by a militant association. Authors reported that the event's utilization of online promotions was relatively poor; maybe due to the size of the event, organizers underestimated the importance of OSMs for the event's promotion and development. Authors also reported that most of the attendees were not very happy about the lack of online advertising and communication about the festival. Authors suggested that providing communication opportunities about the festival via OSMs could have enabled organizers to attract more people, build up a loyal audiences and thus ensure that more external audiences will attend the next events. Authors discussed a number of benefits of OSMs in marketing such as cost, speed, anonymity, and the size of storage of information. However, authors argued that communicating information through OSMs may not be enough because it has to be passed on to the right relays and transmitters. Authors suggested that the best strategy may be to communicate through individuals who are planning on attending the event; this can help form a large OSM community for the festival with a dedicated Facebook page and ensure a greater success of the festival by fostering a real online experience. For the post-event communication, authors suggested that the organizers can build a "collective intelligence" hub on socio-digital media to gather feedback and comments from the attendees. A well-structured online communication tool through the social media may play a critical role in loyalty formation for the festival.

Importance of theming in creating an experience was discussed in Chapter 17 by examining the similarities between the experience economy and Disneyization, with a specific focus on theming as a means of enhancing tourism experience. The authors presented several issues and guidelines related to theming to highlight important factors that visitor attraction managers need to consider when seeking to use theming to enhance or create a visitor experience. The author compared several models, with specific emphasis on finding similarities between the experience economy and Disneyization. Even though authors reported several similarities, theming was found to be the overarching aspect that combines all other similarities (such as the physical environment, staff, tourists, and souvenirs). The author strongly

suggested that for successful delivery of a tourism experience, the theme should be planned meticulously as the theme is the most critical factor not only in the experience itself but also in the experience cycle.

Marketing and communication strategies and approaches for promoting culinary tourism experiences were discussed in Chapter 18. In this chapter, the author specifically focused on identifying issues and approaches utilized in the development and marketing of culinary tourism experiences with the goal of determining the value of collaborative forms of product development and marketing. The author argued that collaborative approaches in developing and marketing of culinary tourism experiences through networks, partnerships, and alliances are critical for the success and beneficial to all stakeholders. The chapter highlighted the importance of collaborative forms of product development and innovation in marketing in terms of both networking and collaboration for both academics and practitioners in the growing area of experiential culinary tourism. Furthermore, the author indicated that this chapter contributes to our understanding of how strategic approaches to developing culinary tourism experiences can benefit destination branding and marketing, a lesson that might be applicable to other cities wishing to identify themselves with regional cuisines.

A comprehensive review of the risk perception literature in the tourism field and conceptual and operational definitions of risk perceptions was discussed in Chapter 19. Furthermore, based on the extensive literature review, a conceptual model of risk perceptions and operationalization of risk perception variables were provided in this chapter. Authors first provided an overview of major criticisms of the travel risk literature. In an effort to address these criticisms, authors proposed a conceptual model to understand the risk-related constructs of perceived risk (perceived vulnerability, perceived severity, affective risk perceptions), perceived efficacy (self-efficacy, response efficacy), and engagement in a recommended risk reduction behavior. Authors argued that adopting a theory-based, interdisciplinary approach to the conceptualization and operationalization of risk-related constructs can provide a more holistic understanding of the role of risk in travel decision-making. Authors further argued that a majority of risk-related variables (i.e., perceived severity, affective risk perceptions, self-efficacy, response efficacy, and engagement in a recommended risk reduction behavior) have not been studied in the context of international travel. Therefore, testing of the

proposed conceptual model can provide a better understanding of the dynamic processes between the risk-related constructs, as well as their role in the destination choice process. The authors considered this study to be a one of the first steps in the process of moving the travel risk literature forward. An obvious next step in the process is to test the proposed conceptual model. As previously noted, going from theory to operationalization has been a challenge for travel risk scholars. Current measures have mainly failed to capture the multidimensional nature of perceived risk. A possible solution to this challenge is to look outside and turn to other fields that have extensively studied these constructs. For example, tourism scholars can adopt the measures used in health behavior and psychology. However, it should be noted that the measures will need to be adapted to reflect the dynamic nature of tourism because in the health behavior literature, for example, studies have focused on risk associated with topics such as AIDS prevention and breast cancer screenings. Another next step in the process is to test the proposed conceptual model in a variety of settings (e.g., different destinations, different types of risk, different tourist origin markets). Such research is necessary to refine the proposed conceptual model.

Marketing strategies and promotional tools used in marketing of sport tourism experiences in a mature tourism destination were discussed in Chapter 20. In this chapter, authors first investigated the success of specific marketing tools used to promote sport tourism and sport tourism experiences in Barbados by examining the responses of various sporting and tourism bodies. Afterwards, authors examined how marketing/promotional tools can contribute to better market sport tourism experiences. Authors reported that many of the promotional tools implemented in Barbados during their marketing process correspond with those used internationally. However problems of poor and insufficient sporting facilities as well as little collaboration between tourism and sporting entities hamper the success of Barbados as a sport tourism destination. This further minimized Barbados' ability to market favorable tourism experiences. Based on the findings, authors concluded that while promotional tools are essential in attracting tourists, other elements must also be taken into consideration to ensure sport tourists have positive experiences which can lead to a successful sport tourism destination.

The role of information and communication technologies in marketing tourism experiences was investigated in Chapter 21 by analyzing and examining the role of ICTs and the emerging

trends and issues in marketing tourism experiences. Authors first reviewed the previous conceptual frameworks and then identified the key issues and trends that are considered to be for ICT-based tourism marketing. This chapter illustrated the many types of ICTs (web-based, social media, location-based, virtual and augmented reality, mobile and smart technologies) and their varied impacts on tourism experiences, tourist expectations, and visitor needs. It painted a picture of a highly technology-based tourism experience that offers new interplays between marketers and tourists and lots of avenues for experience as well as marketing content co-creation. The chapter offered a conceptual framework to show how ICTs have disrupted the exclusive rights of tourism marketers to tourism experience creation and promotion by facilitating new connections among tourists themselves, with marketers, with residents, and with employees. The chapter discussed not only emerging opportunities for marketers to take advantage of new ICTs but also urged tourism marketers to realize its increasing dependence on technology and its need to adjust strategies and tactics aimed at developing and selling compelling tourism experiences. A number of trends were listed in the chapter that illustrate how tourism marketing is changing and presented examples of how tourism marketers have tried to use emerging ICTs for the marketing of tourism experiences. The chapter further emphasized the changing role of marketing and the need of marketers to redefine themselves as trusted experts, curators, experience facilitators, reputation custodians, and storytellers. The trends identified in the chapter raised important questions about the type of knowledge and skills these new tourism marketers need and to what extent tourism marketers have shifted their assumptions and implemented new practices. Authors strongly suggested that more research is needed to answer the questions raised in this chapter. Authors also argued that there is a growing need or research that looks at marketing effectiveness in these new technological contexts.

Part IV: Monitoring and Evaluating Tourism Experiences

Issues and approaches related to the stage of post experience encounter was discussed in Part IV of this handbook. In this part, specific approaches and tools used to monitor and evaluate

the performance of tourism destinations and businesses in developing and delivering memorable tourism experiences were discussed. This part features four chapters that examine conceptual foundations and managerial implications for program design, delivery and performance measurement, an experiential value model within the context of business tourism experiences, peer-to-peer review sites and social media strategies, and evaluations of tourism experiences.

A conceptual framework for guiding destination managers who seek to design and deliver memorable experiences appropriate to their particular destination was proposed in Chapter 22 in order to overcome the current theoretical lack of understanding of the memorable tourism experiences (MTEs) phenomena. The review of the tourism and memory literature related to experiences and the subsequent content analysis and overall synthesis of the author's findings revealed that MTEs are composed of seven underlying conceptual components. Thus, the author argued that tourism visitation experiences should be carefully designed to ensure they include the six positive components of a potential MTE – and, to the extent possible, avoid negative, or adverse, components, which can easily undo many months and years of careful planning. Author suggested enhancing visitor involvement as co-producers of their experiences, remedying negative experiences and enhancing positive ones (e.g., dealing with stressful events and surprising visitors in positive ways), and diversifying memorabilia as ways to enhance the probability of delivering MTEs. The framework developed in this chapter provides recommendations for designing and delivering tourism programs and “experiencescapes” that can provide visitors with the underlying components of MTEs a destination can deliver. The author also argued that destination managers can use the study results to develop rating or evaluation criteria. They may learn how their businesses rank against others across memorable experiential factors and management practices by asking visitors' questions about competitors. Since consumers have become more information oriented when deciding on destination areas, this competitive information could be transferred to advertising efforts and program development.

A theoretical framework for the development of a multi-item Business Tourist Experience Value Model was proposed in Chapter 23. The proposed model consisted of an integration and re-assessment of different elements from a range of empirical studies. The author argued that customers' service quality

assessments can be used as guide by managers to develop service quality strategies. The author argued that the proposed Business Tourism Experience Value model can support the existing business tourism strategies by focusing on the experience, intention, and engagement of business tourist to create a better understanding of their post consumption behavior. When business managers subscribe to experience value and satisfaction practices it gives them the best chance to regain their vitality during favorable business environment, and to sustain their business practices during challenging economic times. According to the author, the proposed model captures the conceptual, methodological, and practical aspects of experiential value research in a business tourism context. From a conceptual viewpoint, this research complements the existing literature by integrating the theory of business models and experience economy in the context of business tourism. This model can be used to assess the performance of suppliers of business tourism services. However, the author suggest that the interpretation of this model must be done with caution as one cannot assume that this model considers the unique business tourism service offering and diverse cultural perspectives of the country in which the research is conducted.

Changes in tourist consumer behavior brought about by social media and the possible strategies for tourism businesses to address resulting challenges were discussed in Chapter 24. Authors identified three main topics through extensive literature reviews, namely: (1) the antecedents (the factors motivating tourists to write online reviews); (2) the impact of eWOM on providers of tourism services (business perspective); and (3) the influence of online reviews on consumers' behavior (demand perspective). Authors also examined the impact of online reviews on tourism businesses and outlined a series of adequate strategies formulated for business practitioners. Authors argued that tourism businesses have to adopt and implement suitable strategies. Two preliminary actions/strategies that can be utilized are: (i) understanding SM: it is essential for tourism businesses to understand what SM are and how social media should be used; and (ii) the need to truly understand how to execute digital marketing effectively. Authors concluded that the interaction of main challenges in the tourism market with the digital environment and the adoption and use of SM clearly indicates that tourism businesses need to adopt new approaches and implement new strategies in performing their managerial and marketing activities. Tourism businesses need to incorporate use of SM in their

managerial and digital marketing activities. In doing so, they will have the input and knowledge needed to invest in creating innovative customer experiences.

An evaluation of heritage tourism experiences was presented in Chapter 25 in a research study with empirical investigation on tourism experiences specific to heritage attractions. The study analyzed five principles of experience economy within the context of heritage attractions with the goal of finding out if heritage attractions are using the principles of experience economy to provide a fulfilling experience to visitors. The principles of the experience economy are having consistent theme, using positive cues, eliminating negative cues, offering memorabilia, and engaging the five senses. Results revealed that majority of visitors either agree or strongly agree that many of the elements comprising the principles of experience economy are in place. One similar drawback reported in the study among the attractions is that they all use visual and aural messages which can distract or contradict the theme and consequently visitors' experience. Author suggested that the major contribution of this study is that it informs management of heritage attractions of the importance of having a theme that is consistent, elements of positive cues, elements that will eliminate negative cues, and memorabilia and sensory elements to provide a fulfilling experience for visitors.

Overall, the *Handbook of Managing and Marketing Tourism Experiences* provided conceptual and practical evidence for the critical importance of adopting and implementing appropriate management and marketing approaches and strategies to address the challenges and opportunities in the emerging field of tourism experiences. It is worth noting that there is no magic recipe to guarantee the successful planning and efficient management of tourism experiences. All involved actors, stakeholders, planners, managers, and marketers must be aware of the challenges, obstacles, and difficulties in this field as discussed in previous chapters. They have to devote energy and resources to surmount them and achieve a sustainable and successful partnership in order to develop and deliver tourism experiences that exceeds customers' expectations. It is quite clear that the challenges, problems, and opportunities will continue to evolve as all tourism destinations and businesses strive to offer better tourism experiences in an increasingly competitive business environment.

Dogan Gursoy
Marios Sotiriadis
Editors