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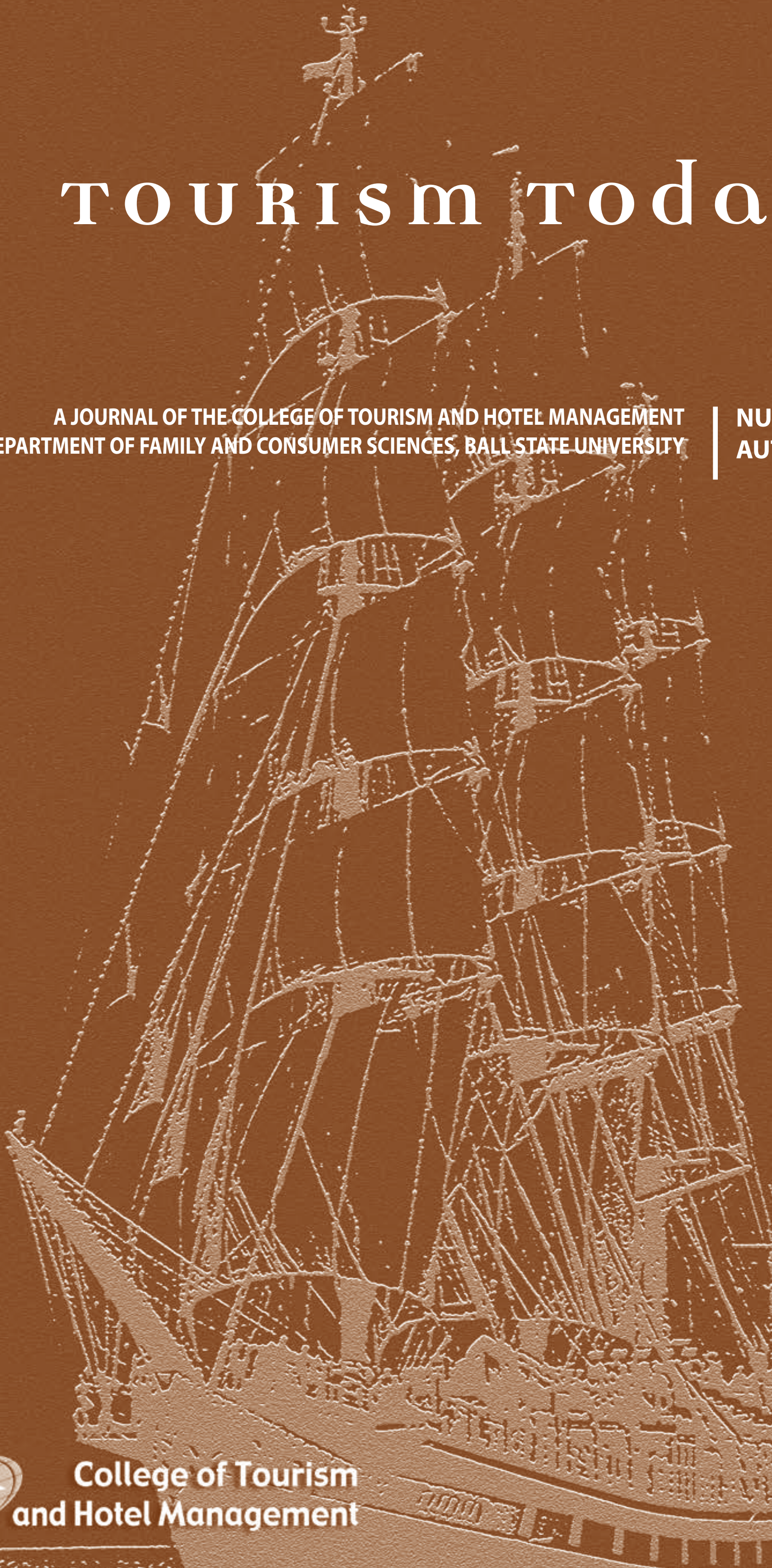

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Editorial Board

Editorial Board

Aims & Scope

Tourism Today serves as an international, scholarly, and refereed journal aiming to promote and enhance research in the fields of tourism and hospitality. The journal is published by the College of Tourism and Hotel Management in Cyprus and Ball State University in the USA. The journal is intended for readers in the scholarly community who deal with the tourism and hospitality industries, as well as professionals in the industry. *Tourism Today* 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 or hospitality industry segment. Besides research papers, the journal welcomes book reviews, conference reports, case studies, research notes and commentaries.

Aims & Scope

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

Decisions regarding publication of submitted manuscripts are based on the recommendations of members of the Editorial Board and other qualified reviewers in an anonymous review process. Submitted articles are evaluated on their appropriateness, significance, clarity of presentation and conceptual adequacy. Negative reviews are made available to authors. The views expressed in the articles are those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent those of the Editorial Board of Tourism Today, the College of Tourism and Hotel Management, nor Ball State University.

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Note from the Editor

Welcome to the fifteenth edition of Tourism Today. Since the last edition of Tourism Today, Tourism Today has been supported by both the College of Tourism and Hotel Management and the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences of Ball State University. The co-operation between these two institutions on different sides of the Atlantic enables Tourism Today to continue to be a quality peer-reviewed journal as an outlet for academics as well as a resource for academics, students, and those in the industry. In order to upgrade the journal, we have applied for a Scopus listing and are patiently awaiting word on that. The intention is to build the journal into a world-class journal. Since we have passed the test of time, we are now aiming to be a world-class journal. Despite the changes in terms of the journal's patrons and some changes to the Editorial Board, the journal will remain available to everyone free of charge online.

There have been some changes to the Editorial Board. For one thing, I have removed Thomas Mavrodontis from the Board since he had recently died. We are grateful for having had his support in the early days of the journal and have good wishes for his family and friends who miss him. The journal has been a success and has survived because of the wonderful people who helped us from its inception and those who continue to help us. There are some other changes/additions to the Editorial Board.

This edition is composed of articles that showcase a variety of approaches and topics. There should be something of interest to just about anyone. For example, Savanna Mays and Nancy Hritz take an analytical look into the repeat visitor. Erica Schenkel and Fernando Almeida investigate the impact the 2001 economic crisis had on tourism policy in Argentina. Another team of authors look into the measurement of service time in fast food in Cairo. These three articles are just a taste of the variety of the topics dealt with in this edition of Tourism Today. As has been the case for since the launch of Tourism Today, comments that assist us in improving the journal are appreciated and are very much welcomed. We encourage readers to support the journal by submitting quality research for our consideration and spreading the word about the usefulness of the journal.
We wish you an enjoyable read.

Craig Webster
Editor-in-Chief, Tourism Today

Satisfaction by frequency of visits and the repeat visitor

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ABSTRACT

Repeat visitors are important to a destination and may differ from first time visitors. The aim of this study was to examine the frequency of visits to a destination and examine satisfaction and intention to return rather than examine the repeat visitor as a large homogenous group. The results here indicate the repeat visitor is not a uniform group, rather at each visit their perceptions, satisfactions and likelihood of returning may be different. Descriptive and ANOVAs reveal differences between a one or two time visitor and those that visit three or more times in overall satisfaction and intention to return. Future research should continue to examine the repeat visitor by the number of times visited.

Keywords: First time and repeat visitors, frequency of visits, satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

Repeat visitation is of primary importance to tourism planners and owners of tourism enterprises. Repeat visitors are shown to be more loyal, stay longer, and spend more in the destination (Pereda, 2002; Petrick & Sirakaya, 2004). While both first-time and repeat visitors are both important for long-term sustainability, repeat visitors are often desired due to specific benefits that they offer. Marketing costs to attract these visitors are lower and repeat visitors are indicative of positive tourist satisfaction, they are most likely to revisit again and typically result in positive word-of-mouth promotion (Kruger, Saayman & Ellis, 2010; Thomas, 2001).

A “first-time visitor” is a tourist visiting a destination for the first time. They have no previous experience with the location, people, accommodations, or activities. Due to their lack of familiarity, they need more assistance with their planning, navigation, and decision-making. This places more responsibility in the tourism providers’ hands to provide the visitor the experience desired.

While many studies have investigated the first time visitor for their unique travel planning, distance traveled, motivations, and intention to return, few studies have examined the repeat visitor as closely. It may be that the first time visitor is rather easily defined as one visit. However, past research has defined the repeat traveler in various ways, from visiting the destination multiple times in the last three years, to traveling to the area more than once ever in their lifetime (Kruger, Saayman, & Ellis, 2010; Li, Cheng, Kim, & Petrick, 2008).

Little research has further segmented the larger group of "repeat visitors" by the frequency of visits in their lifetime. Segmentation is fundamental in designing marketing messages and discerning traveler loyalty as messages designed for the first time visitor are not always as effective or appropriate for other visitors. (Petrick & Sirakaya, 2004). Gitelson and Crompton, (1984), suggested that the repeat visitor could be divided into very frequent, frequent, and infrequent groups. Some other research has tried different segmentation of repeat visitors (Kruger, Saayman & Ellis, 2010; Petrick & Sirakaya, 2004). Therefore this study sought to expand on these efforts by moving beyond the traditional segmentation of "first" and "repeat visitors" and classify visitors by the number of visits to the destination.

The information for this study came from the Wilmington and Beaches Convention and Visitor's Bureau (CVB) tourism study of 2013. This was the first data collected in seven years from visitors to the area. The knowledge gained from the survey is vital for the destination. It allowed for comparison with a 2008 study and portrayed changes over time. The information gathered is also extremely useful in identifying who the destination is attracting, what their behaviors are during their stay, opinions of the destination, and likelihood of return visitation. Looking particularly at number of visits in relation to these statistics benefits the local CVB as well as tourism authorities, enterprises and professionals in the destination.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature examining the behaviors of repeat and first time visitors is vast. Past research has explored travel planning (Woodside and Dubelaar, 2002), interest in activities (Lau & McKercher, 2004; March & Woodside, 2005), daily expenditures (Wang, 2004), motivations (Lau & McKercher, 2004) and a host of other variables. However, satisfaction and intention to return holds great interest for destination managers, planners and policy makers for its link to repeat visitation. Analyzing factors that impact a tourist's intentions to return is essential, especially for mature destinations where repeat visitor numbers make up a large part of the total visitors. Beach and resort type destinations, may rely on repeat visitation more than other types of destinations (Gitelson & Crompton, 1984).

Repeat visitors are beneficial for many reasons; they tend to have a respectable view of and respect for the destination and tend to spend more money. There is also a financial incentive for repeat visitation by destination managers. Lau and McKercher (2004) note repeat visitors "not only represent a stable source of tourist revenue, they also act as information channels that informally link networks of friends, relatives, and other potential travelers to a destination" (p. 280). Thus, fewer dollars are spent in the destination in promotion for the repeat visitor (Petrick and Sirakaya, 2004). Furthermore, the literature is consistent with the notion that once travelers are repeat visitors, their intention to return again is more likely (Kozak, 2001; Lau & Mckercher,

2004) and have a desire to visit again soon within the next two years and become loyal to the destination (Li, et. al., 2008).

Satisfaction of the tourism experience and of the destination is important for any visitor, but most important for converting a first time visitor to a repeat and maintaining the repeat visitor. The current research on satisfaction and the repeat visitor has focused on the creation of models to explain the complex nature of traveler satisfaction. Lee and Beeler (2007) used two models to examine the impact of service quality dimensions on first time and repeat visitors' satisfaction and future intentions. They found first time visitors to be more likely to base their satisfaction on quality, while repeat visitors' satisfaction was determined by other factors. Alegre and Cladera (2009) found that those who have visited more than once had higher satisfaction with their visit and a higher chance of return. Som and Bardarneh (2011) also had similar results.

Moniz (2012) found that while destination attributes and satisfaction do contribute to repeat visitation, age and income were also important. Older visitors and the less affluent were just as likely to return. This was consistent with previous work that found first time visitors to be younger (Lau & McKercher, 2004).

Additional research has explored other variables that may differentiate first time and repeat visitor differences in what might influence their satisfaction. Som and Badarneh (2011) suggested a testable model to include additional relationships between the destination attributes of novelty, image, perceived value and travel distance on satisfaction and ultimately revisit intention. The distance of a destination represent time and monetary issues for the traveler and effect their decision to return. Li, et. al. (2008) in their comprehensive study found differences in repeat and first time visitors with distance traveled. First time visitors traveled further than repeat.

Loyalty was also examined as a contributing factor to satisfaction for the repeat visitor. Petrick and Sirakaya (2003) clustered repeat cruise ship passengers into "loyals" and "disloyals" and examined differences among them and to first time cruisers. There were also among the first not to lump the repeat visitor into one group and segment it further. They found their "loyals" group to have the highest reported satisfaction and intent to cruise again. The study led to a closer examination of the repeat visitor in subsequent research. It has been suggested that while first time visitors might be a homogenous group, repeat visitors are not (Kruger, Saayman, & Ellis, 2010).

Kruger, Saayman and Ellis (2010) led a deeper investigation on the repeat visitor by looking at the number of prior visits and their motivations behind attending a festival in South Africa. Not only were first time and repeat visitors in general found to have varying motivations, but there was also a difference in motivations among the repeat visitors and their number of prior visits. Lacking in the literature is a closer examination of the repeat visitor. Further segmentation of this group would yield valuable insight into specific needs and wants hinted in past research. This would allow tourism managers and promoters to satisfy the repeat visitor, and keep this group coming back. In addition, destinations can reap the secondary benefits such as word of mouth promotion from this highly satisfied group.

This research sought to expand on the previous literature by examining the repeat visitor more closely by the actual number of prior visits. This study specifically sought to:

1. Create a demographic profile of tourists visiting the entire Wilmington and beaches area.
2. Explore differences between the number of past visits to the area and satisfaction with the destination and its attributes.

METHODS

Empirical setting

The region under investigation is comprised of four unique areas. Downtown Wilmington is a historic riverfront with streets full of shops, restaurants, galleries, museums and culture. Carolina Beach offers a unique beach experience with its traditional beach town charm and family, fun appeal. Kure Beach offers a quaint, relaxing getaway in a town true to the coastal laid-back way of living. Wrightsville Beach is North Carolina's most accessible beach and offers outdoor activities, miles of beach, events for the family and a variety of places to stay (Wilmington and Beaches CVBa, 2012).

"Historic waterfronts have the capacity, by virtue of their intimate scale, connections to the past and other inherent characteristics to effectively perform" (Griffin & Hayllar, 2007, p. 15). Waterfront historic towns commonly have tourism as a significant aspect of the economy, life and structure. This is true of downtown Wilmington as well. The local economy thrives off of tourism dollars and the culture of the community is structured to support visitors in addition to the local community.

The Wilmington and Beaches CVB recognizes the distinctive qualities of the four destinations they represent. They advertise in strategic ways to highlight the features and attributes of the individual locations. The Wilmington and Beaches CVB is an independent public authority established by the New Hanover Tourism Development Authority. Their goal is to enhance economic growth and development at all four locations. The organization is funded by room occupancy taxes and aids in marketing, planning, press support and a variety of visitor services (Wilmington and Beaches CVBb, 2012).

In 2008 the CVB conducted a visitor study of travelers in Carolina Beach and Kure Beach. Males (50.31%) and Females (49.69%) had close to equal representation. The points of origin states with highest representation were North Carolina, Virginia and Ohio. One third (33.3%) of the sample reported that it was their first visit to that beach. Those not visiting for the first time (66.67%) had visited an average of 4.31 times previously. The satisfaction, opinions and amenities were scored on a 5-point scale (1=low, 5= high). The "average overall visit satisfaction" had an overall mean of 4.97. The "overall appeal of the attractions in the area" had an overall mean of 4.25. The sampling had a surprisingly high overall satisfaction level in relation to their amenity ratings.

Data collection

Data was collected during the spring and summer of 2013 from travelers coming to New Hanover County. A convenience sample of 604 travelers to the area captured 235 surveys collected in the spring and 369 in the summer. The sampling method utilized was the sampling method with a quota. The goal was 75 surveys per location per season. Data was collected in the four tourist-heavy locations throughout New Hanover County: downtown Wilmington, Wrightsville Beach, Carolina Beach, and Kure Beach. Survey participants were approached within the sections of the Wilmington area specified above and interviewed on site. Participants were given an incentive for participation that included the choice of a food and beverage coupon, keychain, or can koozie. The data collection was part of a larger study for the Wilmington and Beaches CVB.

The survey was divided into three sections. The first section asked about background information, such as number of prior visits to our area, where they are staying if they are an overnight visitor, and activities they plan to do while visiting. Section two inquired about how they planned their trip, including questions such as how long ago they planned their trip, what webpages they used, how they arrived at the destination, and how much they budgeted for their trip. The third section asks their perceptions of the area and levels of satisfaction with events and amenities. Individual questions included their overall opinion of the area, perceptions of the look and feel, amenities such as bike paths, boardwalks, parks and outdoor entertainment, activities and things to do, and about festivals and events. These were presented on a ten point Likert type scale with 1 = very negative and 10 = very positive. In addition, the participant was asked in section three about the likelihood of visiting again. This was also presented on a Likert type scale with 1 = very unlikely and 10 = very likely. The final section asked basic demographic questions of the participant such as travel party size, age, income level, and city and state of origin.

The data was entered into SPSS for further analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to create an accurate profile of the survey participants and their perceptions of the area addressed in section three of the survey. Next, a series of one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were calculated to explore differences in repeat visitation and first time visitors and their opinions on the destination attribute questions. This was a test to compare simultaneously the means of two or more populations using the F distribution and probability value (p value) set a priori at .05 (Lind, Marchal, & Wathen, 2015). The dependent variables for the tests were the overall opinion of the destination and satisfaction with destination attributes (e.g., overall look and feel, activities and things to do), and intention to return. The independent variables were the number of visits to the destination. Before ANOVA could be calculated, several assumptions needed to be met. First the populations are independent of one another. Next, an examination of the histograms revealed a normal distribution with a skew around the mean. In addition, there were no outliers found. Lastly, a Levene test of homoscedasticity was performed to ascertain the homogeneity of variance since the group sizes were unequal. In this case, a non-significant result (higher than alpha level .05) for the Levene test statistic is desired (Lind, Marchal, & Wathen, 2015). The test was not significant ($p = .602$) and therefore the null hypothesis that the variances are equal cannot be rejected and increases confidence that the variances are equal and the homogeneity of variance assumption has been met.

RESULTS

Descriptively, participants taken as a whole were relatively equivalent in gender (45% male and 54.1% female). There were 159 first time visitors (25.8%) and a majority (73.9%) of repeat visitors. There was a dispersion within the age range categories. The 45 to 54 years old age category had 128 participants (20.8%) while the 25 to 34 years old category had 124 participants (20.1%) and the 35 to 44 year old age category had 121 participants (19.6%). The least represented (2.9%) age category were the 68 and up with 18 participants. Only 75 (12.2%) of the visitors traveled alone while the remaining visitors traveled with a variety of party sizes. The most common (38.9%) travel party size was with two to four other people.

Household income also varied. Sixteen percent of the travelers reported earning income in the \$75,000-\$100,000 range and 3.4% of participants reported earning an income of \$250,000 or more. A majority of those surveyed, 42.7%, had previously visited the destination more than five times. An additional 20.5% stated they visited anywhere from three to five times previously. Participants traveled to the destinations from 28 different states. However, the majority (64.4%) were from North Carolina. Virginia (5.2%) and South Carolina (3.6%), the bordering states to the north and south, had the second and third most representation. It can be noticed that additional states also located along the I-95 corridor were represented, including New York (2.9%), Maryland (1.8%), Pennsylvania (1.7%) and Florida (1.3%). A complete breakdown of the demographic results can be found in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Profile of Participants

Variable	N	%
First Visit?		
Yes	159	25.8
No	455	73.9
Gender		
Male	277	45.0
Female	333	54.1
Age Group		
18 to 24	107	17.4
25 to 34	124	20.1
35 to 44	121	19.6
45 to 54	128	20.8
55 to 67	106	17.2
68+	18	2.9

Travel Party Size		
Alone	75	12.2
1 Other	209	33.9
2-4 People	240	38.9
5-9 People	54	8.8
10 or More	18	2.9
Household Income		
Less than $25,000	73	11.9
25 to less than $50,000	83	13.5
50 to less than $75,000	90	14.6
75 to less than $100,000	99	16.1
100 to less than $150,000	69	11.2
150 to less than $250,000	32	5.2
$250,000 or More	21	3.4
Unknown	149	24.2
Number of Times Visited		
One	159	26.5
Two	51	8.5
Three	67	11.2
Four	34	5.7
Five	25	4.2
More than Five	263	43.9
State From		
North Carolina	397	64.4
Virginia	32	5.2
South Carolina	22	3.6
New York	18	2.9
Ohio	17	2.7

Maryland	11	1.8
Pennsylvania	10	1.7
California	9	1.5
Texas	8	1.3
Florida	8	1.3
Tennessee	8	1.1
Kentucky	6	1
Minnesota	5	.9
Illinois	5	.8
West Virginia	5	.8
Washington, DC	4	.6
Georgia	4	.6
Indiana	4	.6
Michigan	4	.6
New Jersey	4	.6
Missouri	3	.5
Wisconsin	2	.3
Connecticut	2	.3
Alabama	2	.4
Maine	2	.4
New Hampshire	2	.4
Arkansas	1	.2
Nebraska	1	.2
Louisiana	1	.2

**Based off 604 surveys collected, not all participants completed each question.*

An overall satisfaction score along with destination attributes mean scores of the travelers was also determined and these can be found in Table 2. The overall satisfaction score for the sample was 8.79. The satisfaction with the destination attribute of "overall look and feel" had a mean of 8.80, "bike paths, boardwalks, etc." was an average of 8.89, and "activities and things to do" had an average of 8.72. The mean for the destination attribute of "festivals and events" (X= 9.51) was highest in the overall opinion of destination attributes category. Lastly, the participant's intention to return was 9.42.

Table 2: Overall opinion of destination and attributes

Variable	Mean	SD
Overall opinion	8.79	1.347
Overall look and feel	8.80	1.323
Bike paths, boardwalks, etc.	8.89	1.728
Activities and things to do	8.72	1.729
Festivals and events	9.51	1.950
Likely to visit again	9.42	1.388

Next, a series of one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were performed to examine if there were differences between the number of times the participants reported visiting and their opinions of certain destination attributes and likelihood of visiting again. A total of six one-way ANOVAs were performed. The results of the ANOVA tests can be found in Table 3.

Table 3: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of Opinion of Destination Attributes for First Time and Repeat Visitors

	Mean	**SD**	***p***
Overall Opinion			
1 time visited	8.35	1.599	
2 times visited	8.41	1.268	
3 times visited	8.89	1.370	
4 times visited	8.70	1.630	
5 times visited	8.64	1.381	
More than 5 times visited	8.96	1.211	
			.044a
Overall Look and Feel			
1 time visited	8.50	1.539	
2 times visited	8.48	1.182	
3 times visited	8.67	1.574	
4 times visited	8.85	1.642	
5 times visited	8.60	1.384	
More than 5 times visited	8.96	1.191	
			.113

Bike Paths, Boardwalks, etc.			
1 time visited	8.70	1.625	
2 times visited	8.65	1.942	
3 times visited	8.56	1.726	
4 times visited	8.84	1.762	
5 times visited	8.76	1.855	
More than 5 times visited	9.02	1.596	
			.381
Activities and Things to do			
1 time visited	8.85	1.725	
2 times visited	8.48	1.909	
3 times visited	8.67	1.564	
4 times visited	9.00	1.936	
5 times visited	8.64	1.497	
More than 5 times visited	8.75	1.653	
			.817
Festivals & Events			
1 time visited	9.00	2.513	
2 times visited	9.49	2.148	
3 times visited	9.48	1.919	
4 times visited	9.22	1.845	
5 times visited	9.72	1.745	
More than 5 times visited	9.47	1.895	
			.838

Likely to Visit Again			
1 time visited	8.75	1.832	
2 times visited	9.45	1.101	
3 times visited	9.58	.922	
4 times visited	9.64	1.168	
5 times visited	9.36	1.319	
More than 5 times visited	9.87	.696	
			> .001b

Note: a= significant at .05 level, b= significant at .01 level

Two of the analyses were significant. The first was the participants' overall opinion of the destination at (p = .044, F = 2.306). A post-hoc examination of the means using Tukey's honestly significant difference (HSD) revealed that those visiting more than five times (X=8.96) were statistically different than those visiting only once (X=8.35) or on their second trip (X=8.41). In other words, those visiting the destination more than five times were more likely to have a more favorable overall satisfaction of the destination than those visiting for the first time or on their second trip.

The second significant result was on the participants' likelihood of visiting again (p > .001, F = 7.454). The post-hoc examination of the means using Turkey honestly significant differences (HSD) revealed that those visiting one time (X=8.75) were statistically different than those visiting three (X=9.58), four (X=9.22) or more than five times (X=9.87). With an increase in visits, the participants in this study were more likely to visit again In other words, those first time visitors were not as likely to come back to the destination, as were those who reported traveling to the area at least three times.

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

In comparing the results of the 2008 Carolina and Kure Beach visitor study and the results of this 2013 study, differences can be noticed. The percentage of first time visitors was lower in the most recent study (33.33% in 2008 and 25.8% in 2013). The number of times visited reported by participants also differed. In 2008, 40.86% of repeat visitors had been to the destination one or two times. However, in the 2013, 42.7% of repeat visitors reported they had been to the destination more than five times. It appears that repeat visitation is on the increase for this beach destination and may have more loyal visitors than in previous years. However, this is assuming that the higher number of visits to a destination results in a "loyal" visitor, though it was not directly measured here. Future research in this beach destination should inquire about loyalty from repeat visitors, perhaps with an attachment question similar to Petrick and Sirakaya (2004) study.

The results from the ANOVA table suggest that as the number of visits increase, the repeat visitor is more likely to be more satisfied with the destination and likely to return again. It may also be suggested from these results that there might be a threshold for ensuring a repeat visitor returns again. At three visits to the destination the repeat visitor stated a higher intention to return than a first time or even a repeat visitor on their second visit. In addition, the satisfaction rate for five visits or more was also statistically higher than those first time or second visit travelers. Also, while not statistically significant, the descriptive mean scores jump from 8.41 for second time visitors to 8.89 for a third time visitor. This could be a result of stronger established positive opinions after multiple visits so that a bad experience does not affect repeat travelers as much as one that is newer to the destination. As mentioned in Gitleson and Crompton's (1984) study, two of the factors contributing to people returning to a familiar destination were a reduced risk that an unsatisfactory experience would be forthcoming and emotional childhood attachment. Further research could explore the number of visits with special attention delineating between second and third time visitors in particular to explore this phenomena. In this sample many of the participants (64.4%) were from North Carolina (therefore, in state) and could have been visiting family and friends, or could have grown up coming to the destination during their youth. This could have caused them to have formulated set opinions and influence their satisfaction and likelihood of return. Therefore these results may be influenced from this high in state visitation.

The results might also suggest the first time visitor is not being reached as effectively as repeat visitors at this destination. In almost every category of the visitor perceptions of the area, the first time visitor rated overall satisfaction and the destination attribute lower than visitors who have been to the area more often (see Table 3 mean scores). Due to this, it is important for destination marketers and organizations to identify first time visitors in order to increase likelihood of visiting again. Kruger, Saayman, & Ellis (2010) state that while repeat visitors are essential, first time visitors are also important to maintain a sustainable flow of visitors.

It would be extremely beneficial for the destination to find a way to target visitors on their first visit and specifically give them an experience that will increase their overall opinion and likelihood of return. Some ways the destination could do this is by offering first time guests a coupon to use on a return visit or by giving these visitors a memento specific to the destination to remind them of their experience and think of it fondly. The destination could also target these visitors in the preparation stage to make the most of service opportunities. Travel planning sites at the destination could utilize their design to identify first time visitors and provide them with a design that is specific to their level of experience with the destination. For example, a link that says "first time visiting? Click here!" that would alter the site to highlight details, and activities for them. This would be a key time to let first time visitors know all that is available to them at the destination and would help provide them with the most enjoyable experience.

Future research

This study examined both day and overnight visitors. It could be useful in the future to distinguish among the two traveler types due to the difference in the nature and purpose of the visit. The length of a visitor's stay also may influence overall opinions, experiences, behaviors, and interest in visiting again and could be the focus of future research. Another means for future research is to continue to follow data of tourists at this destination and see if the number of in state visitors drop over time or if future generations (their children) keep coming back to the destination. Looking at the four beach areas separately could further this research and allow for comparison between the four individual locations within the entire destination considered. Moreover, this study only asked the participant about the number of prior visits to the destination. These visits could have been all at once, or spread apart by many years. Additional research could also explore any temporal relationships that may exist between the number of visits and satisfaction and/or intention to return.

Assumptions

This study was based on the following assumptions. The survey and this study assumed that people traveled to the destination for leisure or business and no other purpose. It was also assumed that participants had an opinion of the area and had experienced enough of the destination to hold a viewpoint. The survey had a focus on aspects of the beach and downtown areas, so the survey assumed that the visitors had spent time in these areas specifically during their visit. As with any study of this nature, this research assumes that interviewers were clear explaining the survey correctly and that visitors were honest in their responses.

Limitations

This study was affected by the following limitations. Weather at the destination was certainly a limitation in this study. Weather conditions at the destination on data collection days certainly impacted number of participants available to survey. Most of the data collection sites were outdoors and subject to impact from rainstorms and chilly days, especially in the spring. A major limitation was that the Wilmington & Beaches Convention and Visitors Bureau developed the actual survey questions. Therefore, the study was limited in what could be examined specifically. The study looks at four different areas and did not consider each location separately. Another factor out of the researcher's control were any special events going on at data collection locations during times of surveying. Such events could have impacted the type of participants surveyed and the opinions reported at that specific time.

Delimitations

The delimitations impacting this study were strategic to the study. Data collection locations were limited. The collection sites were strategically established to be in tourist heavy areas, which were: Downtown Wilmington, Wrightsville Beach, Carolina Beach and Kure Beach. The actual time of day that data was collected was also a limitation. During the spring season, data collection was conducted mostly on the weekends (to capture weekend visitors). In the summer, collection took place in a non-systematic manner and was collected when surveyors were available. In both seasons, data collection took place during the daytime.

The aim of this study was to examine the frequency of visits to a destination and examine satisfaction and intention to return rather than examine the repeat visitor as a large group. The results here indicate the repeat visitor is not a uniform group, rather at each visit perceptions, satisfactions and likelihood of returning may be different, especially at the second and third visit. Future research should continue to examine the repeat visitor by the number of times visited.

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A study of the meaning of intercultural competence from the perspectives of tourism students who participated in a global service-learning program

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ABSTRACT

Given the increasing importance of intercultural competence, educators are seeking ways to help students become interculturally competent and to assess if this goal has been achieved. Definitions and components of intercultural competence thus far were developed mostly relying on sole opinions of faculty members instead of based on students who actually participated in intercultural learning experiences. This study contributes to the literature by assessing the intercultural competence of tourism students who participated in a service-learning experience that took place in Kenya. The results of this research help to explore specific meanings of intercultural competence from students' viewpoints.

Keywords: intercultural competence; intercultural learning; global service-learning.

GLOBAL SERVICE-LEARNING IN KENYA

In an era of global interconnections and interdependencies, intercultural competence has become more imperative for students to develop (Musil, 2007). An increasing number of educational institutions are seeking ways to cultivate "global-ready students" so they are able to relate to and interact with people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds both domestically and overseas (Deardorff, 2008; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009).

Global service-learning offers a unique way for students to develop intercultural competence. Service-learning in a global setting places students in an environment where they interact directly with other cultures, challenge their knowledge and perceptions about themselves and host communities, discover new ideas, and learn different cultures from the inside out (Musil, 2007; Bringle & Hatcher, 2011).

A tourism department of a university in the United States offered an international service-learning course that involved a tourism project in Kenya. The tourism department has partnered with the School of Tourism, Hospitality and Events Management at the Moi University in Kenya on research and teaching. This specific course was created for both tourism programs to collaborate on a tourism development project for the Rift Valley in Kenya. There are social problems that bedevil many communities in the Rift Valley, such as high poverty levels, high unemployment rates, low wages, high cost of healthcare, high illiteracy levels, poor infrastructure, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The goal of the tourism project was to recommend ideas that will help to develop community-based tourism that will improve the local economy, infrastructure, and quality of life for local residents.

A total of three students enrolled in the course. One faculty member and the three students who enrolled in the global service-learning course traveled to Kenya and stayed there for three weeks. The course involved lectures, class discussions, field trips, and research activities that resulted in a written report that details recommendations for tourism development in the Rift Valley. By the end of the three-week visit, students also developed a blog and a Facebook page that documents and promotes tourism resources for the region.

In order to research tourism resources available in the Rift Valley, the group visited several communities that have a potential to attract visitors who look for cultural, sports, and outdoor opportunities. Students observed and experienced resources available for tourism development, met with residents in several communities to learn about their needs and challenges, and discussed how tourism development can help them. In addition, while visiting several communities to gather local residents' opinions about tourism development in the Rift Valley, students were invited to visit two elementary schools where the American students gave several presentations to Kenyan students about life in America.

The course was designed to provide cultural immersion opportunities for students. It was believed that this global experience would help students to develop intercultural competence that is critical for their career development in the tourism industry. The American students worked closely with the Kenyan students and faculty four hours per day on a daily basis. Students from the two countries participated in all class activities together. The constant interactions facilitated many discussions whereby participants from both countries exchanged knowledge and thoughts about Kenya and the United States.

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

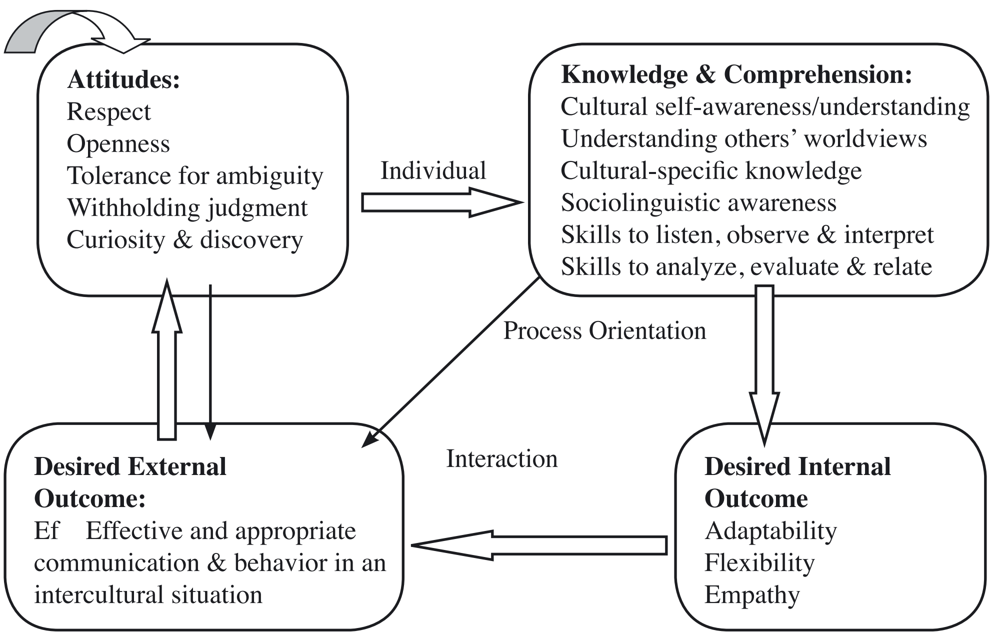
For some time, the term "intercultural competence" has been loosely defined in the literature. It has been used interchangeably with intercultural adaption or intercultural effectiveness (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). At times, it was adopted as a subjective evaluative notion, and at other times, researchers discussed it with different sets of components that constitute the concept (Deardorff, 2006; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009).

Since the 1970s, scholars have begun to develop conceptual models for measuring intercultural competence. Many of these early studies recognized that intercultural competence is a multi-dimensional concept and requires a comprehensive assessment that includes various elements that constitute the competence. More and more sophisticated theoretical models have been developed since the 1990s. Besides exploring various elements of intercultural competence, these newer models also started to investigate the developmental process of the competence across different contexts (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009).

In search of a consensus on what comprises intercultural competence, Deardorff (2006, 2008, 2009) conducted a survey and a Delphi study that included nationally and internationally known intercultural experts as her research participants. Deardorff's (2006) study revealed that among a list of proposed definitions, the top rated one defines intercultural competence as "the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (p. 247).

Furthermore, Deardorff's (2006, 2008, & 2009) study produced a list of 15 components that constitute intercultural competence. These 15 components were classified into four broader categories which are interconnected. Based on these research findings, she developed the Deardorff Process Model of Intercultural Competence that is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Deardorff Process Model of Intercultural Competence



Source: Deardorff, D. K. (2008). Intercultural competence: A definition, model, and implications for study abroad. In V. Savicki (Ed.), *Developing intercultural competence and transformation: Theory, research, and application in international education* (pp. 297-312). Sterling, VA: Stylus.

The first category in the model is attitudes, which includes five components: respect, openness, tolerance for ambiguity, withholding judgment, and curiosity. Deardorff (2008) suggested that attitudes are fundamental starting points for developing intercultural competence. These attitudes will lead to development of a set of knowledge and skills which falls into the second category in the model. Specific components included in this category are: cultural self-awareness/understanding; understanding others' worldviews; culture-specific knowledge; sociolinguistic awareness; skills to listen, observe and interpret; and, skills to analyze, evaluate, and relate. Deardorff (2008) stated that these skills and knowledge require critical and analytical thinking in order to process information about different cultures at a deeper level. For instance, students need to go beyond the basic knowledge of foods, customs, and greetings and try to analyze the intricacies of these elements of a culture (Deardorff, 2009). Next, those skills and knowledge in the second category, as well as the prerequisite attitudes, will result in several internal outcomes, which are adaptability, flexibility, and empathy. Subsequently, all the components from the three categories will manifest themselves in observable, external outcomes of effective and appropriate communication and behavior in an intercultural situation (Deardorff, 2008).

These 15 components in the model are necessary for developing intercultural competence. Deardorff's (2006, 2008, & 2009) model suggests that one moves from an individual level of personal attitudes, knowledge, and skills to an interpersonal level of cultural interactions. Deardorff (2006) emphasized that this framework demonstrates the continuing process of intercultural competence development. An individual's attitudes might be altered after gaining more knowledge and skills and interacting with other cultures. Development of intercultural competence can be a life-long journey on which one may never reach the peak.

Deardorff (2006) also indicated that the development of intercultural competence is a dynamic process. It is possible for an individual to go from attitudes directly to the external outcome although the degree of effectiveness and appropriateness of the outcome may be constrained. Any component in the model can be linked to other components directly. Based on the model, Deardorff (2006, 2008, & 2009) provided suggestions for cultivating these components as well as methods for assessing intercultural competence. Furthermore, Deardorff and Clayton (2010) developed a self-evaluation instrument for measuring these 15 intercultural competencies. The components are measured on a five-point scale (1= poor; 2 = below average; 3 = average; 4 = high; 5 = very high).

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

It is essential to specify the concept of intercultural competence because this would help educational institutions to know the key components of this complex concept and to assess if students are interculturally competent. However, there has been confusion regarding the definition of intercultural competence and how it can be assessed. As a result, many institutions have not been able to measure and document intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006).

One main purpose of this study is to assess the influence of this global service-learning course on students' development of intercultural competence. More particularly, the tourism department would like to examine what specific components of intercultural competence the students gained by participating in the global experience. The results of the measurement will provide insights for the department's future efforts for helping its students to develop intercultural competence.

It is critical to assess intercultural competence that is based on a sound theoretical framework. As discussed above, many conceptual frameworks have been developed for assessing intercultural competence. However, few of the previous studies identified components of intercultural competence that are research-based. Deardorff's model is the first one that defined the concept of intercultural competence and identified its key components based on consensus among leading experts (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009).

Deardorff's (2006, 2008, & 2009) model not only highlights key components that constitute intercultural competence but also stresses that the components can be intertwined. The casual paths in her model help educators to better understand how various components influence each other. Thus, Deardorff's model can also serve as a guide to further test the connectivity and feedback loops among components of intercultural competence. Furthermore, many other conceptual frameworks only focus on specific subcomponents of intercultural competence, such as lingual skills and intercultural sensitivity (Fantini, 2009). Therefore, this study adopts Deardorff's theoretical framework that includes a comprehensive set of components of the competence.

Deardorff (2006) raised several research directions for refining the model. Although her study identified components of intercultural competence, these components are still general in nature. Deardorff (2006) suggested that more research is needed to further explore specific meanings of these terms. In addition, as pointed out by Deardorff (2008) and Kiely (2011), the meaning of intercultural competence needs to be clarified from the perspective of sojourners, program organizers, and host communities that are involved in global service-learning. Finally, since the model was developed, no empirical testing of the model has been reported in the literature. More research is needed to adopt the model in order to determine the usefulness of the theoretical framework.

Therefore, there are several additional purposes of this study. One is to gain additional understanding of the meaning of the 15 intercultural competence constructs from students' perspectives. By doing so, this study will contribute to the literature by being the first study that tests the model from students' viewpoints. Moreover, by adopting Deardorff's model, this study also examines the conceptual framework in a global service-learning setting and the usefulness of the measurement instrument.

METHODOLOGY

The American students were asked to self-evaluate their intercultural competence with the instrument developed by Deardorff and Clayton (2010). Since intercultural competence is an ongoing process, it was suggested to measure intercultural competence several times instead of at only one point in time (Deardorff, 2006). Therefore, intercultural competence was measured at three different times. The students filled out the evaluation for the first time during a pre-trip orientation. The second intercultural competence evaluation was given during the mid-point of the visit to Kenya. The students were given the third evaluation a few days before returning to the U.S. and submitted it one week after arriving home. By doing so, it would help the students to be more mindful about their experience during the entire process and to observe their own learning progress.

Furthermore, this methodology also allows researchers to see how students' intercultural competence changed during the period. Because the first evaluation was conducted prior to the trip in order to serve as a starting baseline, the results of the second and the third evaluations can be used to measure the impacts of the global service learning program on students' development of intercultural competence.

For the first evaluation, Deardorff and Clayton's (2010) instrument was kept entirely as is. The 15 elements of intercultural competence were measured on a five-point scale (1 = poor; 2 = below average; 3 = average; 4 = high; 5 = very high). Students were asked to rate themselves on the 15 components of intercultural competence. In order to gauge the impact of the global service-learning experience on students' development of intercultural competence, Deardorff and Clayton's (2010) measurement scale was altered slightly for the second and third evaluations in order to fit the needs of this study. All 15 constructs were kept the same but were measured on a different scale. The students were asked to rate the improvement in their competence on a different five-point scale (1 = very low; 2 = somewhat low; 3 = moderate; 4 = somewhat high; 5 = very high). Additionally, for each intercultural competence element, the students were asked to explain their rating by providing specific rationales and/or examples.

The faculty of the course asked the students to work on the evaluations without providing them any explanation regarding the meaning of the 15 intercultural competence constructs. This was done with the intention of testing the original instrument to see if students were able to understand the measurement items and to see how the 15 components were interpreted by them.

RESULTS

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE EVALUTIONS

The measurement scale developed by Deardorff and Clayton (2010) was applied to generate the quantitative results of students' intercultural competence that are shown in Table 1. The three students who participated in the service-learning program in Kenya were labeled as students A, B, and C in Table 1. Scores of all 15 intercultural competence components were averaged for each evaluation and each student.

For both students A and C, their mean scores increased for the second and third evaluations. The results indicate that these two students continuously improved their intercultural competence during the experience. Moreover, the degree of improvement can be considered as high given the scores ranging from 4.5 to 4.9 on a five-point scale.

The degree of improvement decreased each time for student B. However, note that student B already has the highest average mean score for the first evaluation. It appears that this student felt he already possessed good levels of intercultural competence before he started the journey to Kenya. Therefore, he may have felt confident about his intercultural competence and perceived room for his further improvement to be slim. When comparing students' travel and living experiences abroad prior to this service-learning program, student B has the most extensive experience due to his previous military deployment abroad from seven to nine months on three separate occasions. Contrarily, previous international travel experience that students A and C each had were vacations abroad ranging from one to two weeks in total.

In order to compare the degree of improvement among the 15 components of intercultural competence, scores from the second and the third evaluations were averaged for each component. The results show that "respect" receives the highest improvement rating, followed by "openness," "curiosity and discovery," and "communication skills." Components that receive the lowest improvement scores are "withholding judgment" and "tolerance for ambiguity."

Table 1: Quantitative Results of Intercultural Competence Measurement

	Student A			Student B			Student C			
Intercultural Competence Components	**1st**	**2nd**	**3rd**	**1st**	**2nd**	**3rd**	**1st**	**2nd**	**3rd**	**Mean scores of 2nd and 3rd evaluations for each intercultural competence component**
Respect	4	5	5	5	5	1	5	5	5	**4.3**
Openness (to intercultural learning and to people from other cultures)	3	4	5	5	5	1	4	5	5	**4.2**
Tolerance for ambiguity	3	4	5	5	4	1	3	3	3	**3.3**

Flexibility (in using appropriate communication styles and behaviors in intercultural situations)	4	4	5	5	3	1	3	5	5	**3.8**
Curiosity and discovery	4	5	5	5	4	1	5	5	5	**4.2**
Withholding judgment	3	5	5	4	no score	1	4	4	4	**3.2**
Cultural self-awareness/ understanding	4	5	5	5	3	1	4	5	5	**4.0**
Understanding others' worldviews	3	3	5	4	5	1	4	4	5	**3.8**
Culture-specific knowledge	2	4	5	3	2	2	3	4	5	**3.7**
Sociolinguistic awareness (awareness of using other languages in social context)	1	3	4	2	5	2	3	5	4	**3.8**
Skills to listen, observe and interpret	3	4	5	3	3	1	4	5	5	**3.8**
Skills to analyze, evaluate, and relate	4	5	5	3	2	1	5	4	5	**3.7**
Empathy (do unto others as they would have done unto them)	4	4	4	4	5	1	5	5	5	**4.0**
Adaptability (to different communication styles/behaviors and to new cultural environments)	3	4	5	5	4	2	5	4	4	**3.8**
Communication skills	3	5	5	5	5	1	4	4	5	**4.2**
Mean scores of all intercultural competence for each student	**3.2**	**4.5**	**4.9**	**4.2**	**3.9**	**1.2**	**4.1**	**4.5**	**4.7**	

Note: For the first evaluation, items were measured on a five-point scale (1 = poor; 2 = below average; 3 = average; 4 = high; 5 = very high). For the second and third evaluations, items were measured on a different five-point scale (1= very low; 2 = somewhat low; 3 = moderate; 4 = somewhat high; 5 = very high).

QUALITATIVE RESULTS OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE EVALUATIONS

In addition to rating the 15 intercultural components, the students were asked to explain their ratings by providing specific rationales and/or examples on the second and third evaluations. The section below presents findings from students' reflections which indicate how they view the meanings of the 15 components, and the relationships among the components. The student comments also provide an indication regarding how students developed their intercultural knowledge, skills, and abilities.

RESPECT

Students' comments reveal three types of respect. One student mentioned that, "I have so much more respect for Kenyans in general since I have been here based simply on their lifestyle, way of life and just hard work and dedication. I realize that they have it much harder than I have ever even imagined having it, and I respect them for keeping such high spirits and working hard to achieve everything they have." This student gave a high regard to Kenyans after learning about many challenges that they face with limited resources.

The second comment stated that, "It has made me evaluate how much respect I show professors, as well as other people in the community on a daily basis. While I don't want to be 'formal' at all times, I do realize that there is a time and place to be more professional and respectful." During our visit, we found that the relationship between faculty and students in Kenya is more formal than it is in the U.S. For instance, Kenyan students do not call their teachers by their first names. The formality exhibited in the social manner in Kenya that this student observed prompted her to think about issues regarding professionalism that involve respect.

The third aspect of respect was found in one reflection that said, "I gave respect as much as possible whenever possible. All of the Kenyans encountered respected me, and it was only fair to return the respect." In this case, respect denotes an expression of consideration and politeness.

OPENNESS

All students stated that they were open to learning from this global service-learning experience. For instance, one comment stated that, "I am definitely open to learning about other cultures and ways of life. I enjoy talking to the students from Moi University about what life is like growing up in Kenya. I am open to new experiences, and I am trying to fully experience each excursion that others have planned." Another comment said that, "I think it is so cool how everyone has a different background and has so much to teach others about themselves. Trading information on culture and past experiences has been something that I have valued through this trip." This reflection shows that the student embraced the idea that every person has something to teach others.

TOLERANCE FOR AMBIGUITY

Students encountered ambiguity constantly during the program. Student reflections reveal that their ambiguity was caused by two main factors. The first one is unfamiliarity with Kenya's culture, experiences, etc., just because I can learn more in all of these instances." In this case, the student felt ambiguity in fact helped her to explore more about the country.

During our stay, we found that Kenyans may not plan things ahead of time as much as Americans do. Although many of our visits to local communities or tourist destinations were planned ahead, the specific schedule of many visits were not confirmed until the day before. This is a different experience for some of the students who were used to the culture of scheduling things days or even months ahead of time in the U.S. One comment stated that, "I have realized that I like being a little more in control over my day to day activities and surroundings. I don't mind not knowing about some things, but I also don't like feeling like I don't know what is coming up. I like to have a general idea of what to expect, so I can plan my time around it accordingly."

The next main factor that caused ambiguity was the language barrier, as mentioned in one comment: "Language barrier, which was minimal, was easily overcome early upon our arrival. Just had to pay a little closer attention to what was being said to fully hear what was being said."

WITHHOLDING JUDGMENT

One remark stated that, "I can't judge a country that I've never been to or have spent hardly enough time in the country to say something negative about it. I've kept an open mind about every experience to date and will do so for future experiences here." This comment shows that this component is linked with openness, which is another intercultural competence component. This is the first linkage among the 15 intercultural competence components identified when the researcher of this study reviewed comments from the evaluations.

CURIOSITY AND DISCOVERY

All of the students' comments show that they were curious about Kenya and recognized that curiosity is a necessity for a traveler. In addition, one reflection mentioned that, "I was always open to new experiences and ideas that were directed towards Kenya's goal of increased tourism." This comment also implies that there is a link between this component and openness.

CULTURAL SELF-AWARENESS/UNDERSTANDING

As Deardorff (2008) suggested, without experiencing a different culture, cultural self-awareness can be difficult to achieve. Oftentimes, experiences of other cultures prompt an individual to reflect on his or her own culture. One remark on the evaluation stated that, "It makes me be more aware of how America is much more open to equality between gender, race and lifestyle choice. It boggles my mind how women here do all the work and don't speak up and say something about sharing the daily work load." After learning about cultures and social issues in Kenya, students contrasted the differences between the two countries in terms of their societal, cultural, economic, and political environments.

Furthermore, the relationship between this component and respect surfaced in this comment: "I am definitely more aware of how much our culture takes things for granted. I was washing my own clothes today, and the task wore me out. I dread doing laundry at home, but now I realize how easy of a task it actually is. I definitely have a new respect for Kenyans who hand wash all of their clothes year round. I also hope to never take my washer and dryer for granted again." By having a new experience and/or knowledge, one might update his or her previous attitudes. This finding echoes Deardorff's (2006, 2008, & 2009) statement that any component in her model can affect attitudes.

UNDERSTANDING OTHERS' WORLDVIEWS

The American students had many conversations with Kenyan students and faculty about various topics regarding the two countries. One comment stated that, "Kenyans view the world through different eyes than Americans. I like how they are not only think about what is going on in their country, but also concerned with what is happening to Africa as a whole."

This service-learning program seemed to foster students' interest in understanding Kenya as shown in this remark: "The longer I have been in Kenya, the more my attention has been turned to international views. Twice over the past week I have actually picked up a Kenyan newspaper and been interested to find out what is happening in this region. Because small little political issues and instances have been brought up in conversation, I have a deep desire to follow the news more closely upon returning home."

CULTURE-SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE

By constantly interacting with Kenyans and visiting many local communities and tourist destinations, students were able to gain culture-specific knowledge as is evidenced in these comments: "There are too many different types of cultures in Kenya to actually grasp the differences between them. I just found out today that each tribe has its own style of dialect." "While other tourist attractions we visited taught me culturally rich information, The Kapenguria Museum by far taught me the most about Kenya's culture and how they as a country came to be what they are today. It's always neat to learn about how a country gains independence and the hardship overcome along the way."

SOCIOLINGUISTIC AWARENESS

Swahili is the language that is widely spoken in Kenya. Our students learned some basic words while interacting with Kenyans. As observed by faculty of the American group, all students were actively trying to learn to use the language. One student commented that, "I didn't think it would be this much fun to learn another language, and I feel that it shows more of an appreciation towards the locals that I'm going out of my way to learn their language. It's only fair because they've gone out of their way to learn ours." This statement shows that students recognized that learning and using a local language not only can be an enjoyable experience, but it is also a way to show appreciation towards a culture.

SKILLS TO LISTEN, OBSERVE AND INTERPRET

Students' comments on the evaluations show that during the three-week visit, they had many opportunities to work on these skills as indicated in these statements: "This week I have gotten really close with many Kenyans here. Because English isn't their first language, my listening, observing and interpreting skills have really been put to the test. However, it is always fun attempting to find other ways to get your point across when you aren't understood when saying what you think is clear." "I've always been a good listener and able to observe my surroundings to keep me in tune with new experiences. I pay attention to little things as to where to keep my hands when in a group standing with important people such as the member of parliament that we met. This way I don't send out a vibe that makes me look like I'm too good to be here or show a lack of interest in what's going on."

SKILLS TO ANALYZE, EVALUATE, AND RELATE

The tourism project that students worked on required them to analyze the information they learned about local resources available for developing tourism. The students also recommended ways for sustainable tourism development to help local communities to improve their economies and quality of life. This is demonstrated by one student who commented that, "Working on this class project has really allowed us to analyze the Kenyan tourism system, evaluate our findings in order to make recommendations, and relate this information to the real world and even how it should be implemented here locally."

Additionally, interacting with local people helped students to reflect on cultural issues as shown in this remark: "When comparing two different cultures and countries' habits, you have to analyze your own ways of life and be able to compare and contrast. This was really neat to see how two places that are so far apart can be yet so similar in many ways."

ADAPTABILITY

It is interesting to see that this component is linked by students to other components, such as respect and openness, as shown in these two remarks: "While I am still learning Swahili, I try to use it to be respectful when I can. In terms of behavior, I always go by the 'when in Rome' motto." "I feel as if I am able to adapt to the new culture and style of communication fairly well. I think that this concept relates to a willingness to be open to new experiences and new things. I am able to communicate with the people in Kenya." These findings indicate that students felt that in order to show respect to local people, it is necessary to adapt to new cultural environments. Openness can be a precursor for adapting one's attitude and behavior.

Furthermore, adaptability also helped one student to be open to other positive experiences, as stated in this comment: "The environment isn't as 'posh' like home. No internet, TV, and refrigerator to spoil me. It's very basic by giving you just what you need to get by: a roof over your head, a bed and a bathroom with running water (sometimes). I've been in tougher situations before, and this is just what I need to reconnect with nature."

FLEXIBILITY

One main thing that these students needed in order to adjust themselves pertains to how differently people of the two countries view time and scheduling. As one student mentioned, "The first thing that pops into my mind when hearing flexibility is 'Mzungu time!' It has been a running joke since we got to Kenya that the visitors stay to a time schedule far more than the locals, because Africans don't ever rush. We have had to practice flexibility and patience when we are trying to set a time to do anything and everything." When Kenyans say "Mzungu time," it refers to the way foreigners keep on schedule, which is more stringent than Kenyans do.

One student found that being flexible allowed her to discover more about a new culture. This is demonstrated in her remark that, "I've remained flexible during the entire trip so far. A bulk majority of the time I'm just along for the ride not asking questions as to where we are going and what we are doing. It leaves an element of surprise and raises the bar from what this country is mainly known for to what it actually has to offer."

EMPATHY

After learning about some challenging circumstances and hardships that many Kenyans face, students commented that they were empathetic to the local people. Additionally, these observations compelled them to reflect on what they have in their home environment and the need to change some of their behaviors, as revealed in this remark: "I have noticed myself becoming more selfless while being here. I would by no means say that I am selfish or don't share at home, but while being here I have realized that there is so much more to life than getting ahead financially. Although it is still a work in progress, I am becoming a more giving person and lending a hand wherever I can."

Moreover, respect is again connected with this component as shown in this comment: "Everyone here is so pleasant and nice that it's easy to go with the flow and treat them with as much respect as they treat you." Being understanding and sensitive to others can be intertwined with showing respect.

DESIRED EXTERNAL OUTCOME

Students found that besides the obvious language barrier, communication can be challenging due to very different cultural and societal environments. For instance, students found that they had to be creative when explaining what marshmallows are and taste like, which are something that most Kenyans had not seen.

Once again, respect was mentioned when a student discussed this external outcome, as in this statement: "I am able to communicate effectively with the people here. I am able to understand them for the most part. I am also trying to learn several words in Swahili. I feel like, as a visitor, making an attempt to learn their language is a sign of respect."

DISCUSSION

Given the increasing importance of intercultural competence, a specification of intercultural competence should be identified in order to help educators and students understand the components of the concept, to develop ways that help students develop the competence, and to assess if students are interculturally competent. This study adopted the Deardorff Process Model of

Intercultural Competence for assessing the development of intercultural competence of a group of tourism students who participated in a service-learning program in Kenya. The students completed three evaluations during the program that assessed the 15 components of intercultural competence that were identified by Deardorff (2006, 2008, & 2009).

This study has made several contributions to the literature. First, since Deardorff (2006, 2008, & 2009) developed her model, this is one of the first studies that empirically tested the model and the measurement instrument. Because this study measured intercultural competence at multiple times during the students' experience, it is found that the quantitative data gathered from this method allows us to track the progress of students' development. The measurement scores are also helpful for comparing which components of intercultural competence students better achieve and which ones need more improvement. For instance, among the 15 components, respect received the highest evaluation score in this study. It appears that this finding is supported by the qualitative data collected which shows it was repeatedly mentioned in students' comments.

Second, the results of this study support the usefulness of Deardorff's model and instrument. During the administration of the evaluations, students not only were able to complete them without difficulty but also elaborated their thoughts regarding the 15 components. Thus, the data generated by this study indicate that all components in Deardorff's model are relevant to intercultural competence.

Third, this is the first study that empirically confirms Deardorff's (2006, 2008, & 2009) statement that the development of intercultural competence is a dynamic and circular process. For instance, students' remarks show that after gaining more knowledge and experience in Kenya, they developed more respect for people of the country. Thus, the data generated by this study verify that each component can directly influence the rest of the components in Deardorff's model. For example, not only can attitudes can be a fundamental starting point for developing intercultural competence, but any new knowledge and skill can also modify previous attitudes.

Lastly, as stated by Deardorff (2006), specific meanings of the 15 components need to be further explored. This study not only explores meanings of the components but also the meanings from students' perspectives. Students' written explanations of each component show that there is some variation in terms of how they interpreted the 15 components. For instance, "respect" was viewed in several different ways by the students. They referred to it mostly as an acceptance or acknowledgement of Kenya's culture and way of life. Students also regarded it as a gesture of greeting, hospitality, or friendship. These results imply that the 15 components in Deardorff's model can manifest in different ways in various situations.

In summary, the results of this research are fruitful and encouraging. The data collected show that Deardorff's model provides a constructive framework for understanding and assessing intercultural competence. For this specific service-learning program in Kenya, both quantitative and qualitative evaluations generated positive results. This indicates that the design of the program helped students develop intercultural competence. Hence, the design of this program shed some light on how service-learning activities or elements can be instrumental for developing the competence. By asking students to comment on the 15 components, it is possible to identify and link factors that lead to a specific component. For instance, many of the comments gathered by this study show that having constant interaction with local people who were not only knowledgeable but also interested in exchanging ideas is crucial when it comes to several components, such as developing culture-specific knowledge and sociolinguistic awareness.

The methodology in this study includes both quantitative and qualitative evaluations which was helpful for investigating students' development of intercultural competence. Although it is not a focus of this paper and thus is not discussed extensively here, Deardorff's theoretical framework combined with the methodology utilized in this study can help to pinpoint specific factors or situations that contribute to development of each of the 15 intercultural competence components in a global service-learning experience. This study's findings indicate that Deardorff's model helps to investigate what exact student learning was achieved through the global service-learning experience.

FUTURE RESEARCH

This study is exploratory in nature given it is the first one in the literature that attempts to empirically test Deardorff's framework by surveying students who participated in an education abroad experience. Much research is needed to further test the Deardorff Process Model of Intercultural Competence. As mentioned in the Study Limitations section, the model was tested in a specific global service-learning situation with a small sample size; thus, possible research findings may be restricted. Therefore, it would be interesting to test the model in different international learning environments to see if new meanings of intercultural competence will be discovered. The dynamics among the 15 components of intercultural competence also require further empirical investigation. This study found several interconnections among the 15 components of intercultural competence. It would be interesting to further investigate if the same connections can also be found in different global learning situations. In addition, future research needs to examine conditions that foster those connections and feedback loops in Deardorff's model.

Another finding of this study is that greater improvement of intercultural competence was found in students who have less experience with traveling or living abroad than a student who has more experience abroad prior to the trip. Every student has unique prior knowledge, skills, attitudes, experiences, and readiness for entering a new cultural experience (Deardorff, 2008). Student backgrounds and characteristics can be further investigated to see their influence on the development of intercultural competence.

STUDY LIMITATIONS

Although this study makes several important contributions toward conceptualization of intercultural competence, there are limitations. Given that only three students enrolled in the service-learning course offered in Kenya, the sample size is restricted in this study. In addition, the model was adopted in a unique service-learning program in Kenya; the results of this study may be different from those of other types of experiences that are developed for fostering intercultural competence.

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Business strategy and HRM practices: relations and affections for enhancing job satisfaction and staff commitment

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ABSTRACT

The present paper aims at identifying and highlighting the role of business strategy in the shaping of particular HR practices and policies. Furthermore, it studies the impact of such policies on job satisfaction and staff commitment in the hospitality industry. The general concept includes classifying hotels according to their business strategies in order to highlight the relation between HRM and business strategy and to examine the impact of the business strategy on job satisfaction and staff commitment of the employees. For this reason, a primary research was conducted using questionnaires that were completed in the presence of the researchers by HR executives working in the hotels of Thessaloniki. The research findings indicate the positive impact of HRM and selected practices on the levels of job satisfaction and staff commitment in the hospitality industry. Furthermore, the research revealed a clear relation and correlation between job satisfaction and staff commitment. The research among hotels applying different business strategies also revealed a series of important differences as regards to the levels of commitment and job satisfaction of their employees as well as in relation to their HRM policies.

Keywords: job satisfaction, staff commitment, business performance, human resource management, business strategy, hotels

INTRODUCTION

The role of human resource management (HRM) in hotel management has increased in importance among firms engaging in the hospitality industry. Gradually, an increasing number of firms, regardless of their size, adopt the idea that a successful operation depends on the effective management of human resources (HR). The available HR play a crucial role both in creating the final product and in planning and implementing a business strategy according to the vision and mission of the hotel. Consequently, HRM contribution in business management has gained in recognition whereas an increasing number of firms seem to integrate HRM in their organizational structures. According to Tyson and York (2000), the evolution of the earlier personnel management into HRM is actually due to the adoption of strategic approaches in its implementation. Nowadays, the selection and effectiveness of HR practices on the one hand is directly related to a business strategy, regardless of the prevailing method of said relation (Delery and Doty, 1996; Pfeffer, 1998; Morris, Snell and Wright, 2006), and on the other hand their impact can be measured in terms of business performance and HR performance outcomes (Becker, Huselid and Ulrich, 2001).

Job satisfaction and staff commitment are among the most important findings of HR research and have been widely investigated. They are related to the pleasure gained from the achievement of corporate and personal goals and the commitment from and to the enterprise respectively. In hospitality literature, the increase of said research is attributed partly to the negative correlation between job satisfaction and staff commitment with high indices of employees leaving their jobs and partly to the positive correlation of the above to business performance (Randall, 1990). HRM systems and practices are in fact the means for the achievement of job satisfaction and staff commitment. Such practices include among other things training programs (Choi and Dickson, 2010), methods to attract and recruit staff (Bagri, Babu and Kukreti, 2010; Dawson and Abbott, 2011), career opportunities and job perspectives (Tutuncu and Kozak, 2007). In an industry characterized by high percentages of staff leaving their jobs, the attempt to achieve job satisfaction and staff commitment should be a clear target. The planning and implementation of HR practices can contribute initially to the achievement and then to the improvement of the levels of job satisfaction and staff commitment, as indicated by various research (Karatepe, Avci, Karatepe and Canozer, 2003; Chow, Haddad and Singh, 2007; Ubeda-Garcia, Marco-Lajara, Garcia-Lillo and Sabater-Sempere, 2013, Meng and Han, 2014).

LITERATURE REVIEW

HRM RELATION TO JOB SATISFACTION AND STAFF COMMITMENT

HRM concerns policies, practices, and systems that affect the behavior, attitudes and efficiency of employees (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart and Wright, 2003), thus creating a competitive advantage for the enterprise that cannot be easily copied (Huselid, 1995; Frits and Mcduffie, 1996; Guest, Michie, Conway and Sheeman, 2003). In the hospitality industry, HR practices are investigated both as to their impact on business outcomes (Nankervis, 1993; Alleyne, Doherty and Greenidge, 2006; Cho, Woods, Jang and Erdem, 2006; Chand and Katou, 2007; Stavrinoudis and Floras, 2012; Tavitiyaman, Zhang and Qu, 2012) and as to their HR outcomes (Hoque, 2000; Alleyne et al., 2006; Ahmad, Solnet and Scott, 2010). Having realized the importance of HRM (Huselid, 1995) in the shaping of the levels of job satisfaction and staff commitment, it was rendered necessary to investigate the role of HRM in the hospitality industry as well (Haynes and Fryer, 2000; McGunnigle and Jameson, 2000; Fisher, McPhail and Menghetti, 2010; Gallardo, Sanchez-Canizares, Lopez-Guzman, and Jesus, 2010).

The HR practices that are related to empowerment are the ones that have a direct positive impact on job satisfaction (Fock, Chiang, Au and Hui, 2011; Kazlauskaite, Buciuniene and Turauskas, 2012; Stavrinoudis and Simos, 2016) and enhance staff commitment (Lee, Nam, Park and Lee 2006; Kazlauskaite et al., 2012). Some other research has revealed that job satisfaction is directly linked to the implementation of learning and training programs, either as an individual HR practice (Costen and Salazar, 2011) or combined with other practices (Kelliher and Riley, 2002). Training programs have a positive affect on staff commitment as well; such an affect can vary between slightly positive (Hughes, 2002) and strongly positive (McGunnigle and Jameson, 2000). At the same time, promotion practices, performance evaluation systems, rewarding practices and the use of suitable communication channels (Hughes, 2002) contribute to the enhancement of job satisfaction and staff commitment. It should be noted here, however, that different HR practices should be implemented for executives and employees (Ahmad et al., 2010). Based on the international scientific literature, the following hypotheses can be formed:

H1: Job satisfaction is directly and positively related to a full implementation of HR practices.
H2: Staff commitment is directly and positively related to a full implementation of HR practices.

THE ROLE OF BUSINESS STRATEGY

Still, the effectiveness of HR practices and their role in improving business performance and HR performance is directly related to the business strategy and the means for its implementation. In terms of this we have two major approaches: i) The contingency theory (Porter, 1980; Schuler and Jackson, 1987, 1999; Chandrakumara, 2007; Wang and Syu, 2008) which refers to HRM and business strategy adaptation; and ii) The best practice theory (Huselid, 1995; Delery and Doty, 1996; Pfeffer, 1998; Tzafrir, 2006) that is based on the best set of HR practices, regardless of business strategy. Even so, irrespective of which of the above models said relation concerns, the differences at the levels of HR performance may be attributed to the implementation of different business strategies.

Besides, the latter are examined as to their importance in terms of financial outcome (Slater and Olson, 2000; Liao, 2005; Parnell, Lester, Long and Koseoglu, 2012), behavioral performance (Tavitiyaman, Qub and Zhang, 2011; Tavitiyaman et al., 2012) and job satisfaction (Garrigos-Simon, Palacios-Marques and Narangajavana, 2005). The research conducted by Garrigos-Simon et al., (2005) in Spanish hotels indicated a strong correlation between business strategy and job satisfaction. The present research examines the correlation of business strategy to job satisfaction and staff commitment as a direct outcome of the implementation of HR practices in terms of the best practice theory (Huselid, 1995; Delery and Doty, 1996; Pfeffer, 1998). It aims at pinpointing the strategic group of hotels that has implemented appropriate HR practices to a greater extent. Thus the following hypotheses were examined:

H3: The levels of job satisfaction are different between hotels implementing different business strategies.
H4: The levels of staff commitment are different between hotels implementing different business strategies.

CORRELATION BETWEEN JOB SATISFACTION AND STAFF COMMITMENT

In an attempt to identify those HR practices that contribute to improving job satisfaction and staff commitment the relation – correlation between them was also studied. Using a sample of employees of various hotel chains, Silva (2006) started by identifying the factors leading to achieving job satisfaction and staff commitment to reach the conclusion that satisfied employees are also committed and vice versa. A recent research in the hospitality industry (Santa Cruz, Lopez-Guzman and Sanchez-Canizares, 2014), but also some previous ones (Smith, Gregory and Cannon, 1996; Gunlu, Aksarayli and Percin, 2010; Yang, 2010; Ineson and Berechet, 2011), have revealed a direct positive impact of job satisfaction on staff commitment. Bai, Brewer, Sammons and Swerdlow (2006) have suggested focusing on achieving staff commitment by means of adapted policies. Consequently, job satisfaction, that can be achieved through a series of actions from recognizing the efforts of the staff to supporting staff initiatives and providing new opportunities, leads to staff commitment. Besides, job satisfaction is normally achieved prior to staff commitment, as staff commitment is a long-term process (Feinstein and Vondrasek, 2001). At the same time, the more job satisfaction increases, the more it improves staff commitment (Firth, Mellor, Moore and Loquet, 2004). The aforementioned research led to the fifth hypothesis:

H5: Achieving job satisfaction has a direct positive impact on staff commitment

THE IMPACT ON BUSINESS PERFORMANCE

But how does a hotel benefit from having satisfied and committed employees? The increased levels of staff commitment, that are the result of the implementation of certain HR practices, strengthen the loyalty and trust towards the corporation, boost self–esteem and dignity at the workplace and enhance business performance in general (Beer, Spector, Lawrence, Mills, and Walton, 1984). In terms of business performance, however, Maxwell and Steel (2003) have suggested that the above benefits remain hypothetical and not at all convincing. As regards the quality of the hotel product, the above findings are also confirmed by the findings of another research (Bai et al., 2006). On the other hand, research conducted by the British Hotel and Catering Training Company (HCTC) in a sample of hotels located in six different areas in the United Kingdom has revealed that job satisfaction is considered by hotel executives the third most important factor among 16 different factors that could possibly have a positive impact on productivity indices.

A recent research in the Spanish hospitality market has revealed a positive correlation between job satisfaction and improvement of the quality of services as well as customer satisfaction (Santa Cruz et al., 2014). Even some factors that are considered highly important in the hospitality industry, such as smiling at customers and giving them a warm welcome, seem to be affected by the levels of job satisfaction of the employees (Gu and Siu, 2009). Some further benefits include productivity increase of older employees (Iun and Huang, 2006), smooth succession in family-run hotels (Peters, Raich, Mark and Pichler, 2012) as well as reduction of employee turnover (Kazlausakaite, Buciuniene and Turauskas, 2006). The outcomes of job satisfaction and staff commitment were also examined by means of using variables for the measuring of organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) (Iun and Huang, 2006; Fisher et al., 2010) and variables of financial performance, such as profits, revenues per occupied room and customer satisfaction (Fisher et al., 2010). The factors for measuring business performance by means of achieving job satisfaction and staff commitment have given rise to the phrasing of the last hypothesis under examination:

H6: The achievement of job satisfaction and staff commitment is directly and positively related *to business outcomes*.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH GOALS

The objective of this research is to identify and categorize within a standard framework all parameters of business strategy and HRM that affect the levels of job satisfaction and staff commitment in the hospitality industry. At a second level, the internal relation among said parameters is examined and the direct positive relations on business performance are identified. In order to fulfill the main research objective, the following goals were set:

- identifying the positive and direct impact of HRM practices on the levels of job satisfaction and staff commitment in the hospitality industry;
- evaluating business strategy to identify to what extent HRM practices have actually been implemented and what positive impact they had on job satisfaction and staff commitment;
- examining the dependence of the levels of job satisfaction and staff commitment on the business strategy;
- examining the relation between job satisfaction and staff commitment;
- studying the correlation between business performance and levels of job satisfaction and staff commitment.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

In the present research six research hypotheses were investigated, as these are analyzed in the literature review.

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

Based on Hoque's (1999) research in the field of HRM in the tertiary and hospitality sector, but also on a less recent (2010) research by the authors of the present paper, the questionnaire is divided into five sections, each of them designed to fulfill specific purposes of the survey. The two first sections include the dependent variables which were used to measure staff commitment and job satisfaction. A total of twelve questions of a five-point Likert scale were used for the calculation of the performance results. The third section is comprised of a set of HRM practices. The type of questions used is a three-point Likert scale. The fourth section of the questionnaire is comprised of a single multiple choice question which concerns the business strategy of the hotels. Based on Hoque's (1999) methodology, Schuler's and Jackson's (1987) typologies were used to present the hotels' strategic choices. The characteristics of the hotels that have participated in the survey are presented in the fifth and final section of the questionnaire.

SAMPLE DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION

According to the Hellenic Chamber of Hotels, during the period of data collection (January-March 2014), the city of Thessaloniki numbered 64 hotels of all classifications. The questionnaires were filled in by business executives of 46 firms (which correspond to a satisfactory percentage, i.e. 72%, sufficient to reach safe and correct results) who had also responded to a previous survey of the researchers in 2010. The researchers used the same questionnaire as the primary purpose of the survey was to record to what extent the hotels of Thessaloniki have changed – adapted their strategy over the past four years of economic recession as well as to make comparisons. Yet, the collected results indicated no substantial differences in terms of business strategies and for that reason the analysis focused more on specific elements of this research. The questionnaires were filled in by HRM Directors in the presence of one of the researchers and in the case where the business had no such position in the organizational chart, they were filled in by Hotel Managers. Table 1 shows the participating hotels ordered by hotel classification.

Table 1: Participants' percentage by hotel classification

Star Rating	Population	Participants No	Participants %
5*	10	9	90.0%
4*	11	8	72.7%
3*	21	18	85.7%
2*	13	6	46.1%
1*	9	5	55.5%

DATA ANALYSIS

The Statistical Package SPSS was used to process the findings and draw conclusions. Pearson chi square test was used to examine the existence of positive correlations between independent and dependent variables. Each pair of variables was individually checked as to its independence based on a series of predetermined requirements. The presentation and analysis of the results of the survey is divided into five sections.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

CORRELATIONS: HRM PRACTICES, JOB SATISFACTIO, STAFF COMMITMENT

Within the framework of this research, 20 HRM practices were examined as to their impact on the levels of job satisfaction and staff commitment. The chi square test (table 2) indicated that job satisfaction is positively and directly related to eight HRM practices, whereas staff commitment is related to five. The tests were conducted with a confidence interval of 99% with sig.>0.05 for the independence of the variables. More specifically it was shown that: "harmonized terms and conditions at work"; "single status for staff evaluation, remuneration, reward and promotion"; "communicating firm's values and policies to new staff"; "team work"; and "staff involvement in setting performance targets for outlets" have a direct positive impact on staff commitment. Job satisfaction is directly and positively related to: "formal reward of staff whose productivity meets the firm's goals"; "staff information on hotel's performance"; "staff involvement in setting performance targets for outlets"; "deliberate design of jobs to make full use of staff capabilities and talents"; "deliberate development of a learning organization"; "staff involvement in setting performance targets for outlets"; "team work"; and "communicating firm's values and policies to new staff". It should be noted that the last three HRM practices promote directly and positively the improvement of job satisfaction and that of staff commitment. Their positive impact on both controlled variables makes it even more important for hotels to adopt them. Interpreting the overall results of the chi square tests, given that we have 8/20 positive correlations between HRM practices and job satisfaction as well as 5/20 positive correlations between HRM practices and staff commitment, we accept H1 and with a slight reservation also H2 within a framework of HRM practices with a reduced number of variables, as not all tests resulted to a sig.<0.05 to support it.

Table 2: HRM practices – Job satisfaction and Staff commitment

HRM Practices	Job Satisfaction (X2 significance)	Staff Commitment (X2 significance)
Harmonized terms and conditions	0.057	0.001
Single status for all staff	0.682	0.006
Specific policy of internal promotions	0.08	0.675
Trainability as a major selection criteria	0.774	0.911
Deliberate use of realistic job previews during recruitment and selection	0.865	0.334
Communicating firm's values and policies to new staff	0.012	0.021
Deliberate development of a learning organization	0.001	0.066
Formal staff training at least once a year	0.099	0.556
Flexible job descriptions	0.895	0.868
Deliberate design of jobs to make full use of staff capabilities and talents	0.015	0.127
Work is based and organized on team working	0.015	0.008

Staff involvement in setting performance targets for outlets	0.002	0.004
Quality management strategy	0.126	0.581
Staff responsible for the service quality outcome	0.251	0.226
Staff participates in quality circles for quality enhancement	0.002	0.131
Attitude surveys	0.5	0.685
Team briefing in regular occasions	0.176	0.655
Staff is informed on hotel's performance	0.006	0.135
A merit element in pay for all staff	0.251	0.445
Formal reward of staff whose productivity meets the firm's goals	0.049	0.526

IMPLEMENTATION OF HRM PRACTICES AND BUSINESS STRATEGY

The typology of Schuler and Jackson (1987) was used for the strategic classification of hotels, i.e. the following three business strategies: quality enhancers, cost reducers, others, whereas Hoque's (1999) methodology was used to determine the classification factors. According to their answers in the survey, the hotels were classified as follows: cost reducers (28.26%), quality enhancers (41.31%) and others (30.43%). Table 3 illustrates the implementation percentage -classified by business strategy- of those HRM practices that are directly and positively related to job satisfaction, staff commitment or both.

Table 3: HRM practices – Business strategy

HRM Practices		**Business Strategy**				
		Cost reducers	**Quality enhancers**	**Others**	**Total**	**Stdevp (%)**
Harmonized terms and conditions	Yes	46.2%	73.7%	71.4%	65.2%	12.5
	Partially	53.8%	26.3%	21.4%	32.6%	14.3
	No	0.0%	0.0%	7.1%	2.2%	3.3
Single status for all staff	Yes	76.9%	84.2%	85,7%	82.6%	3.8
	Partially	23.1%	15.8%	14,3%	17.4%	3.8
	No	0	0	0	0	0.0

Deliberate development of a learning organization	Yes	23.1%	31.6%	28.6%	28.3%	7.1
	Partially	53.8%	47.4%	50.0%	50.0%	2.6
	No	23.1%	21.1%	21.4%	21.7%	0.9
Deliberate design of jobs to make full use of staff capabilities and talents	Yes	46.2%	68.4%	42.9%	54.3%	19.2
	Partially	46.2%	26.3%	50.0%	39.1%	10.4
	No	7.7%	5.3%	7.1%	6.5%	1.0
Work is based and organized on team working	Yes	61.5%	63.2%	78.6%	67.4%	7.7
	Partially	38.5%	36.8%	14.3%	30.4%	11.0
	No	0.0%	0.0%	7.1%	2.2%	3.3
Staff involvement in setting performance targets for outlets	Yes	23.1%	31.6%	42.9%	32.6%	8.1
	Partially	23.1%	36.8%	28.6%	30.4%	5.6
	No	53.8%	31.6%	28.6%	37.0%	11.2
Staff participates in quality circles for quality enhancement	Yes	15.4%	36.8%	21.4%	26.1%	9.0
	Partially	30.8%	36.8%	35.7%	34.8%	2.6
	No	53.8%	26.3%	42.9%	39.1%	11.3
Staff is informed on hotel's performance	Yes	38.5%	42.1%	35.7%	39.1%	2.6
	Partially	30.8%	26.3%	50.0%	34.8%	10.3
	No	30.8%	31.6%	14.3%	26.1%	8.0
Formal reward of staff whose productivity meets the firm's goals	Yes	38.5%	52.6%	14.3%	37.0%	16.0
	Partially	23.1%	21.1%	50.0%	30.4%	13.1
	No	38.5%	26.3%	35.7%	32.6%	5.2
Communicating firm's values and policies to new staff	Yes	23.1%	63.2%	28.6%	41.3%	17.7
	Partially	38.5%	15.8%	28.6%	26.1%	9.3
	No	38.5%	21.1%	42.9%	32.6%	9.4
Total		**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	

The results were analyzed according to the descriptive measures of maximum and minimum value, mean value as well as standard deviation. The hotels of the aforementioned three strategic groups have fully implemented HRM practices in a mean percentage of 47.4%. Half of the hotels have adopted and implement these HRM practices that are directly and positively related to job satisfaction and/or staff commitment. The highest degree of HRM practices implementation can be observed among quality enhancers, above the average of all three strategies, and the lowest among cost reducers, with the gap between them being quite considerable in terms of statistics. A considerable percentage (32.6%) of the hotels chose the "partially" option and 17.5% answered "no". Cost reducers recorded the highest percentages of negative replies and had the least positive replies.

The analysis so far has indicated that the maximum and minimum value and primarily the mean of the percentages of the hotels and their attitude towards HRM practices, reveals small differences between hotels of different business strategies; the most important of them being the apparent lack of HRM practices implementation from the side of cost reducers (mean=39.2%) compared to "others" (mean=45.0%) and mainly compared to quality enhancers who have the highest mean value (mean=54.7%). Besides, the standard deviation in HRM practices that arises from the positive replies of hotels (Table 3) indicated high deviations in the variables "Formal system for the communication of firm's values and policies to new staff", "Harmonized terms and conditions between executives and staff", "Formal reward of staff whose productivity meets the firm's goals, at least once a year" and "Deliberate design of jobs to make full use of staff capabilities and talents". As regards the last two HRM practices, the firms lacking more in their full implementation are "others". The percentages for each one of the three strategic groups are as follows: others: 14.3%< cost reducers: 38.5%< quality enhancers: 52.6%; and others: 42.9%< cost reducers: 46.2%< quality enhancers: 68.4% respectively.

Nevertheless, according to the findings, "others" is the strategic group that predominates over "quality enhancers" in the full implementation of HRM practices in the following three variables: "Work of the majority of the staff is based and organized on team working"; "Single status for staff evaluation, remuneration, reward and promotion"; and "Staff involvement in setting both individual and collective performance targets for outlets". The fluctuations between high and low percentages in the choices made by "others" are also evident in the high percentage of standard deviation in business strategy (stdevp=23.7), which is definitely higher than the ones of the two other groups. Quality enhancers appeared to be the most coherent as regards HRM practices, a fact that can be interpreted as a strategic choice of said group.

BUSINESS STRATEGY AND JOB SATISFACTION – STAFF COMMITMENT

A chi square test was used to study the correlation between business strategies and i) job satisfaction (Table 4); and ii) staff commitment (Table 5). As regards job satisfaction, in cost reducers the findings indicate a low or moderate satisfaction reaching 76.9%, with just a small percentage, i.e. 23.1%, claiming to be satisfied or very satisfied. A high percentage (68.4%) of the quality enhancers claims that their employees are satisfied; whereas the remaining 31.6% claim that the levels of satisfaction are moderate to low. The strategic group "others" has a rather high percentage of hotels with satisfied employees (71.4%).

Table 4: Business strategy and Job satisfaction

Cross Tabulation					
			Level of job satisfaction		Total
			Low or moderate	High or very high	
Business strategy	Cost reducers	Count	76.9%	23.1%	13
		Expected Count	5.65	7.35	13
	Quality enhancers	Count	31.6%	68.4%	19
		Expected Count	8.26	10.74	19
	Others	Count	28.6%	71.4%	14
		Expected Count	6.09	7.91	14
Total		Count	20	26	46
		Expected Count	20	26	46
Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)		
Pearson Chi-Square	8.28	2	0.016		
Likelihood Ratio	8.49	2	0.014		
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.11	1	0.013		
N of Valid Cases	46				

As regards the levels of staff commitment, the situation is quite similar. Cost reducers comprise the majority of firms without loyal employees (76.9%), whereas an interchange was noted between "quality enhancers" and "others" in high and very high staff commitment. The above percentages are 79% and 64.3% respectively.

Table 5: Business strategy and Staff commitment

Cross Tabulation					
			The commitment of staff		**Total**
			Low or moderate	**High or very high**	
Business strategy	**Cost reducers**	**Count**	76.9%	23.1%	13
		Expected Count	5.37	7.63	13
	Quality enhancers	**Count**	21.0%	79.0	19
		Expected Count	7.85	11.15	19
	Others	**Count**	35.7%	64.3%	14
		Expected Count	5.78	8.22	14
Total		**Count**	19	27	46
		Expected Count	19	27	46
Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	**Df**	**Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)**		
Pearson Chi-Square	10.20	2	0.01		
Likelihood Ratio	10.52	2	0.01		
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.38	1	0.04		
N of Valid Cases	46				

According to the above results, there is a direct correlation between business strategy and job satisfaction (sig.=0.016) but also between business strategy and staff commitment (sig.=0.010). Consequently, H3 and H4 can be accepted, since they assumed and/or expected different levels of job satisfaction and staff commitment in hotels with different business strategies. It was confirmed that the use of particular HRM practices (positive correlation) has led to high levels of job satisfaction and staff commitment among quality enhancers (68.4% and 79.0% respectively) and quite low ones, even lower than expected, among cost reducers (23.1% in both variables). An impressive finding was that the strategic group "others" had high levels of job satisfaction and staff commitment (71.4% and 64.3% respectively). Especially as regards to job satisfaction, "others" had the highest percentage among the three groups of business strategies.

CORRELATION BETWEEN JOB SATISFACTION AND STAFF COMMITMENT

According to the results of the Pearson chi square test, compared to job satisfaction, staff com mitment lags in the number of HRM practices that affect it directly and positively. The test of-correlation between job satisfaction and staff commitment aims at shaping the final framework of those HRM practices that can contribute to the improvement of both of the above parameters. The value of asymp.sig.=0.00<0.05 indicates a very strong correlation between job satisfaction and staff commitment. Consequently, H5 stating that staff commitment depends on job satisfaction is to be accepted. The aforementioned finding increases the importance of job satisfaction, as job satisfaction can be included in the factors that improve the levels of staff commitment.

In order to increase job satisfaction and staff commitment, it might not be necessary to address each of the above factors separately, according to the results of the HRM practice, but to cope with them at the same time by inducing a positive effect on both of them. Hotels can focus more on HRM practices that improve the levels of job satisfaction and by means of said practices they can also achieve staff commitment. To do this (according to the sig values obtained), hotels need to emphasize more in developing and implementing measures, such as: “formal reward of staff whose productivity meets the firm’s goals”; “staff information on hotel’s performance”; “staff involvement in setting performance targets for outlets”; “deliberate design of jobs to make full use of staff capabilities and talents”; “deliberate development of a learning organization”; “team work”; and “communicating firm’s values and policies to new staff”.

The strong dependence of staff commitment on job satisfaction might be a major factor for the interpretation of the percentages recorded among hotels per business strategy. The levels of job satisfaction and staff commitment among hotels with a similar business strategy are not very different from one another. It was actually expected that job satisfaction would be much higher than staff commitment, as it was ascertained that the most HRM practices implemented by hotels had a positive correlation.

Table 6: Enhancing staff commitment through job satisfaction

Cross Tabulation

			The commitment of staff		Total
			Low or moderate	High or very high	
The level of job satisfaction	Low or moderate	Count	15	5	20
		Expected Count	8.26	11.74	20
	High	Count	4.00	22.00	26
		Expected Count	10.74	15.26	26
Total		Count	19	27	46
		Expected Count	19	27	46

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	16.57	1	0.00		
Continuity Correction(a)	14.20	1	0.00		
Likelihood Ratio	17.55	1	0.00		
Fisher's Exact Test				0.00	0.00
Linear-by-Linear Association	16.21	1	0.00		
N of Valid Cases	46				

CORRELATION OF JOB SATISFACTION AND STAFF COMMITMENT TO BUSINESS PERFORMANCE

The achievement of job satisfaction and staff commitment by creating an appropriate framework of HRM practices is examined as to its relation to business strategies of hotels. The following variables were chosen among the available ones: "labor productivity"; "service quality"; "financial performance" and "service innovation". The aforementioned factors are those measures that can better explain the business performance outcome as a result of the work of the entire workforce of all departments rather than as the work of some of them. That is why the factors "development of sales" and "market share" were excluded, as the results of said factors are based mainly on the performance of operative departments, such as the sales and reservations department.

Table 7: Job satisfaction– Staff commitment and Business performance

Business performance	Job satisfaction asymp.sig	Staff commitment asymp.sig
Labor productivity	0.592	1.000
Service quality	0.147	0.081
Financial performance	0.090	1.000
Service innovation	0.336	0.370

The results illustrated in table 7 and the asymp. significance values of >0.05 did not reveal any direct and positive impact on business performance. The only indications of some levels of dependence are the possible correlations between financial performance and job satisfaction as well as between service quality and staff commitment. Still, given that the above does not result to a sig.<0.05 but only to a sig<0.1, said dependencies might be random and cannot be accepted. Consequently, H6 referring to the dependence of the results of business performance on job satisfaction and staff commitment is to be rejected.

DISCUSSION AND MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

It was attempted by means of primary research to i) examine the levels of job satisfaction and staff commitment of employees working in the hospitality industry; ii) highlight the management and strategy factors affecting the aforementioned levels; and iii) to identify the impact of such correlations on business performance outcomes. The findings of the research revealed that there is a series of positive and direct correlations that affect job satisfaction and staff commitment. Therefore, measuring and affecting job satisfaction and staff commitment of the hospitality industry employees is a complicated procedure that necessitates recognising and understanding a number of variables regarding HRM and the company's general strategy. However, it is a necessary precondition for their effective and competitive operation.

Moreover, there are some interesting strategic differences related to the implementation of HRM practices and their impact on job satisfaction and staff commitment. Nevertheless, the improvement of business performance outcomes does not seem to be related to job satisfaction and staff commitment; an interesting fact that contradicts the findings of other research in this field (Maxwell and Steel, 2003; Bai et al., 2006; Iun and Huang, 2006; Santa Cruz et al., 2014).

In particular, the suggested framework of HRM practices that should be implemented in order to increase the levels of job satisfaction and staff commitment needs to aim at the following: harmonized terms and conditions at work with a single status for staff evaluation and promotion, skill identification, promotion of team work, staff information on issues related to the firm, outstanding performance reward, quality teams and constant training. These parameters must receive full attention, monitoring and studying of the hospitality firm's management. On another level, providing training to hotel employees might increase productivity and service quality, but it does not seem to have any major impact on job satisfaction or staff commitment.

Furthermore, the policy of internal promotions provides further motivation to ambitious employees to increase their productivity and pursue personal career goals. Still, the above policy does not seem to affect either job satisfaction or staff commitment. The HRM practices that present a positive correlation concern mainly business extraversion, team work and meritocracy. An interesting finding of this research is that a great number of factors regarding the increase of job satisfaction and staff commitment of hotel employees is related to practices that do not entail a great cost for the enterprise. Hotels should focus on quality parameters that their employees are interested in and treat and manage their HR in a way allowing employees to become aware of their important role as a primary production resource and not merely as a production coefficient.

Consequently, it is necessary that hotels invest in establishing trust-based relationships with their employees. Such relationships can be established when a firm operates as an organization of constant learning and training of the staff on specific issues related to the operation, performance, values and corporate philosophy. To this end, it is useful to exploit and develop any special skills, innovative ideas and know-how of individual employees, provided though that said exploit and development take place within working groups. Employees must be trained to learn, participating in procedures of constant enhancement of their knowledge and skills. No matter if this is about the qualitative improvement of a service or the way that this service is provided, the sense of employees that they are part of a working group is a component of an HRM practice directly and positively related to job satisfaction and staff commitment. Equally important factors, that need to be taken into account by hotel management, are meritocracy and staff reward. Job satisfaction and staff commitment increase when employees feel that the management applies a fair treatment principle among all employees and their efforts are recognized by the firm.

Consequently, among other things the aforementioned practices are also suitable for promoting job satisfaction and staff commitment. It is suggested that hotel management should first focus on efforts to improve job satisfaction (Smith et al., 1996; Gunlu et al., 2010; Yang, 2010; Ineson and Berechet, 2011) which will then become a strong asset for achieving staff commitment. By acting this way, cost reducers could reverse the current situation of having very low percentages of committed staff.

Quality enhancers are the predominant strategic group and have the highest mean in the implementation of HRM practices that are directly related to the levels of job satisfaction and staff commitment. They have the highest percentage of high or very high staff commitment (79%) as well as the second highest percentage of job satisfaction (68.4%) after the group "others" that leads with 71.4%. Cost reducers as well as hotels applying an equivocal strategy have the lowest percentages of HRM practices adopted. Given the direct and positive impact of HRM practices on job satisfaction and/or staff commitment it was actually expected that there would be differences in the levels of satisfaction and commitment once these are examined according to a classification based on strategy applied, and this was actually verified. It was also verified that the strategic group that adopts HRM practices to the greatest extent has also the highest percentages of job satisfaction and staff commitment. The group with the smallest implementation has respective lower percentages. In general, cost reducers seem to employ staff with a low job satisfaction and a low commitment. Consequently, if hotel managements focus on appropriate HRM practices this might lead to more satisfied and committed employees. However, in order to achieve this, every hospitality firm, based on its category and implemented strategy, must adopt a different mixture of HRM practices.

It would be very risky to attribute the above low levels to a smaller implementation of HRM practices, compared to the other two strategic groups, although the research revealed that HRM practices do improve such levels. Still, the differences are not so eminent to allow attributing the above results to unsuccessful HRM choices. It is possible to attribute the above very low levels of job satisfaction and staff commitment to various management policies and choices related to particular business strategies of hotels. Consequently, it is necessary to conduct further research as to their importance. Still, in terms of HRM, various tools can be recommended to improve job satisfaction and staff commitment. A full implementation of said tools could counterbalance -to the extent that this is plausible- any effects of a business strategy.

The present research has identified the existence of hotels that employ staff with low job satisfaction and staff commitment and suggests ways to improve them by implementing particular HRM practices. It supports that there is a positive correlation between job satisfaction and staff commitment and highlights the role of business strategy by means of identifying the differences in the levels of job satisfaction and staff commitment as well as in the implementation of HRM practices. However, given that the research was conducted in a particular tourist destination, its findings and conclusions may not apply in other locations within the country or abroad.

FURTHER RESEARCH

The present research did not prove the significance of job satisfaction and staff commitment in terms of business performance. It is quite possible that more specialized variables are needed to measure hotel business performance and this might be the subject of a future research. It would be interesting to conduct parallel researches in resorts and urban hotels, reach conclusions and make comparisons. It would be particularly interesting to conduct a research focusing more on the level of applied business strategies and their categories and would attempt to study and codify the particular parameters or sets of parameters that affect, according to the strategical category, HR satisfaction and job commitment. In this way, tourism businesses will have a practical tool of enhancing job satisfaction and staff commitment of their personnel.

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Participation of gym activities in the Kumasi Metropolis of Ghana, Africa

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ABSTRACT

Leisure activities in tourism appear to have increased substantially over the last few decades. Participation in gym activity is one of the growing areas in leisure activities. Leisure activities to some extent, provide challenging moments, as well as pleasure and satisfaction for individuals. However, literature on gym is relatively porous in terms of participant motivation, constraints associated with their participation, coaching qualities of gym instructors, and the frequency of visits to the gyms in the sphere of Ghana's tourism industry. This study examines motivation and constraints for gym participation in the Ashanti region of Ghana. A quantitative method was used in collecting data from 87 respondents who engaged in gym activities in hotels and public gyms in the Kumasi Metropolis of Ghana. Respondents were 18 years and above at the time of the data collection. A convenience sampling technique was used to select 10 recognized gyms within the study area and nine respondents were selected through convenience sampling technique from each site to be part of the study. Findings from the study show that gyms are usually used by males who are single with University level of education and consider themselves as falling within the average income category. These participants visit the gym at least once every week and are motivated by their personal appearance, health and body shape. Some of their constraints, however, include transportation, time and encouragement from gym managers.

Keywords: Constraints, Gym, Leisure, Motivation, Participation, Tourism

INTRODUCTION

Leisure activities in tourism appear to have increased substantially over the last few decades. Expectations are that there will be growth in the participation of leisure activities. The growth in healthy food, gyms and the investment in leisure facilities prove that consumers are looking for more than relaxation during a break or holiday (Lynch, 2002). One factor that is thought to contribute to an individual's leisure activity levels is his or her motivation to exercise (Lam, 2009). There is the need for a disciplined behaviour and a considerable level of motivation to enable one to participate in active leisure activity. The concept of leisure has been explained in various ways with the focus mainly on free time available to an individual. Conceptually, leisure refers to a non-work, non-obligatory and non-constrained period of time available to an individual. Leisure is usually associated with recreation which deals with activities performed within the leisure period.

Many tourists who travel to destinations participate in a number of leisure activities including taking the time to visit a gym once or a number of times in a week for diverse reasons. Other leisure activities that are usually engaged upon by tourists include walking, running, playing games, dancing and many others. These activities help improve the lifestyle of individuals who participate in leisure activities. Leisure activities to some extent, provide challenging moments, pleasure and satisfaction to individuals. However, discretionary time and money have been barriers to participation for most tourism activities. There could also be other variables that might prevent people from taking part in active recreational leisure activities.

Rapid growth in the gym industry has created concern for lack of qualified individuals in important positions at gyms worldwide (Kapadia, 2006). It has been realized that some gym operators do not properly understand the needs of gym participants seeking diverse healthier lifestyles and motivations (Coach, 2009). There are some constraints associated with coaching qualities of gym instructors. These include visitor motivation, coaching qualities of instructors, and frequency of visits to the gym in the sphere of Ghana's tourism industry. This study examines motivation and constraints for gym participation in the Ashanti region of Ghana.

CONCEPT OF MOTIVATION

Brown et al (1999), classified sources of motivation in physical activities into five broad themes: health and well-being; social support; a sense of doing something useful; avoidance of the negative stereotyping of ageing; and the environment. In addition to this classification, Allender, Cowburn and Foster (2006), also came up with a range of motivations that encourage people (young children, adolescents, adults and the aged) to engage in physical activities. These motivations include; health benefits, enjoyment, sense of achievement, experimentation, weight management, new social networks, medical sanctions, peer or parental support etc. For example, Allender et al (2006) realized that participation in physical activities for young children was more enjoyable when children were not being forced to compete and win, but encouraged to experiment with different activities. The need for physical activity has been emphasized by Cavil et al (2006). However, they placed more emphasis on the health benefits accrued to persons that engaged in physical activity. Some of the health related issues associated with physical activity include reduction in heart disease, stroke, overweight and obesity, Type 2 diabetes, colon and breast cancer and depression. With physical activity, the musculoskeletal health and the psychological well-being of a person can also be improved.

THE CONCEPT OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Physical activity has been described by Caspersen, Powell and Christensen (1985) as any force exerted by skeletal muscles that results in energy expenditure above resting level. Physical activity can vary widely either in intensity or the amount of effort made by an individual. Variation in intensity of physical activity could be based on the type of activity and the capacity of the individual. For example, running is usually of higher intensity than strolling and a young fit person is likely to walk at a given pace more easily than an older less fit person. This means that virtually all types of physical activities are of interest to all categories of people. Sports and exercise on the other hand are seen as specific types of physical activity. Usually, sports involve some form of competition and exercise is usually done to improve fitness and health. Health-enhancing physical activity emphasizes the connection with health by focusing on "any form of physical activity that benefits health and functional capacity without undue harm or risk" (Foster, 2000). Active living is a way of life that integrates physical activity into daily routines. The goal for the general adult population is to accumulate at least half an hour of activity each day (Leadership for Active Living, 2003).This would help individuals to gain some benefits from participating in active recreational activities.

PARTICIPATION IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

According to Stead et al (1997) participation in physical activity is influenced by lifestyle. For those who exercise regularly it is an enduring part of their life. It feeds and strengthens self-image. Also, those that exercise regularly see themselves as active and fit; which gives them motivation to maintain an active exercising behaviour. For those who have gotten out of the habit of doing physical activity, it is hard to get back into it, both mentally and physically. Major life events and deteriorating health curtails basic mobility, not just exercise participation.

Participation in physical activity has a number of benefits that are influenced by a number of factors. The primary motivation for exercising is to gain psychological and emotional rewards. Physical activity helps all categories of people. For the aged, exercise is often related to self-esteem and self-image (feeling good) and physical appearance (looking good). One of the most important perceived rewards is social benefit. This is related to meeting new people, maintaining friendships and generally getting out as opposed to boredom. Opportunities to socialize reduce social isolation and mental stagnation. . There is a preference for all age groups to do activities with people of similar age, ability and outlook (individuals feel more comfortable in a homogenous group). Social contact is a primary motive, both as a prerequisite (no one to go with is a barrier to participation), and as a desired outcome (meeting new friends). In relation to social support, other motives people identified as important for encouraging activity were partners and other family members, service providers, including general practitioners and fitness leaders. Physical activity helps people who are inactive to improve their health status and better their well-being. This can help those people to even become moderately active.

PATTERNS AND FREQUENCY OF GYM PARTICIPATION

As a result of development and technological advancement, there has been a number of changes in the pattern and frequency of participation in gym activities. Participation in vigorous activity each day is recommended for good health. In a survey conducted by Stutts (2002) among Canadian students either biannually or triennially for seven years revealed that physical activity levels were decreasing with increasing chronological age in both men and women. Thus, the involvement in physical activities tend to decrease as one attains more years. What is not clear is the militating factors that lead to these trends.

CONSTRAINTS TO GYM PARTICIPATION

As far as leisure is concerned, a constraint is defined “as a factor that prevents or prohibits an individual from participating and enjoying a leisure activity” (Jackson, 2000). In the realms of tourism and leisure, two major constraints that have affected people in their participation in tourism and leisure are discretionary time and money. However, the constraints of visitors for gym participation could be divided into broad categories consisting of personal, physiological, environmental, practical, social and cultural constraints (Cindy, John & Irene, 2008). Ball, Craqford and Owen (2000) indicated that for both males and females categorised as ‘too fat’, their weight serves as a barrier and they may be too shy or embarrassed to participate in physical activity. It has been asserted by Silliman, Rodas-Fortier and Neyman (2004) that fitness level of an individual is a constraint to participation in gym activities. Poor body image would be the barrier for the female to participate in physical activities like gym activities. Schuler, Roy, Vinci, Philipp and Cohen (2006) indicated that the top barrier to exercise for older women is chronic health problems and pains. Works by Bopp, Lattimore, Wilcox, Laken, McClorin, Swinton, et al. (2007) on the perceived influences on physical activity participation among African Americans revealed that fatigue was a constraint for both men and women who did not participate in physical activity. The major reasons for fatigue in men were due to work schedules and physical exertions while at work. In women it was due to work and family obligations. The younger women and men did not exercise because of lack of knowledge about how to exercise in spite of health concerns. Family and work commitments were the other main reasons for non-participation in physical activity.

Andajani-Sutjahjo *et al*. (2004) mentioned that “not being able to find physical activity facilities that are not expensive is the common barriers to physical activity”. Again it was mentioned that the main barriers reported by young women were related to motivation and time. Silliman *et al*.(2004) assessed the diet and exercise habits and perceived barriers to following a healthy life and found that the most commonly barriers to physical activities are “lack of time”, “lack of motivation” and “lack of willpower”.

Social barriers include family and social support and gender role. Boppet *al*. (2007) pointed out that both the younger men and the younger women would not exercise due to lack of social support. For the same reasons, ethics of care has been framed as a constraint to mothers' leisure (Brown *et al.* , 2001). Gender roles have been identified to affect women's participation in physical activity (Summerfield, 1990). Harrington and Dawson (1995) suggest that women's place within society, women's roles and responsibilities, often limit women's freedom of choice. Furthermore, lack of technical skills, private transportation, and financial resources were also experienced by women more intensely than men.

A number of studies that examined constraints on leisure-time physical activity (LTPA) among people focused on constraints related to their socio-cultural background and marginal position in society. Only a few studies identified barriers that might be related to the environments in which people live and recreate. One can argue, however, that some of the environmental barriers might be unique to particular population or at least might be experienced differently by different people. Their access to recreational facilities might be restricted by communication problems, inter-racial tensions or not feeling welcome in certain environments (Santos and Rozier 2007).

MOTIVATION FOR GYM PARTICIPATION

Active participation in any activity is usually triggered by a host of factors. Frempong et al (2013) posit that the pull and push factors of participation in recreational activities are influenced by a number of confounding variables. These factors could range from personal, to social to political levels and they can affect the participant or the facility in which the activity takes place. In terms of leisure participation, fun is considered as the most important motive followed by enjoyment in the participation of physical activity by men and women (Koivula, 1999). In terms of mood and enjoyment motives, Strelan et al. (2003) found that there is a positive relationship between exercising for enjoyment and satisfaction, body esteem, and self-esteem; consequently there is a moderate negative relationship between the motive of mood/enjoyment and self-objectivity. Ebben & Brudzynski (2008) attest that enjoyment, pleasure, feel good/ better and general health were the common motives.

Social motive is one of the motivations for gym participation. Dann (1977) identified two major needs (push factors): anomie and ego-enhancement. They both transcend from the concept of escape and ego-enhancement. Anomie needs stem from the fact that individuals are living in an anomie society which provokes a need to seek social interaction that is lacking locally; given such a fact, individuals visit gyms away from their local residence to seek satisfaction of such a need. On the other hand, ego-enhancement stems from the need to be recognized. An individual may seek a gym experience as a means to satisfy such needs.

In a research study differentiating motives of men and women for participating in sport and exercise, Kilpatrick, Hebert & Bartholomew (2005) found that the most common motives for exercise were positive health, fitness and health/ management. Furthermore, men had higher levels of motivation than women for challenge, competition, social recognition and strength and endurance. Women on the other hand had higher levels of motivation than men for weight management. In addition, Segar, Spruijt-Metz and Nolen-Hoeksemal (2006) concluded that more women had the motive related to weight loss and/or body shape for physical activity participation. In all these, Anderson (2003) had indicated the number of motives correlating with the physical activity in women. Sit, Kerr, & Wong (2008) found a similar result that indicated that the most important motives factors for physical activity participation were fitness- health, followed by enjoyment-interest and appearance. Especially, in the women who were doing moderate physical activity fewer than five times a week.

An individual's perceptions of their appearance can ultimately affect their motivation to exercise in the gym. Tiggemann and Williamson (2000) and Strelan and Hargreaves (2005) found similar results in their studies, suggesting that there is no significant difference between males and females means for appearance motives. Grossbard et al. (2009) found contradictory results of these two studies. This study refers to the appearance type motive as weight/body concerns, which can be compared with appearance. Weight/body weight is a very specific form of appearance. They find that weight/body weight concerns in females are much higher than in males, yet both are significant (Grossbard et al., 2009). McArthur, Laura, Thomas and Raedeke (2009) found similar results to that of Grossbard et al. (2009) where female's appearance motive is more significant than males.

STUDY AREA

The current study was conducted in Kumasi, Ghana. The city of Kumasi was founded in the 1680s by King Osei Tutu I to serve as the capital of the Asante State. However, it came under the influence of the British rule in 1890. With time, the city began to expand and grow thereby making it second to Accra (the capital city of Ghana) in terms of land area, population size, social life and economic activity. Kumasi has attracted such a large population partly because it is the regional capital, and also as the most commercialized centre in the region. Other reasons include the centrality of Kumasi as a nodal city with major arterial routes linking it to other parts of the country and also the fact that it habours a number of educational institutions.

A high population growth means serious demand implications for leisure activities in the area. This should be accompanied by good and technology oriented infrastructure and service provision. Rapid population growth also means overcrowding and pressure on existing sports and leisure infrastructure and services. When such a large population is anticipated, there is the need for planning for new infrastructure and maintenance of existing ones to prevent them from running down as a result of excessive pressure.

METHODOLOGY

The study made use of quantitative method in collecting data from respondents. The researchers adopted non-probability sampling techniques to select respondents for the study. Convenience sampling technique was first used to select ten (10) gym centres from the study area. There were two categories of gym centres in the study area; general public gyms and gyms in hotels. The general public gyms are centres with gyms facilities which operate on purely commercial basis while gyms in hotels are gyms that are attached to hotels for hotel residents' use and commercial use as well. Nine (9) respondents were conveniently selected from each selected gym centre to be part of the study. The target population consisted of people who engaged in gym activities who were 18 years and above. A total of 100 questionnaire were administered of which 87 were retrieved and were usable for the study. This consisted of males (n=69) and females (n=18). Questionnaire was the main research instrument used for the study. The questionnaire consisted of a number of sections based on the focus of the study. Respondents willingly participated in the study by signing the informed consent form before responding to the questionnaire. SPSS version 19 was used to analyse the data and the results have been presented in the form of tables. Statistical tools employed for the study include descriptive statistics, crosstabulation and correlation analysis.

FINDINGS

From the data, majority of the respondents, (75%) were from hotels with gym units while 25% were from public gyms, all in the Kumasi Metropolis in Ghana. A broad profile of the respondents has been shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents

Variable		Frequency (N=87)	Percentage
Sex			
	Male	69	79.3
	Female	18	20.7
Main occupation			
	Teacher	8	9.2
	Farmer	4	4.6
	Trader	9	10.3
	Students	27	31
	Others	39	44.8
Educational level			
	None	2	2.3
	Primary/JHS	4	4.6
	Secondary	18	20.7
	Vocational/technical	14	16.1
	Polytechnic	11	12.6
	University	35	40.2
	Postgraduate	3	3.4

Age			
	20-29	32	36.8
	30-39	45	51.7
	40-49	10	11.5
Marital status			
	Single & never married	38	43.7
	Married & living with	26	29.9
	partner	14	16.1
	Cohabitating	8	9.2
	Married but living apart	1	1.1
Nationality			
	Ghanaian	79	90.8
	Non Ghanaian	8	9.2
Income level			
	None	8	9.2
	Low	7	8
	Average	48	55.2
	High	24	26.4
Residence in Kumasi			
	Yes	69	79.3
	No	18	20.7

Source: Fieldwork, 2013

The participants were generally part of the younger population with 51.7% of the respondents between the age bracket of 30 - 39 years old and 36.8% between 20 - 29 years old. Majority of the participants had attained tertiary education (43.6%). It was observed that students who took part in gym activities represented 31.0%. The average income earners (55.2%) were the major group that takes part in gym activities in the Metropolis.

FREQUENCY OF GYM PARTICIPATION

Several factors compel people to participate in gym activities. This could be as a result of being intrinsically motivating and satisfying factors, providing immediate gratification or being designed to maximize physical fitness. The regularity of participation, from Gibson, (1998), is usually influenced by factors such as age, gender and income and these differentiate one group from the other. The frequency of gym participation has been presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Frequency of gym participation

Frequency of visit to the gym	Frequency	Percentage
Everyday	6	6.9
4-6 days a week	12	13.8
2 or 3 days a week	21	24.1
Once a week	29	33.3
2-3 times a month	14	16.1
Once a month	5	5.7

Source: Fieldwork, 2013

The result shows that, 6.9% of the total respondents indicated that they visited the gym 'everyday', 13.8% of them visited the gym between'4-6 days a week' while 24.1% of the respondents visited the gym between '2 or 3 days a week'. A third of the respondents (33.3%) reported visiting the gym at least once a week. Out of this number, 82.8 percent are males while 17.2 percent are females. The age range of respondents that visit the gym consistently are those within 30 – 39 years. The ever married category, mostly visit the gym at least once a week (62.1%) and those who visit the gym everyday (6), 83.3 percent are those who have never married.

Table 3: Sex and use of cardiovascular equipment

		Sex		
		Male	Female	Total
Use of cardiovascular equipment	Always	36 (52.9%)	4 (21.1%)	40 (46.0%)
	Usually	15 (22.1%)	7 (36.8%)	22 (25.3%)
	Rarely	14 (20.6%)	5 (26.3%)	19 (21.8%)
	Never	3 (4.4%)	3 (15.8%)	6 (6.9%)
Total		68 (100%)	19 (100%)	87 (100%)

Source: Fieldwork, 2013

The use of equipment at the gym could be one of the reasons people participate in gym activities. Cardiovascular equipment is used to strengthen and work specifically on the heart of the human body. As far as participation of leisure activities are concerned, people are motivated by different things. The result from the survey shows that generally, males use the cardiovascular equipment more than females at gym places in Kumasi (Table 3). Over half of the male respondents use the cardiovascular equipment "always" compared with 21.1 percent of the females who use the equipment "always". Again half of those who use the cardiovascular equipment are within the age bracket of 30 – 39 years and in terms of marital status, those who have never married use the cardiovascular equipment (60.0%) more than those who have ever been married (40.0%).

A correlation analysis to examine the relationship between some of the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents and the use of gyms shows that there is a relationship between some of the background characteristics and participation in gym activities. There is a statistically significant relationship between visits to the gym and the use of cardiovascular equipment at the gym. This is significant at p-value of 0.01 with a correlation value of $r = 0.458$. Though the correlation value is not strong, there is a statistically significant relationship between these variables. On the age of respondents and the use of cardiovascular equipment, there was a weak inverse relationship between these two variables. A correlation of $r = -0.023$ was recorded. As a respondent's age increases, then the use of cardiovascular equipment at the gym decreases. These developments are likely to have negative repercussions on participation in gym activities in the study area.

MOTIVATION FOR GYM PARTICIPATION

As far as gym participation is concerned, the motivational factors constitute the bedrock of gym involvement. These variables could be considered as gym motivators because they constitute what respondents want and need in terms of gym participation in the study area. These variables act as triggers to encourage people to take part in gym activities (see Table 4). Among the variables used to measure motivation of gym participants, six variables came out as having an influence on respondents' participation in gym activities in the area. These variables are healthy appearance, improvement in body shape, physical health, weight and muscle definition, cardiovascular fitness, and enjoyment and happiness from gyms.

Table 4: Motivation for gym participation

		Frequency	Percentage
1.	Healthy appearance	72	9.3
2.	Improvement in body shapes	69	8.9
3.	Maintaining physical health & well being	67	8.6
4.	Keeping weight and muscles	60	7.7
5.	Cardiovascular fitness	58	7.5
6.	Enjoyment and happiness from gyms	52	6.7
7.	Because I feel physically unattractive	49	6.3
8.	Because I find gym activities stimulating	44	5.7
9.	Because I find gym activities rewarding	43	5.5

10.	To get better at my gym participation	40	5.2
11.	Because I like engaging in gym activities	40	5.2
12.	To be with others who are interested in gym	38	4.9
13.	Because I want to meet new people	32	4.1
14.	To improve existing skills and obtain new skills	32	4.1
15.	Because gym managers are interesting and friendly	31	4.0
16.	Because my friends want me to participate	25	3.2
	Total Responses	**776**	**100.0**

Source: Fieldwork, 2013

The top priority motivations for gym participation were healthy appearance and improvement in body shape. This result suggests that participants of gym activities are motivated by outcome-oriented variables. These results are contrary to the findings of Koivula (1999) who found that participants rated fun and enjoyment as the most important motive for participating in gym activity. To address motivations relating to body shapes, the results of this study support Segar, Spruijt-Metz and Nolen-Hoeksemal (2006) result that showed that 44 percent of the respondents were categorized as having motives related to body shape for gym activity participations. The results slightly deviated from Anderson (2003) who found that improving physical appearance, controlling weight and improving cardiovascular and general fitness were the top three motives for participating in gym activity for the subjects. The motivational variables or factors that are needed in the planning processes of gym activities to satisfy participants could also lead to financial gains for gym operators. This implies that there is the need to consider these motivational factors as influential in the participation of gym activities in Kumasi, Ghana.

A correlation analysis was performed for the motivational factors of gym participation and the results are presented in Table 5. The results show that most of the variables are significantly related to the others although the relationships are not strong. For instance, healthy appearance and improvement in body shape (0.293), improvement in body shape and because I feel physically unattractive (0.351), keeping weight and muscles and enjoyment and happiness from gym (0.431), to be with others who are interested in gym and because I want to meet new people (0.482) are correlated. These motivational factors that are statistically significantly related to each other. This implies that an improvement on one of the variables would likely bring a change in the other variable it is statistically correlated with.

Table 5: Correlation analysis of motivational factors for gym participation

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
2	0.293*	1														
3	0.257*	0.193	1													
4	0.235*	0.329*	0.281*	1												
5	0.258*	0.000	0.309*	0.204	1											
6	0.224*	0.306*	0.197	0.431*	0.237*	1										
7	0.334*	0.351*	0.235*	0.104	0.066	0.327*	1									
8	0.218*	0.176	0.389*	0.163	0.325*	0.336*	0.196	1								
9	0.269*	0.164	0.158	0.281*	0.260*	0.348*	0.268*	0.196	1							
10	0.177	0.300*	0.120	0.416*	0.065	0.338*	0.208	0.405*	0.241*	1						
11	-0.006	0.243*	0.120	0.193	0.016	0.159*	0.254*	0.220*	0.241*	0.306*	1					
12	0.218*	0.164	0.206	0.433*	0.131	0.347*	0.215*	0.268*	0.196	0.350*	0.211	1				
13	0.159	0.095	0.190	0.307*	0.236*	0.335*	0.191	0.277	0.104	0.301*	0.157	0.482*	1			
14	0.159	0.095	0.020	0.215*	0.236*	0.381*	0.335*	0.134	0.247*	0.349*	0.109	0.338*	0.209	1		
15	0.085	0.025	0.121	0.062	0.221*	0.132	0.075	-0.033	0.177	0.084	0.036	0.119	0.080	0.279*	1	
16	0.021	0.011	-0.076	0.016	0.072	0.116	-0.004	0.221*	0.033	0.128	-0.076	0.107	0.095	0.148	-0.048	1

- Variable names are the same as in Table 4.
- * Correlation is significant at 0.005

CONSTRAINTS TO GYM PARTICIPATION

Leisure activities are affected by both motivational and constraint variables. Participants therefore go through a number of stages before finally deciding to take part in gym activities. Apart from the motivational variables which serve as pull or push factors in gym participation, constraint variables always deter prospective participants from engaging in gym participation. Among the variables that were used to examine constraints to participants of gym activities in the study area, five variables came out as the most influential constraints. These constraints include lack of encouragement from gym operators, transportation to the gym area, inadequate time for gym activities, gym equipment and facilities and other work schedules. These factors prevent people from taking part in gym activities in the study area. This has been shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Constraints to gym participation

Factor	Frequency	Percentage
Transportation problems to the gym	58	8.0
Lack of encouragement from gym managers	58	8.0
Lack of time for gym activities	53	7.3
Lack of gym equipment/facilities	53	7.3
Due to official work schedule	52	7.2
Need for doing other things or work in other spare time	52	7.2
Family responsibilities	41	5.6
Fatigue after gym participation	40	5.5
Too busy with house chores	39	5.4
Lack of encouragement from spouse/partner	36	5.0
Lack of necessary skills in gym participation	35	4.8
Financial costs in gym participation	35	4.8
Too much stress at gym	33	4.5
Vagaries of weather	27	3.7
Lack of knowledge on which gym activities operate	26	3.6
Lack of encouragement from colleagues/friends	24	3.3
Low motivation for gym	24	3.3
Lack of partners for gym participation	20	2.8
Lack of energy for gym participation	20	2.8
Problems of family expenditure	19	2.6
Lack of interest in gym activities	17	2.3
Inconveniences of gym	16	2.2
Total Responses	**726**	**100.0**

Source: Fieldwork, 2013

Some of the factors that have been identified as constraints to gym participation in the study area include the following; transportation problems to the gym, lack of encouragement from gym managers, lack of time for gym activities, lack of gym equipment/facilities, official work schedule, need for doing other things or work in other spare time, family responsibilities and fatigue after gym participation. These variables, either individually or combined with other variables affect respondent's participation in gym activities. The result is contrary to the findings of Harrington and Dawson (1995) who suggested that lack of technical skills, private transportation, and financial resources remained the major constraints for gym participation. This disparity in the result could be due to different environmental settings and economic powers in the study areas. The notable constraints that the study came out with were not different from the work of Bopp, Lattimore, Wilcox, Laken, McClorin and Swinton, (2007) who found that work and family obligations were constraints to gym participation. They therefore indicated that not having a convenient place to walk, not having facilities with equipment and an unaffordable fee would be deterrent to being physically active.

CONCLUSION

Participation in leisure and tourism activities is good for all humanity if not for anything else, at least to maintain good health. Participation of gym activities should not be skewed toward the male gender and a specific age range in adulthood. The socio-demographic characteristics of respondents depicts that as far as gym activities are concerned, they are usually participated in by males who are single with university level of education and consider themselves as being within the average income category. These participants visit the gym at least once every week and are motivated by their personal appearance, health and body shape. Some of their constraints however, include transportation, time and encouragement from gym managers.

The six top motivational variables identified to help participant take part in gym activities include; 'cardiovascular fitness', 'body shape', 'healthy appearance', interesting managers, 'physical health & well-being'. These factors have exhibited themselves as the most influential factors in gym participation in the study area. As a matter of fact, these factors shape individual health and appearance and boost the confidence of a person if they are considered in a positive manner. It is therefore recommended that gym operators should understand what motivates people to take part in gym activities, what participants think of the product that they sell, how much they enjoy, learn and benefit from the activities at the gym and how they interact with people and the environment at the gym.

Since most of the motivational factors for gym participation are positively correlated to each other, it is recommended that gym instructors focus on the factors with high positive correlation values to help participant achieve their goal. As participants achieve one or more motivational factors, it will have positive influence on the other factors or variables.

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The 2001 economic crisis in Argentina and its repercussions on tourism policy

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzed mainly tourism policy since 2001. In Argentina tourism became state policy in the post-2001 crisis in order to achieve economic recovery. The actors of the political system decided that tourism played a major role in the government agenda. These policy changes have been accompanied by other political and economic changes. This study opens two debates about the connection between the 2001 crisis and the changing model of tourism in Argentina.

Keywords: Public policy, tourism policy, crisis, Argentina

INTRODUCTION

People have been moving from one place to another constantly since remote times. Human beings have an innate curiosity to visit and discover new places, new habitats and customs and different lifestyles as well. The evolution of tourism has been a long term process sustained in time and in direct relation to the social transformations, to the big changes in the business world, to the technological and communication advances and also to the changes in the routines, behavior and habits of people. These episodes have had an essential role throughout the history of the development of tourism.

Tourism is a transversal activity which involves different public elements associated, directly and indirectly, with theoretical and practical aspects of politics. Perhaps the political approach would not be so important if the social and economic benefits, associated with the activity, were not present, or if politics was a closed system without any impact.

The importance of acknowledging the reasons why certain policies work in the area and certain others do not, has made us recognize the need to focus on the study of the tourism politics with more enthusiasm every day. Tourism, with all its specific power, and its particular structure and political processes, makes it a relevant target of study for the analysis of public politics. This complex relation has forced the estate to articulate decisions related to touristic issues, making it a matter of government concern. That, which had started as a private activity of elite groups, began to gain public importance with the advance and progress of the democratic era.

The government can influence tourism policy indirectly, from government actions in related areas, or directly, intervening in the sector with a specific public policy. Since the mid-twentieth century, the growing benefits of tourism activity caused most states to assume an active position in the sector, creating administrative departments and specific tourism policies (Monfort, 2000; Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert, & Wanhill, 2007; Scott, 2011). In contrast to the first phase of strong government intervention, in the second phase there is less government intervention and it takes place with a strong though active private participation.

Since the late twentieth century, the economic perspective of tourism policy is increasingly important, which makes governments more concerned by tourism and its economic impact (Sessa, 1976; Aguiló & Vich 1996; UNWTO, 1998; Monfort, 2000; Fayos-Solá, 2004; Velasco, 2011 Díaz Pérez, 2006; Barroso & Flores, 2007; Izard, 2010). Tourism has a continuous expansion and diversification from its origins, becoming one of the largest economic sectors in the world. In 2012, the barrier of 1 billion tourists for the first time was overcome; this implied that tourism represented 9% of global GDP and 6% of exports, and the sector created one in 11 jobs and generated total global revenues of $1.3 billion. Latin America participates with 8% of international tourist arrivals and 6% of tourism revenue (UNWTO, 2013).

In this framework, the research examines Argentina's tourism policy as an economic alternative post-crisis 2001. Thereafter, tourism was inserted on the public agenda as one of the priority actions to achieve the "awaited" economic recovery. The aim of this study was to analyse the tourism policy in Argentina after the severe economic crisis of the 2001 period. The study is based on documentary research including observation and analysis of various sources: statistics, discursive, regulatory, and institutional. An assessment of the sources of the economic impact of these policies was performed. This study concludes with the opening of two debates: firstly, the relationship between the neoliberal ideological trend and the development of tourism policy in Argentina is analysed; and secondly, the changing Argentina tourism model is discussed.

THE PARTICULARITY OF THE LATIN AMERICAN CONTEXT

Public policy cannot be analysed in isolation from the factors that give meaning and content to policy; they are not self-explanatory, but form cycles in constant motion, so their approach must be linked to the context in which they develop (Medellín, 2006; Cabrero Mendoza, 2011). Structural changes affecting Latin America since the late 1970s impose the need to rethink certain considerations on the study of government policies and their impacts. Oszlak and O'Donnell (1995, p. 110) argue that complexity, interdependence, and dynamism are becoming policy as a "key" of a social process, and the authors highlight the inadequacy of canonical analysis to address their study as an isolated phenomenon. Similarly, Jacint (2011) emphasizes the need for a policy analysis in the context of networks of public and private actors, which interact in cross-sectoral areas and in regional, national, and international levels, from policy networks. Scartascini, Spiller, Stein, and Tommasi (2011) note the importance of describing the "political game," the diversity of actors interacting in the process of political understanding.

Since the late twentieth century, we have been witnessing a change in the social scope paradigm similar to that involving the transition from a liberal to a welfare state, which produced the transformation of socio-economic and cultural factors. An "institutional fragmentation" takes place. In this line of logic, the nation-state gives up its power in favor of supranational organizations, while also devolving powers to regional and local institutions, as well as to public and private actors to create a complex set of interdependencies.. The latter process has a close relationship with the private management of public services and public administration connection with nonprofit organizations (Subirats, 2010).

In this new context, Acuña (2011) notes (i) the imposition of "pro-market structural reforms," which radically altered the form of state organization and operation, and (ii) he points out the important role of multilateral agencies such as producing policy recommendations, theories, and research agendas, which tend to reshape public policy in the region. These changes drive "... a metamorphosis of State practice," which promotes fiscal balance, reducing public spending, and improved management (Bazúa, 2006, p. 287). Unlike the stated objectives, the implementation of these recommendations in Latin America leads to more heterogeneous, unequal, and exclusionary social structures (Medellín, 2006; Repetto, 2006).

Thus, in the last decade what emerged is what Evans (2011) calls a "third wave of ideas," which recognizes the importance of the state as an enduring and effective institutional structure. The author emphasizes the importance of state structures that provide the necessary capacity to face new challenges and the danger of emptying the state of contents by structural adjustment. The effective state is neither the "megalomaniac" state of import sustitution nor the "minimalist" state of neoliberal radicalism (Prats, 2011).

A TOOL FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY POST-CRISIS ARGENTINA 2001

After the hyperinflationary crisis that the country experienced until late in the 1990s, began a series of changes. These changes represent the final insertion into the neoliberal model that had begun in the mid-70s, after the last coup. In 1991 a convertibility plan that employs a fixed nominal exchange rate for the Argentine peso against the American dollar was applied. In addition to this action, it launched a broad range of initiatives: a program of privatization, deregulation of some key sectors of the economy, economic openness to international investment, greater facilities for import of goods and services, and the abandonment of a public retirement system.

The system of currency convertibility, which was accumulating growing imbalances, was deepened during the Asian crisis of 1997, constituting the "epilogue" of an extensive neoliberal period (Ferrer, 2010; Rapoport, 2010). Since mid-1998, economic activity has stopped growing, until it finally collapsed in 2001. The rising fiscal and trade deficits and large external debt of the late twentieth century came together in the worst crisis in the economic history of Argentina. The crisis had a hard impact on society, and resulted in the decline of formal employment, rising unemployment, and income concentration, which reached unprecedented rates of poverty and indigence.

As part of the internationalization process and planning of tourism policy since the 1970s, tourism came to occupy a central place on the public agenda of the post-2001 crisis. The role reserved for tourism was attracting the necessary foreign exchange, improving the balance of payments deficit, and reducing the heavy external debt declared in default. Tourism was a key instrument of the national government as far as the desired revival of the country was considered.

The state, for the first time in this period, was positioned as a key player in the planning, coordination, and action in tourism. Tourism became part of the exclusive twelve policy that defines the state government was aimed at boosting economic activity, revenue, public investment, public infrastructure, and economic growth (Oficina del Presidente 2003; Jefe de Gabinete de Ministros, 2006). The Ministry of Tourism should "... develop tourism activity as a driver of the economy," making Argentina the country best positioned for tourism in South America (Jefe de Gabiente de MInistros, 2006 p. 297).

On the occasion of the presentation of the Action Plan of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of the Nation, the President of the Republic highlighted the main place of this sector in the necessary revitalization of the national economy: "...we put the bases economic recovery in Argentina, and for this we will make every effort.... Tourism is a priority of the Government; we trust that the Argentina economy will find in this activity its backbone, and we trust in fast dynamization that will occur in the economy and fast investment activity that will generate" (Oficina del Presidente, 2003).

This economic foundation that supports the tourism policy in this period is reflected in the ascription and seniority acquired by the administrative department of tourism. The former Secretary of Tourism of the Nation grows in authority and powers and is ascribed to related departments and the production industry, and finally, for the first time in history, constitutes an autonomous body of maximum rank in the structure administrative. In 2010 the former Secretary became Minister of Tourism of the Nation (Decree 919), the fourteenth national government ministry.

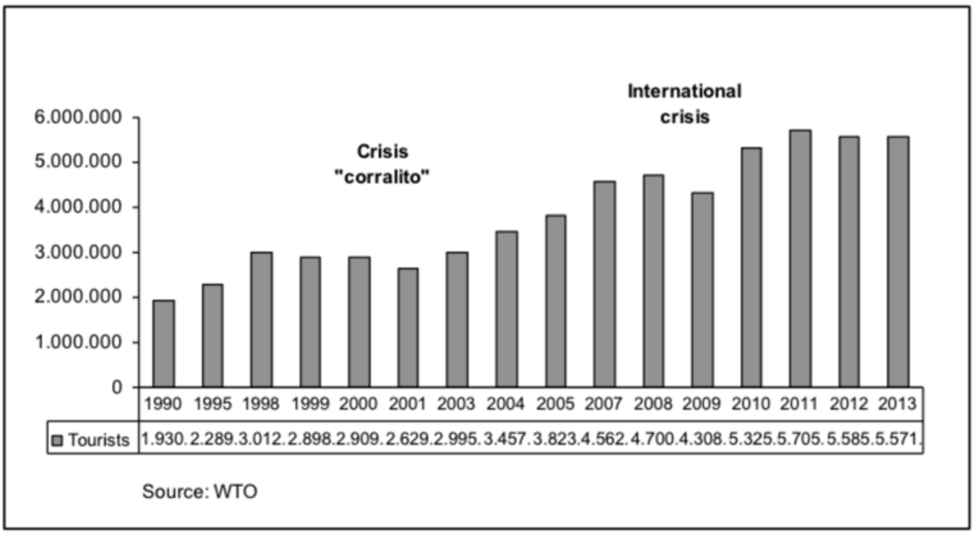
The adoption of the new National Tourism Act (No. 25,997/05) and the Regulatory Decree (Decree 1,297/06) constitutes the most important institutional fact, which replaced the old Law 14,574/58. Law No. 25,997 establishes the facilitation role to be assumed by the state in the national management of tourism by promoting cooperation with other public and private organizations directly and indirectly related to the activity. This participation in the national tourism administration is established in the Federal Strategic Plan for Sustainable Tourism (Ministerio de Turismo, 2005), with a useful life until 2016, extended until 2020 (PETS, 2011). This plan has a federal and decentralized character.

Law No. 25,997 declares tourism as "national interest" and "socio-economic, strategic and essential activity" and states that this "policy will be a priority for the state" (Law 25.997, Articles 1 and 3). The first article points out two facts: the importance of inbound tourism as a non-traditional "export business" and consideration of the private tourism sector as a "strategic partner" for the government. This law clearly reflects the tendency to consolidate tourism as a key area in the national economy.

In this context, the sharp devaluation of the Argentine peso in 2002 (Law No. 25,561), along with the intense action of the administrative departments of tourism, carried out a transformation of the traditional tourist patterns. This transformation was achieved through a significant increase in international and domestic tourism. Argentina reached the first position in international arrivals in South America during the period 2010-2011 (WTO), and Buenos Aires was deemed since 2004 as the leading city hosting conferences of America (ICCA).

The country as an international destination presented remarkable growth, with an increase of over 100% in international visitor arrivals, to 5,704,648 (2011) (Figure1). On the other hand, tourism revenues increased by 90% between 2002 and 2011 and reached US $5.212 million (Figure 2). These arrivals came mainly from neighboring countries, of which Brazil and Chile account for nearly 50%. For its part, the outgoing of Argentinian tourists grows by 47% and 130% currency outflows. The main destinations of Argentine tourists are Uruguay, Chile, Brazil, and Paraguay (75% of all international departures).

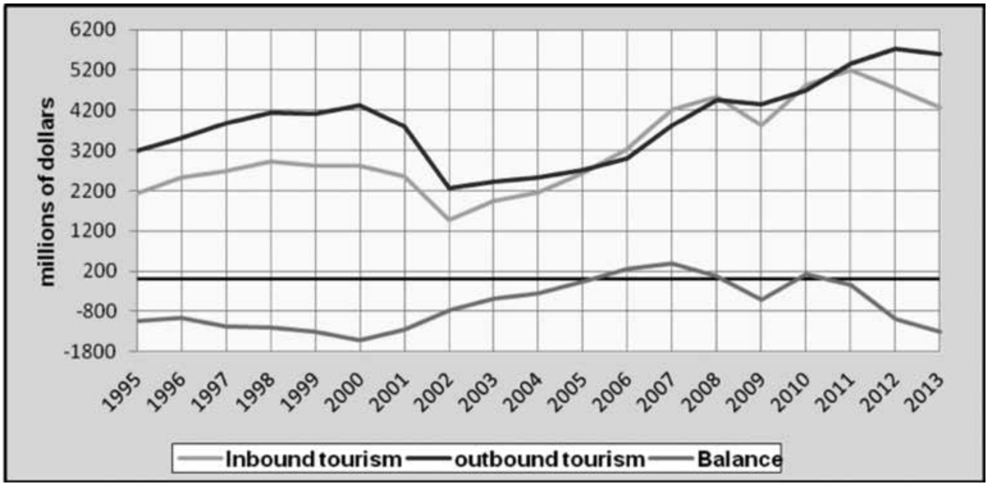
Figure 1: International tourist arrivals to Argentina



The growth of tourism over the outbound between 1995 and 2005 resulted in a progressive equilibrium in the tourism balance, which managed to even reach a record surplus in the 2006-2010 period, with a slight drop in 2009. The international financial crisis and higher prices for Argentina as an international tourist destination—due to the country's own inflation and devaluation of neighboring currencies like the Brazilian real and the Chilean peso—led to a sharp decline in international arrivals, while outbound tourism continued its growth trend (Figure 2).

This fact caused the return to balance the deficit between 1995 and 2005. The latter issue has become, in the short-term, the main concern of the National Government in tourist matters (Jefe de Gabiente de Ministros, 2014). In this context, it implemented a tax on the foreign purchases of goods and services through credit cards and buying foreign currency for travel and tourism expenditures (AFIP No. 3,378/2012; AFIP, No. 3,450/2013; AFIP, No. 3,550/2013). Along this line, currency devaluation should also be included in early 2014, which involved a variation of the exchange rate of approximately 65%.

Figure 2: Evolution of tourism revenue, expenditure and balance



Source: MINTUR, 2013.

In terms of domestic tourism, various initiatives to relaunch growth in the post-2001 crisis have been promoted. These actions are intended to help increase tourism, revenue generation, and tourism employment as well as reduce high seasonality of domestic destinations. In the last decade, the tourism practices of Argentine residents have seen a marked increase, although less than international tourism, presenting a cumulative growth of over 50% since 2002 (CAT, 2008). In this sense, the reports of the Argentina Chamber of Tourism show a steady growth of this type of practice in that period of time, which even exceeds domestic tourism consumption figures of the past decade.

This growth in international and domestic tourism is reflected in the significant participation acquiring tourism in the national economy. Tourist activity at constant prices for the year 2010 came to contribute 7.29% of GDP, ranking sixth among national sectors. The tourism sector was above Construction, Financial Operations, Community Services, Social and Personal, the Agriculture, and Public Administration; tourism contributed 7.27% of total employment in the country and accounted for 6.9% of total exports, 42.6% of service exports, the fourth largest export industry of national importance, behind the oil sector, automotive, and petroleum complexes (CAT, 2008).

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

These pages show how tourism is far from being a shallow or unimportant field of study. On the contrary, it shapes the social and economic relations, impacts the territory, influences different aspects of government management and, if it does not have the necessary public regulations, it could give place to processes of inequality, concentration, segregation or even the loss of national heritage.

From the moment the democratic era started, after the Second World War in industrial countries, tourism has shown a continuous expansion and diversification and it has become one of the most important fields of study in the world. This obvious growth has made national and local governments take a special interest in this field, and even international organizations have noticed the great advantages, opportunities and benefits tourism has to offer.

With an open and international economy as we have, the activity is seen as a virtuous alternative which can eventually generate more income and more employment for a nation. Tourism represents the internal growing product of a country, shows it to the world, and allows exportation of capital and services.

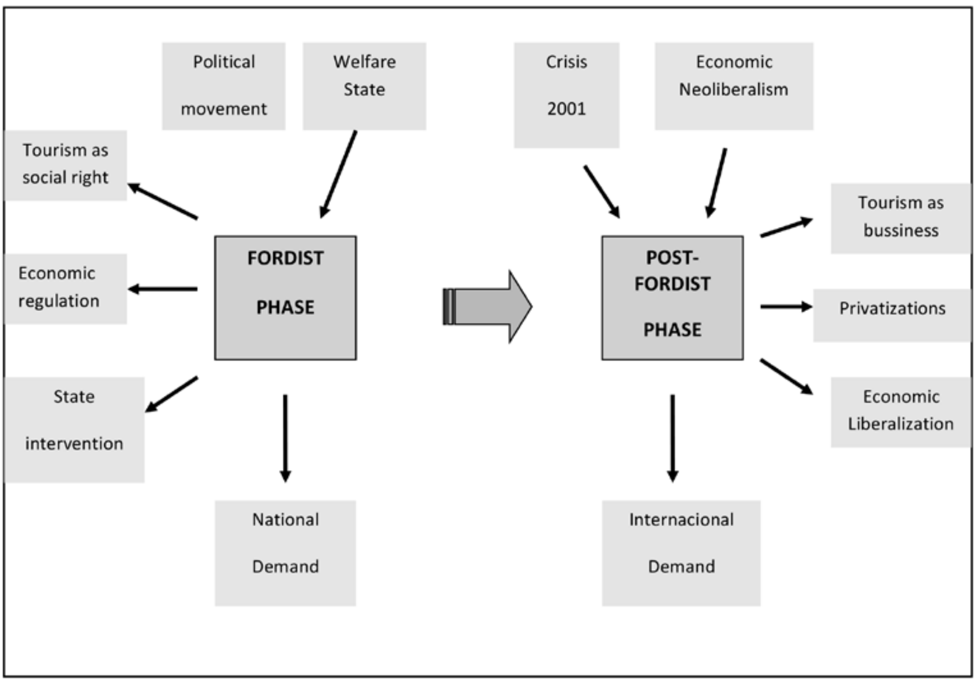
These are obvious reasons why tourism could be one of the most important fields to pay attention to with regards to the benefits it may bring at a local and national level.

The 2001 economic crisis in Argentina, paradoxically, became an opportunity for the tourism sector. The national government was repositioned as a key player in tourism management for the desired economic recovery. This made tourism pass part of the national agenda, which identified political actors in the tourism sector and the government to devote resources to it and adopt specific regulations. Public administration launched an active policy in the area, aimed at encouraging investment in the necessary infrastructure and cooperation with the tourism entrepreneurs.

Unlike the first phase of strong state intervention in the country, led by Prime Peronism (1943-1955), which in the mid-twentieth century tourism became a public issue based on social, the new intervention period encouraged a reformulation of the tourism sector as an economic and private issue. In this second phase, governments especially enhanced the economic aspect of tourism, a process in which government regulators were no longer to become facilitators of tourism. This situation cannot be understood without the intervention of the crisis of 2001,economic vision of tourism that dominates internationally from economic neoliberalism (Blázquez, 2014), or sponsorship from international bodies such as the World Tourism Organization. Economic crises are usually accompanied by adjustment measures that favor the entry of international capital, while getting set policies and legal rules favorable to international interests (Flamant-Kerel & Singer, 1971). In this context, the Argentine crisis and the global crisis of 2008 should be understood as “the opportunity that uses the capital to restructure and rationalize, to restore its operating capacity and accumulation” (O’Connor, 1988, p. 18). In addition, international tourism requires the creation of “new peripheries of pleasure” in the South (Turner & Ash, 1991, p.15) to output capital accumulation central spaces. This logic is in line with the global division established by the peripheries Gormsen model (1981) and, specifically, the 2001 crisis has served to include Argentina more obviously in a tourist periphery. Tourism exploits the wide range of incomes between central places and tourist economic peripheries to impose "their dominance over the states and democracy" (Blázquez, Artigues, & Murray, 2011, p.2), so that tourism paves the way for entry of transnational different economic sectors (Britton, 1982).

Another consequence of the new tourism policy has been changing the national tourism model (Figure 3). This process should be understood within a production system change, from Fordist of the first phase to the post-Fordist model according to neoliberal principles (Schenkel & Almeida, 2015). It has gone from a model based on domestic tourism, social aspects, and mainly being an exporter of tourists and capital abroad, to one based on attracting international tourists to earn a foreign exchange model, the balance of trade payments, and attract private savings for other economic sectors.

Figure 3. national tourism model: from Fordist of the first phase to the post-Fordist



Source: Elaborated by the authors

In this way, Argentine tourism has evolved from the national-economic model driven by Prime Peronism into a similar pattern to that can be found in most Latin American countries; we can say that there has been a “normalization” of the productive structure linked to tourism. Argentina follows the steps of developing countries that have used tourism in the same way southern European countries did more than 60 years ago (Almeida, 2014).

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Measuring service time characteristics in fast food restaurants in Cairo: a case study

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to measure service time characteristics in fast food restaurants in Cairo (A Case Study of KFC Restaurants). Concerning research methods, the data for this research was gathered primarily through a survey instrument from a field study carried out at fast food restaurants in Cairo. Research surveys are divided into customer surveys and manager surveys. About 250 surveys were distributed to the customers and 10 surveys to the managers. The valid surveys were 197 customer surveys and 10 manager surveys. Finally, the research displayed an effective method to measure service time characteristics in fast food restaurants in Cairo.

Keywords: Service time, fast food restaurants, queuing theory, mathematical modeling.

INTRODUCTION

Time is widely considered a scarce resource, a strong competitive device, a very valuable asset to every person, and one of the factors that contribute to customer enjoyment of a meal experience. Therefore, hospitality enterprises customers do not want to wait for the service they are paying money to get. Waiting time negatively affects customer satisfaction, service quality evaluation, and revisit intentions. Consequently, waiting time is considered as a critical challenge for restaurant management. This shows the need to apply management science techniques to analyze service time characteristics. The effective management of waiting time will lead to improve business because of the efficient operations, good service quality, and satisfied customers. The use of management techniques became an urgent need in solving operational problems that face the restaurants. Thence, measuring service time characteristics is a very important process in managing service time.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Waiting time is a critical issue in the service industry, especially in the hospitality industry; hospitals, retailers and fast food restaurants for both customers and organizations because it relates to the time which is the most valuable asset that they have. Most customers consider speed of service as the most important factor even more than quality of food. Fast food restaurants use time as a strategic tool and a competitive advantage in their operations. However, most customers wait a long time in a queue for service which they dislike. Long waiting time negatively influences customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, frequency of purchase, customer decision making and costs and revenues (Obamiro, J., 2010, p. 1, Pillay, D., 2011, p. 506, Old, O., and Rogers, T., 2012, p. 39, Qiu, C., and Zhang, W., 2013, Koh, H., et al, 2014, p. 1073).

There is a relationship between time management and revenue management. Time is considered to be a scarce resource, which should be carefully spent as time spent waiting reduces the utility that can be derived from it. The more valuable the customers' time, the more negative their perception of those that waste it (McGuire, K., 2010, p. 271). Time factor has a direct effect on revenue (Dharmawirya, M., 2012, pp. 8-13). The ability to manage the time involved in a service process is critical to effective revenue management (None, B., et al, 2012, p. 295). Managing waiting time would improve profitability (Hwang, J., et al, 2012, p. 226). Faster payments mean more customers are served– increasing profitability and customer's returns (Thompson, G., 2014, p. 2).

Although speed is the most important factor considered by customers when choosing fast food restaurants, they spend a long waiting time for service delivery. Customers have four different waiting times, i.e., time taken to reach the front of the queue (2.5 minutes), time taken to place an order, time taken for the order to be served (1.5 minutes), and time available to consume a meal (Church, I., Newman, A., 2000, pp. 400-403). Customers spent on average 5.4 minutes waiting before they could get their orders. The 5.4 minutes consisted of 2.42 minutes of queuing time and 2.98 minutes of service time. This total waiting time is only slightly below the actual expected waiting time of 5.42 minutes during lunch time peak hours. Waiting time is something that needs to be managed seriously, especially in fast food restaurants (Dharmawirya, M., 2012, pp. 8-13).

Speed is the most important factor considered by customers when choosing fast food restaurants. Therefore, the critical success points for fast food restaurants are to have staff and food ready to serve the maximum number of customers in the least amount of time (Dharmawirya, M., 2012, pp. 8-13). The success of fast food restaurants depends critically on managing food preparation time, queue length and waiting time (Koh, H., et al, 2014, p. 1073). To conclude, the aim of the time management is to minimize the response time (Nan, X., et al, 2014, p. 928).

Queuing theory is a branch of operational research (Warwick, J., 2009, p. 44; Koh, H., et al, 2014, p. 1073). Queuing is traditionally defined as a process where people, materials or information need to wait at certain time to get a service (Vuyst, S., et al, 2014, p. 1143). The queuing theory results are often used for making business decisions about the resources needed to provide good service. In the case of fast food restaurants, it is about adding more service counters and speeding up food preparation during peak hours (Koh, H., et al, 2014, p. 1073). Queuing theory is the mathematical approach to the analysis of waiting lines in any setting (Obamiro, J., 2010, p. 1, Ameh, N., et al, 2013; Koh, H., et al, 2014, p. 1073) when arrival rate of subjects is faster than the system can handle (Ameh, N., et al, 2013).

Queuing theory is a mathematical technique which is considered one of operations management techniques. It is widely used to analyze, optimize, and make a decision of system performance in organizations such as a health care industry (Mital, K., 2010, P. 419, Almehdawe, E., et al, 2013, p. 602, Wiler, J., et al, 2013; Ameh, N., et al, 2013, Lakshmi, C., and Iyer, S., 2014, p. 25), call centers (Aktekin, T., and Soyer, R., 2012, P. 441, Stolletz, R., and Manitz, M., 2013, p. 280, Aktekin, T., 2014, P. 719), banks (Taufemback, C., and Silva, S., 2012, p. 1381, Chowdhury, M., 2013, p. 468, Chowdhury, M., et al, 2013, p. 22, Maitanmi, S., et al, 2013, p. 54), supermarkets (Williams, E., et al, 2002, Li, B., and Wang, D., 2010, P. 334, Lu, Y., 2013, p. 3, Daniel, E., et al., 2014, p. 364) besides to transportation (Anokye, M., et al, 2013, p. 23, Nan, X., et al, 2014, p. 928, Wang a, Y., et al, 2014, p. 53) also information technology (Sharma, A., et al, 2013, p. 1, Mohanty, S., 2014, p. 469) in addition to construction industry (Teknomo, K., 2012, P. 139), manufacture (Siewe, F., et al, 2009, p. 1468, Marsudi, M., and Shafeek, H., 2014, p. 668) as well as libraries (Warwick, J., 2009, p. 44, Somvanshi, T., et al, 2012, p. 25).

A queuing system can be described as customers arriving for service, waiting for service and leaving the system after being served. A queuing system is characterized by arrival pattern of those requiring service, service pattern of servers, queue discipline, system capacity, number of service channels, and number of service stages. A queuing analysis is based on a set of assumptions, queue discipline refers to the manner in which waiting patients are selected for service when a queue is formed which could be either first-in and first-out (FIFO) or some priority order specified (Mital, K., 2010, P. 425). Queuing theory characterizes queuing systems according to: arrival patterns of customers (e.g. Poisson/Erlang/general); service patterns; queue discipline (e.g. first-come-first served, priority-based); the number of servers provided; the maximum queue length allowed; and configuration of servers (e.g. in series/in parallel/mixed) (Wang a, Y., et al, 2014, pp. 53-54).

The queuing theory is stochastic mathematical models of waiting lines where customers queue to receive services (Siewe, F., et al, 2009, p. 1468; Cernea, S., et al, 2010, p. 616). Two main components of a queuing system are customers and servers (Teknomo, K., 2012, P. 140). It consists of three main components (processes); average arrival rate (λ), average service rate (μ), and number of servers (S). Given that one has a good understanding of these processes; relevant operating characteristics of service system performance can be obtained using existing queuing theory (Aktekin, T., and Soyer, R., 2012, P. 441).

For application, there are some assumptions that must be considered. Also, it is necessary to determine the probability distributions of arrival and service rates, and queuing discipline (e.g., FCFS Rule). Later, by equations, the queuing theory parameters which reflect the service system efficiency can be determined. This includes mean waiting time, incidence of excessive waiting, average queue length, and expected number of busy and idle servers, probability that those requiring service will not have to wait at all, probability that those needing service may not be served at all, etc. (Mital, K., 2010, P. 425). Also, the number of customers in the system/ queue, the waiting time in the system/queue, and the offered load that are all functions of the three input processes (Aktekin, T., and Soyer, R., 2012, P. 441).

Queuing theory enables the mathematical analysis of several related processes, including arrival at the back of the queue, waiting in the queue, and provision of service at the front of the queue. The theory permits the derivation and calculation of several key performance measures including the average waiting time in the queue, the expected number queuing for service and the probability of the system in certain states such as empty or full. It explores the relationship between demand on a service system and the delay of services based upon the concept of random behavior of customers (Koh, H., et al, 2014, p. 1073).

A queuing analysis is based on set of assumptions, namely, that only single individuals are coming to a system and that there are no bulk arrivals. Lengths of the intervals between arrivals are independently and identically distributed and described by a continuous density function. It is assumed that inter-arrival times and service times follow the exponential distribution or equivalently that the arrival rate and service rate follow a Poisson distribution (Mital, K., 2010, P. 425). Queuing assumptions are that: (1) arrivals come from an infinite or very large population, (2) arrivals are Poisson distributed, (3) arrivals are treated on a FIFO basis and do not balk or renege, (4) service times follow the negative exponential distribution or are constant, and (5) the average service rate is faster than the average arrival rate (Chowdhury, M., 2013, p. 468).

To manage service time, there are two approaches; operation management, and perception management. Also, there are two techniques; analytical technique and simulation technique (Church, I., Newman, A., 2000, p. 398, Obamiro, J., 2010, p. 1, Almehdawe, E., et al, 2013, p. 602, Mei, S., and Cheng, A., 2013, p. 124, Lenin, R., and Ramaswamy, S., 2013, PP. 1-2, Nan, X., et al, 2014, p. 928, McVay, B., 2014, p. VI, Wang a, Y., et al, 2014, p. 53). All studies that used these methods are conducted in industries such as health care industry, call centers, banks, retailers, libraries, and hospitality industry, however for the later very few studies are there.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is a domain of management science (MS). Eventually, the researchers depend on the methodologies of management science (Anelo, R., and Vladimir, A., 2004, p. 353). The quantitative modeling approaches encompass a variety of methods, some of them are queuing theory, mathematical modeling, statistics, and simulation (McVay, B., 2014, P. VI). Queuing theory is a well-established methodology in the society of operations research. It can provide a fundamental tool to study the dynamics of many service systems with resource constraints

(Lixia, L., 2014, P. 546). Research on time management, especially, customer waiting time has traditionally been the domain of queuing theory (Zhao, X., et al (2014, p. 310).

Concerning the research methodology, the researchers will depend upon descriptive/analytical methodology. In this framework, the researchers will depend on waiting lines models, in the analysis process using a survey tool. In regards to research methods, data for this research were gathered primarily from a field study survey carried out at fast food restaurants in Cairo (A Case Study of KFC Restaurants); for both management and customer. The management survey focuses on managing and operating time of Quick-Service Restaurants. The customer survey aims to measure time of foodservice related to customer time satisfaction. Research surveys are divided into customer surveys and manager surveys. About 250 surveys were distributed to the customers and 10 surveys to the managers. The valid surveys were 197 customer surveys and 10 manager surveys. The following table represents research methodology design in use.

Table 1: Research Design Characteristics

Rank	Research Design Factors	Research Characteristics
1	Science Type	Management Science (MS)
2	Research Area	Operations Management (OM)
3	Research Point	Time Management (TM)
4	Pragmatism Philosophy	Research Philosophy
5	Deductive Approach	Research Approach
6	Research Methodology	Survey Study
7	Research Choices	Quantitative Method
8	Time Horizons	Longitudinal Study
9	Research Methods	Survey Analysis
10	Research Technique	Management Science Techniques
11	Research Procedures	Operations Management Procedures
12	Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha Test (0.7 or above)
13	Validity	The survey questions are components of the Queuing theory models which are a well-established methodology to study time management.
14	Generalization	Large and Random Sample

Source: The Researchers

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

The management survey aims to managing and operating time of Quick-Service Restaurants. To do this, data on the average number of staff in the restautarant was investigated, daily working hours and monthly salaries were collected and tabulated. Table (1) shows a summary of this data. Moreover, the number of guests being served per month was also obtained for the same restaurant over a year period. This aggregation of guests appears in the same table.

Table 2: The Average Number of Staff in KFC Restaurant

Position	**The Average Number of Staff in the Restaurant (Aver.)**		
	No. of Staff	**Daily Work Hours**	**Monthly Salary**
Cashier	2.5	9	1260
Server	2.5	9	1260
Chief	4.6	9	1260
Total	9.6	27	3780
	The Average Number of Customers per year (KFC Restaurant)		
Months	**No. of Arrivals**	**Months**	**No. of Arrivals**
January	10152.6	July	8671.8
February	8876.2	August	10827.1
March	8982.5	September	10792.6
April	8437.1	October	11062
May	9351.9	November	10297.2
June	10421.1	December	11875.3
Total			**119747.4**

Furthermore, the queuing system characteristics for the restaurant were specified including those that relate to guest arrivals, queue and service facilities. Table (3) shows these characteristics.

Table 3: Queuing System Characteristics

Factors	Parameters	Queuing System Characteristics
Arrival Characteristics (Calling Population)	Arrival Population Size.	Unlimited
	Average Arrival Rate.	18 customers
	Average Arrival Time.	3.3 minutes
	Arrival Rate Patterns.	Random Arrival Pattern
	Arrival Distribution.	Poisson
	Arrival Behavior.	Patient
Queue Characteristics	Queue Length.	Unlimited
	Queue Discipline.	FCFS
Service Facility Configuration.	Service Facility Characteristics	Single queue, single service station
	Number of servers.	3 servers
	Number of phases.	1
	Service Rate Patterns.	Fixed
	Service Distribution.	Exponential
	Average Service Rate.	24 operations
	Average Service Time.	2.5 minutes

From another perspective, the customer survey was used to measure time of foodservice related to customer time satisfaction. Waiting times including actual, expected, desired, maximum and critical time, as well as food item price are tabulated as it appears in table (4).

Table 4: Average Waiting Time in the Queue for KFC Customers Investigated

Factors	Value (Average)
Actual Waiting Time	5.3
Expected Waiting Time	4.6
Desired Waiting Time	3
Maximum Waiting Time	9
Critical Waiting Time	15
Food Item price	47

Table (5) on the other hand shows average waiting time satisfaction level among guests investigated as well as average waiting tolerance level in queue.

Table 5: Average Waiting Time Satisfaction and waiting tolerance levels among Guests.

Waiting Time Satisfaction	Freq.	%
Satisfied	151	76.6
Dissatisfied	46	23.4
Sample Size	197	100
Waiting Tolerance Level	**Freq.**	**%**
Yes	164	83.2
No	33	16.8
Sample Size	197	100%

Mathematical Analysis

Queuing models can help the management obtain many performance measures (operating characteristics) of a waiting line system. So, the researcher depended on queuing theory models, especially, the Multiple-Server system (M/M/s), because the service times in the study are distributed exponentially. Queuing Model of M /M /S /∞/∞ assumes that the system operation has reached a steady state, customers entering the system can change its queue at any time, the arriving of customers follows Poisson distribution, and the Paying time follows negative exponential distribution. So this fee system is a queuing system of M / M / S/ / ∞ / ∞ (Li, B., and Wang, D., 2010, P. 335). M means Poison arrival distribution; M means exponential distribution of service time; and S means number of servers (Teknomo, K., 2012, P. 140).

Operating Characteristic Equations for an M/M/s Queuing System

λ Arrival rate (e.g., per hour)

μ Service rate

s Number of servers

ϱ: Utilization factor of the system (i.e., the probability that all servers are busy).

ϱ **$\varrho=\lambda/(s\mu)$**

L_q: Average length (i.e., the number of customers) of the queue.

$$L_q \quad L_q = \frac{(\lambda/\mu)^S \lambda\mu)}{(s-1)!(s\mu-\lambda)^2} P_0$$

L: Average number of customers in the system (i.e., the number in the queue plus the number being served).

L $L = L_q + \lambda/\mu$

W_q: Average time that each customer spends in the queue.

W_q $W_q = L_q/\lambda$

W: Average time that each customer spends in the system (i.e., the time spent waiting plus the time spent being served).

W $W = (W_q + 1)/\mu$

P_0: Probability that there are no customers in the system (i.e., the probability that the service facility will be idle).

$$P_0 \quad P_0 = \frac{1}{\left[\sum_{k=0}^{S-1} \frac{1}{k!}\left(\frac{\lambda}{\mu}\right)^k\right] + \frac{1}{s!}\left(\frac{\lambda}{\mu}\right)^s \frac{s\mu}{s\mu-\lambda}}$$

P_n: Probability that there are exactly n customers in the system

$$P_n \quad P_n = \frac{(\lambda/\mu)^n}{n!} P_0 \qquad \text{for } n \le s$$

$$P_n = \frac{(\lambda/\mu)^n}{s!\, s^{(n-s)}} P_0 \qquad \text{for } n > s$$

Queuing Model Computations

Table 6: M/M/s Queuing Model Computations per hour

Parameters	**Value**	
Arrival rate λ	18 customers	18
Service rate μ	24 operations	24
Number of servers s	1 server	3
Mean time between arrivals	3.3 minutes	3.3
Mean time per service	2.5 minutes	2.5
Traffic intensity (congestion rate)	75 %	25 %
Average server Utilization P	75 %	25 %

Average number of customers in the queue L_q	2.25 customers	1.5
Average number of customers in system L	3 customers	76.5
Average waiting time in the queue W_q	7.5	0.06
Average time in the system W	16.7 minutes	2.52
Probability of no customers in system P_0	25 %	47 %

Table 7: Probability (% of time) system is empty P_n

Number of Units	Probability
0	1.523
1	2.741
2	2.467
3	1.480
4	6.661
5	0.0002
6	0.0007
7	0.001
8	0.004
9	0.008
10	0.014

Table 8: Time, Cost and Capacity Analysis of the M/M/s Queuing Model.

Operating Characteristics		Number of servers			
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**
A	Service rate (μ)	24	24	24	24
B	Arrival rate (λ)	18	18	18	18
C	Total no. of work hours in the shift	8	8	8	8
D	Total no. of customers per shift	144	144	144	144
E	Average waiting time per customer(in minutes)	7.5	0.42	0.06	0
F	Total waiting time (in minutes) per shift (D×E)	1080	60.48	8.64	0
G	Cost per minute of waiting time (estimated)	8	8	8	8
H	Value of lost time per shift (F×G)	8640	483.84	69.12	0
I	Salary cost per shift	331.2	662.4	993.6	1324.8
J	Total cost per shift (H+I)	8971	1146	**1062**	1324.8

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Queuing theory is considered a relevant tool in the analysis of service time characteristics because its assumptions are available in this study. The researcher depended on M /M /S /∞/∞ where M means Poison arrival distribution; M means exponential distribution of service time; and S means number of servers. Table (4) displays service time characteristics in fast food restaurants and table (10) shows the analysis of the m/m/s queuing systems per shift related to time, cost and capacity factors. According to this analysis, the optimal operating system of service time is M/M/3 which achieves less expensive cost **1062** per shift with 3 servers. The researchers recommend that mangers of KFC restaurants rely on and use M/M/3 system as the optimal system in application with the following characteristics:

- Arrival rate 18 customers per hour
- Service rate 24 operations per hour
- Expected waiting time 4.6 minutes
- Maximum waiting time 9 minutes
- Desired Waiting Time 3 minutes
- Critical Waiting Time 15
- λ = 18 customers
- μ = 24 operations
- s = 3 servers
- ϱ = 25 % (congestion rate)
- W_q = 0.06 minutes
- W = 2.52 minutes
- P_0 = 47 %

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The use of crowdsourcing as a strategic model in future hotels

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to define, analyze their types, and to do an in-depth study of the concept and the importance of crowdsourcing for the management and marketing of hospitality and tourism firms. More concretely, the paper analyzes the impact of crowdsourcing related processes, together with the evolution of the new conceptions of marketing and management, in the transformation of hotels. Furthermore the paper forecast the future of hotels, by exploring and studying diverse uses and possibilities of crowdsourcing techniques for improving diverse processes in different organizational areas of hotel business. With the new marketing perspective, the paper provides also several examples of its use in hotels, and pretends to create an exploratory framework, and analyze the strengths of the use of crowdsourcing related techniques in the hotel arena, and also the negative consequences of some of these techniques for hotel firms.

Keywords: crowdsourcing, hotels, Web 3.0 innovations, consumer behavior, new technologies

INTRODUCTION

Recent studies identify some of the current and future trends affecting the hospitality industry, including globalization and the development of new technologies. The progress of information and communication technologies, together with the evolution of the Internet and the social networks have had a deep impact in the structure of firms and have altered the way organizations manage the production process of all kind of firms (Garrigos et al., 2012), and tourism and hospitality firms are not an exception (Garrigos et al., 2015). We should add the new complex and dynamic market realities, and the unprecedented access to information and networks by customers, which are increasing the pressures to hotels to produce better and cheaper products and services, and more adapted to the needs of customers. In order to answer to these changes, destinations and business are following a new conception of the production process, centered in a new marketing perspective where the customer is the essential part of the design of all kind of products and operations in the firm. In addition, pioneer firms are considering innovative perspectives to improve organizational and marketing processes, innovating mainly by using new techniques, and by incorporating the crowd in their developments.

Actually, in order to face the new transformations on the business environment, the most successful enterprises in the world, belonging to diverse sectors, are developing new business models and ways of innovations centered on the customer, and related most of them to the called "crowdsourcing" (defined as taking a specific task once performed by employees and outsourcing it to a large group of people via the internet in the form of an open call (Howe, 2006), in which customer participation and stakeholders integration in the value chain of the firms has become the new key success factor. Such as Della Corte et al. (2013: 456) state, in a study in the tourism sector, "in a today competitive environment, the co-creation of solutions is of fundamental importance for the firm in order to gain competitive advantage". In the new scenario, the participation of the crowd is critical according to these authors, as the crowd is able to create new solutions regarding tourist organizations, markets, society as well as virtual community. More specifically, in a recent work in the lodging industry, Richard, et al (2015) posit for the importance of crowdsourcing for innovation, by highlighting that nowadays, by seeking to co-create solutions with a diverse crowd of potential customers, interested parties and experts, hotels are opening up their innovation process to the world. However, and although their growing and strategic importance, the studies of crowdsourcing in general are scarce. More concretely, the studies of crowdsourcing in the tourism and hospitality sectors are reduced and dispersed, and no previous study has analyzed it globally focusing in our sector.

In order to avoid this situation, the aim of this paper is to define crowdsourcing and analyze deeply the different kind of processes that this term comprises. Moreover, the paper aims to forecast also the future of tourism firms, by analyzing the transformation of their marketing and management, due to the emergence of crowdsourcing related processes, the changes in the conception of the marketing and the emergence of the Web 3.0 with the development of the new technologies.. The importance of anticipating and analyzing these mechanisms are critical for the managers of hotels, and for destination managers, in order to copy with the most important challenges of the future.

Moreover, the paper aims to identify and explore diverse uses and possibilities of Crowdsourcing techniques in the hotel sector, in order to improve diverse processes in different organizational areas of this business. In addition, and taking into account the new conceptions of the nowadays marketing, the paper tries to provide several examples of its use in hotels, and pretends to create a framework and analyze the strengths of the use of Crowdsourcing related techniques in the hotel arena, studying also the use the power of the crowd in some important areas of hotels. Finally, the paper analyzes some negative consequences for hotels of some crowdsourcing techniques

CROWDSURCING: DEFINITION AND TYPES

The expression "crowdsourcing" was coined by Jeff Howe (2006) in the magazine Wire as "the act of a company or institution taking a function once performed by employees and outsourcing it to an undefined (and generally large) network of people in the form of an open call". The term, mainly based on the idea of the consumer as a "helper" in product development (Artič, (2013). or as provider of almost every task for organizations, is extended nowadays to as "the outsourcing of tasks to the general Internet public" (Kleemann et al. 2008). Hence, after analyzing several definitions in the literature, Estellés-Arolas and González Ladrón-de-Guevara(2012:197) include this definition:

"Crowdsourcing is a type of participative online activity in which an individual, an institution, a non-profit organization, or company proposes to a group of individuals of varying knowledge, heterogeneity, and number, via a flexible open call, the voluntary undertaking of a task"

After this definitions, we could conceived it in the tourism sector as the act of taking a job or a specific task usually performed by an employee of the tourism organization, or more widely termed by a "designated agent", such as a contractor, and outsourcing it through an open call to a large group of people or a community (crowd or mass) over the Internet.

Although this is not the purpose of this work, the crowdsourcing process is important, first of all because several motivating factors make crowd participants, to work on low-paying tasks. Motivators can be the simple satisfaction, like in the case of Wikipedia, till other monetary or financial compensations (Mason and Watts, 2010; Horton and Chilton, 2010). Such as Estelles and Gonzales (2012:195) stress "the user will obtain satisfaction of a given necessity, whether it be economic, social recognition, self-esteem or the development of individual skills." These low cost motivations, make companies to acquire services, knowledge, solution, ideas and so on, that economically could not be so profitable to obtain by other mechanisms.

Secondly, the contributions obtained from crowdsourcing processes, can not only be cheap, but also of a great quality. Moreover, apart from the low cost, crowdsourcing is very relevant, because. relative to more traditional outsourcing, crowdsourcing has the potential to provide higher quality solutions cheaper and faster Hence, some authors have studied several motivators and their impact on solution quality (Huang et al., 2012; Leimeister et al 2009); while other have analyzed for instance quality measures of idea generations.(Poeth and Schreier, 2012, Blohm et al, 2011) to get the best from the crowd.. In addition, several crowdsourcing applications has been used for solving problems and/or for dealing with managerial decision making (Zhao and Zhu, 2012; Chiu et al., 2014).

Nevertheless, in order to understand the process, we have to consider the wide amplitude of the crowdsourcing potential, as we can realize about the existence of several modes of crowdsoruc-ing. Hence, the literature relates different alternatives or kinds of crowdsourcing schemes to be applied.

Looking for instance for the more extended schemes of crowdsourcing possibilities, some crowdsourcing initiatives include crowdvoting, crowdfunding, microwork, creative crowdsourcing, crowdsource workforce management and inducement prize contests (Wikipedia, 2015). However let us analyze previous models. For instance, in a pioneer study

Kleemann et al., (2008: 12-14), studied and provided examples of the next types of crowdsourcing: consumer participation in product development and configuration; product design; competitive bids on specifically defined tasks or problems; permanent open calls; community reporting; product rating by consumers and consumer profiling, and customer-to customer support. Estelles and Gonzalez (2012b) focused on: crowdcasting, crowdcollaboration (crowdstorming, crowdsupport), crowdcontent (crowdproduction, crowdsearching, crowdanalyzing), crowdfunding, and crowdopinion. In the context of education, Alghamdi et al (2013) stress for example crowd creation, crowd voting, crowd funding and crowd wisdom. Pedersen et al. (2013), in a framework based on an input-process-output model, differentiated among crowd creation (generating ideas), crowd wisdom (reducing, clarifying and organizing the ideas), and crowd voting (evaluating ideas and building consensus). According to the more extended work by (Brabham, 2013), Crowdsourcing can apply to four main directions: knowledge discovery and management (or organization), with the aim of finding and assembling or organizing information; broadcast search (or optimization), in order to come up with a solutions to a probably objective or measurable problem, such as scientific problems; peer-vetted creative production (or ideation), to debate ideas and solve problems that have subjective answers in domains as politics, design, aesthetics, or art.; and distributed human intelligence tasking (or analysis), focusing on processing and/or analyzing a large amount of data/information better than computers in due time. In addition, other activities added by (Trifu and Croitoru, 2014) are: crowdvoting, to gather a large group's opinions or judgment on a certain topic; crowdfunding; to gather the necessary financial resources for funding different projects by a multitude of people that contribute with a small amount; creative crowdsourcing, that refers to graphic design, crowdsourcing architecture, apparel design, illustration, writing; or crowdsearching, looking for a general search for answers, solutions, or missing persons, pets or lost items. More recently Prpic et al (2015:79) differentiate among crowdvoting, idea crowdsourcing, micro task crowdsourcing and solution crowdsourcing, according to the two dimensions of subjective versus objective content, and filtered versus aggregated contributions. In this sense, in the case of crowd-voting an "organization request choices between alternatives and then aggregates the votes"; for Idea crowdsourcing the organization "invites opinions for small and big questions and then evaluates the proposed ideas"; for Micro-task crowdsourcing the organization "breaks a problem into smaller jobs and then re-assembles the completed task"; and for solution crowdsourcing the organization "invites and tests contributions for every specific problems and then adopts the best non-falsifiable solution".

Figure 1: Crowdsourcing alternatives.

	Subjective content		
Aggregated Contributions	CROWD-VOTING	IDEA CROWD-SOURCING	Filtered contributions
	MICRO-TASK CROWD-SOURCING	SOLUTION CROWD-SOURCING	
	Objetive Content		

Source Prpic et al (2015)

Although the works about crowdsourcing in the tourism sector are still scarce, we can also find some pioneer classifications based in the previous works. For instance, applied to the marketing in the tourism sector on the cases studies of “Turismo Emilia Romagna” and “Destination New South Wales”, Della Corte et al. (2013) analyze four categories of crowdsourcing: crowd sharing (user to user), where users share knowledge and information (suggestions, pictures, videos); Crowd interaction (Tourist-to-potential tourist; citizen to tourist), that aims to create a relationship between tourists/citizens and tourists who are looking for specific information; Crowd creation (User-with-firm), where users create contents in a dynamic and evolved way (in this case they put together users and firms through a map; and indirect crowdsourcing (Customer Relationship Management) with the purpose of listening of complaints, suggestions or impressions with the aim of improving the service

More recently, Richard,et al (2015), suggest also Crowdsourcing in the lodging industry as an important innovation technique, and propose, based in the model by Brabham (2013), a crowdsourcing framework, and also examples of solutions for the industry, together with managerial implications of pursuing a crowdsourced strategy. In this model, where the first horizontal axis represents the stakeholders in the lodging industry (the owners, who provide the funding for the hotel; the brand or the identity of the hotel, responsible for image, product design and marketing; and the management firm or the operational core of the hotel, responsible for its employees and processes), and the vertical axis represents ways in which the crowd can be called upon in order to provide innovative solutions to lodging industry problems (based in the model by Brabham, 2013 explained before)

Figure 2: Crowdsourcing framework in the lodging industry (with examples)

Solution Type:	**Brand**	**Management Firm**	**Ownership**
Organization: Finding and collecting information into a common location and format	Amenity Preferences Wallpaper Color Bedding	Employee Benefits Laundry Chemicals Accounting Software	Financing Terms Franchise Fees Brand Availability
Optimization: Solving empirical Problems	Wireless Internet Business Center Layout Room Ergonomics	Housekeeping Cart Car Pool Program Energy Savings	Location Selection Meeting Room Design CapEx Budgeting
Ideation: Creating and selecting creative ideas	Loyalty Program New Logo Design Kids Programs	Employee Menu Staff Recognition Cost Savings Program	Management Terms Recreation Amenities Spa Equipment/Design
Analysis: Analyzing large amounts of information	Comment Cards	Employee Surveys	Expense Statistics

Source: Richard,et al (2015:20)

Hence, diverse applications of crowdsourcing can be implemented in different parts of tourism organizations by following these previous examples. However, for us, more that the specific applications, the importance is the concept, as it represents a break in the previous business models, and in the previous conceptions of the production and marketing processes in the tourism industry in general, and especially in the hotel industry.

CROWDSOURCING FOR TOURISM FIRMS IN THE NEW WEB 3.0 ERA

Crowdsourcing has been proved as an important mechanism to improve the management of tourism organizations and destinations, in a way that could copy with the main developments of the marketing. In this way, in our point crowdsourcing should be used in organizations mainly to improve the efficiency of operations and services offered to clients, according to the perception of customers (by using crowdsourcing as a tool for assessment and control function), but essentially as an element to know and influence tourist decisions. To sum up, we state that crowdsourcing is a key mechanism to improve the two-way relationships existing between tourism organizations and customers. From the outside to inside perspective, crowdsourcing can be critical in order to improve the efficiency of tourism organizations, but also from the inside to outside perspective, in order to spread the image and communicate the existence and advantages of tourism organizations. Let us focus in these two directions.

The first direction of this relationship (outside-inside) is analyzed for instance by State & Popescu (2014), in a work that studies the use of crowdsourcing for the improvement of the customer relationship management of organizations in the industry of tourism and hospitality. Such as these authors posited, “By crowdsourcing, the managers of the profile units can get extremely useful information in order to improve their own activity” (Ibid, p.12). This is important in our perspective, as crowdsourcing can help organizations to cover the gap between the services offered by tourism units and the reality met and/or perceived by the customers or tourist, as it can provide with a reliable feedback of the opinion of the tourism units’ clients. In addition, such as Della Corte et al. (2013:453) stress, the information of tourists is essential as “tourist reveals a wider and more articulated vision comparing the specific and limited vision of the tourist organization and the whole destinations reference system”. For instance, State & Popescu, (2014) explain the importance of this information specially to adopt measures to improve/develop the training of subordinate human resources. However, we could extend the importance of the information obtained from the opinions of tourist obtained through crowdsourcing techniques in order to improve all the operations of organizations, in a way that could meet the expectative and perceptions of customers. Such as Garrigos et al (2012b:1885) state, enhancing the participation of the people can help to the personalization of the services offered to customers, and in this point, the use of crowdsourcing techniques and “the specific task of the community manager in creating, managing, and enhancing participation and collaboration in virtual communities and social networks is of vital importance to firms”. Following Richard et al (2015), with the two-way dialogue between the organizations and the crowd, hotels hope to be able to develop new models of service excellence, to provide a new level of authenticity and personalization, and position themselves to successfully adapt to future trends.

Furthermore, we have to consider that crowdsourcing can be used not only as a mechanism to obtain information, but also to generate ideas, provide solutions…. so other crowdsourcing mechanisms should also be considered in the improvement of the operations of tourism organizations. For instance, According to Garrigos et al (2012b:1887), the process of crowdsourcing “may be very broad and could include everything from the design of a product or process, product development and configuration, solving technical or other problems, creating content, corporate R&D, advertising, quality monitoring… to the inclusion of almost every step in an organization’s value chain”. At this point, Brabham (2008: 79) explains that the public could help designing products, or in the area of marketing, even producing memorable commercials and images, outperforming the industry faster and cheaper than even the top minds in these fields. For instance, Della Corte et al. (2013:45) explain that with different formulas and methods or application of crowdsourcing,, the crowd can suggest new ideas to promote for instance destinations “in terms of the right things to do in the destinations, the best experience to live, the place in which they can find tour information or opinions for new tourist services”

In addition, we have to look also to the other direction (inside-outside) of the dialogue between the crowd and the organizations, and consider for instance the possibilities offered by crowdsouricng technique for instance to promote the tourism or vacation organizations. First of all, we have to take into account that crowdsourcing, and the better management of social media and customer participation on the internet by firms are also essential for "improving customer trust and the reputation and image of organizations" (Garrigos et al. 2012b:1885). Then, according to these authors, the use of crowdsourcing tools and the figure of the community manager are essential. Moreover, we have to consider that usually decisions of choosing the final travel destination (or the election of the particular organization to provide a tourism service) are taken by the clients based more on their own research and/or consulting friends and/or relatives, than on the efficiency of tourism units efforts (hence, State & Popescu, (2014) posit for instance for the importance of crowdsourcing for creating databases about tendencies of the clients in choosing destinations and the criteria for substantiating their decisions, and the importance of the customer relationship management of firms). Obviously, if the customers take as a basis of their decision the information spread in the social media, it is crucial that tourism organizations emphasize on the management of this information, not only to consider that information, but also to manage and spread the information that can promote and expand the image of the tourism companies. For example, and following Della Corte et al. (2013:453), in the tourism industry, "the crowdsourcing enriches the visibility of contents, information and news, helping firms emerging in the current competitive scenario and stemming the general confusion caused by the dispersion and pulverization of information both on the demand and the offer side". Moreover these authors stress that crowdsourcing is important in their case study because "the exchange of information, knowledge and competences between tourists and the virtual community creates a word-of mouth… that influences and shapes tourist's attitudes and preferences both at organic and induced level."

THE USE OF CROWDSOURCING IN HOTELS

Let us emphasize then in some previous uses of crowdsourcing techniques in the hotel industry in order to know the successful of previous experiences. Although the research about crowdsourcing in hospitality is still reduced, the literature shows that Crowdsourcing in hotels is being applied in different ways. Among them, and following our previous scheme we are going to differentiate among the use of Crowdsouricng in order to improve the production, the processes, and the services of the company, and the use of Crowdsourcing in order to spread the brand and image of the firms.

a) Starting for the use of crowdsourcing in order to improve operations, several of these techniques are essential for hotel companies when developing their products or when they try to adapt them to the diverse tourists. For instance, several application of crowdsourcing provide a view into a problem solving model that can be generalized and applied to solve mundane and highly complex tasks (Brabham 2008) in almost all the operations of hotel organizations, since the design of the hotels, till the design of the rooms, the facilities, the technologies to be used, the development of product and processes, and even the tasks related to human resources management. Let us know some examples:

1) Crowdsourcing for improving design of and the installations of hotels.

Initiatives of companies like Starwood Hotels link concepts of crowdsourcing and the use of virtual worlds (Second Life) for instance to facilitate hotel concept testing on the market and plan or rapidly prototype the evolving concept for new architectural projects (Jana, 2006). For instance, Starwood Hotels monitored the way that Second Life residents moved inside the hotel to know for instance to which areas of the hotel avatars preferred to go to and which furniture they found attractive. These analyses helped the company to create positive outcomes by implementing built recommendations and by not having to build features in the real world that virtual visitors have disliked. Moreover, Richard,et al (2015) and Vivion, (2014) explain the case of a project of a collaborative design of a crowdsourced hotel to be built in New York, a hotel designed and funded by a worldwide crowd of contributors. In this case the company offers up to thousands in prizes for design contributions (experts judge contributions in the areas of digital services to improve the guest experience, and designs for the suites and public spaces). The design for instance of the rooms has been also outsourced to the crowd by companies such as Marriot, which allow customers for instance to generate new ideas and innovations, together with employees and hotel owners: “Rather than someone at the company coming up with the idea and letting consumers validate it, with co-creation the idea starts with the consumer” in Marriot, according to Michael Dail, vice president of Global Brand Marketing for Marriott Hotels (Trejos, 2013). Moreover crowdsourcing has been used for instance by InterContinental Hotels Group, in order to renovate guestrooms at Staybridge Suites and Candlewood Suites, using for this the participation of graduate students from a College of Art and Design

2) Crowdsourcing for improving the quality of the products and services offered by hotels.

The hospitality industry in seeking out solutions, essentially from customers, but al so from professionals and contributions from social media, in order to meet customer needs (Trejos, 2013). Hence, the participation of users and other stakeholders and the information that they can provide through crowdsourcing processes, as well as their participation in social networks, is important in designing and adapting all kinds of hotel services to cater for customers’ needs, as it helps hotel managers to, with a continuous feedback, improve the quality of products and services. Crowdsourcing can be used in hotels for instance to improve maintenance by reducing defect incidence, concretely the exposure of maintenance issues to the guest, co-producing the identification of issues by incorporating its stakeholders into its processes, or by let them incorporate ideas and solutions.

In this vein, some examples brought from other firms in the hospitality sector could help hotels to improve their products and processes. For instance, considering the example of “MyStarbucksIdea” platform, where customers are enabled to share feedback or ideas and make suggestions on existing or new products (Müller 2011). Moreover, according to Trejos, Marriot solicit ideas from travelers on everything from design to technology to food and beverage on its website, travelbrilliantly.com (Trejos, 2013). Literature offers also some examples used to innovate in operations, since the use of crowdsourcing in Sheraton for instance for new service developments, business processes improvements or customer relationship techniques (Sigala & Marinidis, 2009), to the project "from the ideas to the practice", where clients of the Spanish Hotel Company Hesperia are able to share their innovative ideas with the managers of the hotels. Moreover, other such as Starwood Hotels and Hyatt Hotels, are opening recently these contributions to other contributors through the social media, or by partnering with open-innovation consultancy groups (Richard,et al., 2015).

3) Crowdsourcing to improve the management of inventories.

Obviously, the previous improvements with the creation of algorism can also help firms to improve the management of operations or inventories. For instance According to Zhang et al (2009: 350) "In the tourism literature, inventory management problems, such as overbooking and revenue/yield management, have been addressed in the context of the hotel sector. We think, that crowdsourcing processes can help us to create mechanisms like algorithms or technological applications to improve these problems, apart from creating innovative formulas and recommendations to hotels to improve these questions.

4) Crowdsourcing to improve the management of personnel and other uses.

In hotel companies such as Marriott, crowdsourcing, combined to gamification on facebook has been used for human resource purposes, as a way to engage people and fill vacancies (Erkinheimo and Dombowsky., 2013). Other examples are the use of Crowdsourcing for improve the R+D tasks, with the innovation and creation of new products and services suggested by the crowd, the finance of new projects, with crowdfunding processes, the provision of specific items, with the creation of specific platforms, or the service to customers, with the use of platforms specialized to get the participation of the crowd to improve specific needs of tourist (location, weather, traffic conditions, interesting places to visit….), or to allow them to plan better their trips or offer them complementary resources).

b) If we analyze, the use of crowdsourcing for Marketing purposes, the examples are extensive.

First of all, crowdsourcing is important for hotels and customers because the Web can, in theory, head towards better-informed purchases—both online and off—thanks to sites that offer crowdsourced reviews of everything and hotels are not an exception. Examples of this is for instance the emergence of diverse webpages and firms such as Tripadvisor.com Booking.com or Hotels.com

Actually, in marketing there is a growing trend to use crowdsourcing to improve product development, to get information on everything (product, services), for instance to improve marketing research, for packaging and delivery, to design everything (logos, social media content development such as videos or banners for viral distribution), to improve the price setting and distribution of hotel product or to improve promotion and communication. Hence, crowdsourcing allows marketers with the opportunity to exploit the crowd`s contribution to access to a huge amount of knowledge and intelligence outside the firms, which help them to make more informed decisions. Let us show some examples

1) Crowdsourcing for marketing research.

Conley, & Tosti-Kharas (2014) postulated that crowdsourcing can be introduced as a method for performing content analysis in management research, and analyzes for instance the advantages and disadvantages of crowdsourcing for content analysis. Moreover, Crowdsourcing is considered as a feasible way of providing cheap, robust, content based, analysis of digital data such as text or images e.g "choose the best picture of the hotel" (Jagadeesan et al. (2009). These data, together to the information that marketers can get in the social medias or in platforms based on votes or recommendations of customers, can help hotels for instance to design their strategic marketing and the election of their target.

In addition, one important way of the use of Crowdsouricing techniques in hotels is the use of mining data in order to rank the hotels. Going further, some authors have tried to make improvements in these directions. For instance, Ghose et al (2012) proposed and designed, based on data from U.S. hotel reservations made through Travelocity, combined with data from various social media sources (using mining user generated and crowdsourcing content, and specifically with techniques from text mining, image classification, social geotagging, human annotations, and geomapping), a new ranking systems for hotels on Travel Search Engines, based on the average utility gain a consumer receives from staying in a particular hotel. These rankings are important for companies, as they can know their weaknesses and strengths, that can allow on only to improve their marketing but also their operations

2) Crowdsourcing to create campaigns and promote tourism companies.

Firstly, the crowd can help to spread the promotion of the companies, for instance through the viral marketing, or can help to develop or improve the marketing campaigns. For instance, Starwood Hotels and Resorts have used internal crowdsourcing by asking a crowd of its own employees to choose among a variety of potential marketing campaigns (Barlow,2008). Actually this company has used simultaneously a crowdsourcing mix, by implementing an idea-crowdsourcing activity to employees, in order to generate different marketing campaign ideas, before using crowd-voting to then select the best of the submitted marketing campaign ideas (Prpic et al., 2015). Moreover, within accommodations, professionals can rate marketing, promotional and product innovations as being particularly important and impactful to their businesses (Blake et al., 2006; Richard,et al (2015).

However, hotel marketers have to take into account and copy with some of the problems derived of the extension of crowdsourcing processes. In this sense, and apart from the advantages for marketing, we have to take into account that ethics can potentially be abused through crowdsourcing, for instance with review manipulation, by using the crowd for surveillance, or by invasive and unethical gathering of information for revenge or to expose potential fraud (Harris, 2011). For instance, Fisman (2012) mention that Researchers at Yale, Dartmouth, and USC founded evidence that hotel owners have posted fake reviews to boost their ratings on the site—and may even be posting negative reviews of nearby competitors. Although some specialiced web or firms such as TripAdvisor have removed suspicious reviews in the wake of the fake postings, the importance of these reviews is critical, The thing is that, despite the fraudulent posts, Consumers, do seem to take online reviews seriously.

Another special case of fraud is the case of crowdturfing, defined as "systems where customers initiate "campaigns," and a significant number of users obtain financial compensation in exchange for performing simple "tasks" that go against accepted user policies" (Wang et al., 2012:679). Moreover,, Gokhman et al (2012) analyze the possible use of crowdsourcing services such as Mechanical Turk to solicit deceptive hotel reviews. Ott et al (2011) also analyzed the use of Amazon mechanical Turlk to compare truthful and deceptive positive reviews for hotels found on TripAdvisor in the Chicago area, while Yoo and Gretzel (2009) compared the psychologically relevant linguistic differences between truthful and deceptive hotel reviews. Finaly, in another example, Ott et al (2012) explored the prevalence of deception tourists online review communities such as Expedia, Hotels.com, Orbitz, Priceline, TripAdvisor,

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper is to do an in-depth study of the concept of Crowdsourcing and analyze the transformation of the marketing in hotels due to these processes. The paper has analyzed the concept of crowdsourcing and diverse classifications of crowdsourcing processed for firms. Moreover, the paper has analyzed the importance of crowdsourcing processes for tourism and specifically hotel companies. The work has provided also with diverse examples of the use of crowdsourcing processes for improving design of and the installations of hotels; improving the quality of the products and services offered by hotels; improving the management of inventories; improving the management of personnel and other operational uses; Crowdsourcing for marketing research; and Crowdsourcing techniques to create campaigns and promote tourism companies. Moreover the paper analyzes some of the frauds and negative situations that have to face hotel companies due to negative use of crowdsourcing techniques. The paper offers new perspectives that can be useful for practitioners, who can implement these innovations in their tourism business, and also to authors, who can extend these perspectives and applied in new theoretical developments.

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Tourists' satisfaction, product quality, future behaviors: Sisangan Forest Park, Iran

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to assess tourists' satisfaction regarding to the products and services' quality of Sisangan Forest Park in Iran and their future behavior based on their satisfaction indexes. To achieve this goal, using quantitative method and questionnaire more than 200 tourists' opinions were evaluated in Sisangan Park. Data obtained was analyzed by using SPSS 22 software, Mann–Whitney U test, samples t-test, one-sample t and simple linear regression. The results show that there is not significant differences between tourists' desire about having fun and feeling safe. They also had satisfaction from the services and facilities provided in Sisangan and this satisfaction motivates them to recommend others visit the park.

Keywords: Tourists' satisfaction, Product quality, Iran, Sisangan Park

INTRODUCTION

The quality of a product or service is one of the important factors in customer satisfaction, which has been affected by internal factors and influenced by different variables in services' companies (Jaafar, Bakri, & Rasoolimanesh, 2015). Nowadays, customer satisfaction can be considered as the main factor of success in the competitive world of business (a. N et al., 2015). The main problem in achieving customer satisfaction, is providing the product or service with the quality that customers expected (Kim et al., 2014). Increased competition in tourism industry has led to the managers of hotels, public and private institutions to looking for new strategies to increase domestic and foreign tourists (Barutçu, Doğan, & Üngüren, 2011). Achieving this goal is closely related to analyzing two concepts; product or service quality and tourists' satisfaction. Undoubtedly, the future of tourism depends on the issues concerning about the improvement of quality (Abinama & Jafari, 2015). So, it must be considered important in all sectors of the tourism industry such as transport and accommodation, hospitality, etc. in order to ensure about tourists' satisfaction (Gee & Fayos Solá, 1997).

Tourist satisfaction as one of the most important issues for managing tourism destinations (Song et al., 2012), is extremely important for success in destination marketing (Ahmad Puad & Badarneh, 2011; Bidoki & Kargar, 2016), its impact on the choice of destination (Dmitrovic et al., 2009), the decision to return (Tidtichumrernporn et al., 2010), giving positive comments on the destination (Jihad Abu & Howaidee, 2012), consumption of goods and services on vacation (Kheiri, Zeinabad, & Tabatabaie, 2016; Matzler, Füller, & Faullant, 2007), shopping reputation (Heung & Cheng, 2000), willingness to pay more (Berezan, Millar, & Raab, 2014), subtraction of sensitivity toward prices (Chang, Yang, & Yu, 2006) and positioning of destinations in the global market (Zhou, 2014).

Among more than 30 provinces of Iran, Mazandaran province is one of the most vital tourist attractions due to its plenty of resources. Lush forests, sea and beach, as well as mountain are some of those attractions (Kheiri, 2013). Of all these attractions, the forest in this province is unbeatable in all around the world (Kheiri, 2010). So that each year millions of domestic tourists go to visit Mazandaran from other provinces. One of these natural attractions is the Sisangan Forest Park in the city of Nowshahr. This park was found in 1964 and there has rare species of flora and fauna (Moosa Dokht, 2013). The park covers an area of over 600 hectares. Interestingly, 30 hectares of the park has common border with the Caspian Sea shores and it highly added to its beauty. Many domestic tourists visit Sisangan Park each year. In 2015, this park attracted more than 9 million domestic tourists (Iran's Statistics Centre, 2016). Providing services to these tourists and their satisfaction are important issues that must be addressed.

In Iran, almost no research has been done on satisfaction of Iranian tourists. Considering the matters addressed above on the importance of tourist satisfaction, this study's aim is to fill this gap. Hence, this study proposed 7 hypotheses:

1. Sisangan's attraction is different for male/female tourists.
2. The interests of male/female towards to recreation is different.
3. Female tourists feel less secure in the destination rather than male tourists.
4. Tourists are satisfied from perceived image of destination's facilities, accessibility, attractiveness, and expenditures.
5. Tourists' satisfaction positively effects on suggesting the tourism destination to others.
6. Tourists' satisfaction positively effects on the decision to visit the destination again.
7. Tourists' satisfaction has positively effects on giving positive comments about the destination.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Since the main purpose of this study is to evaluate the tourist's satisfaction in Sisangan Forest Park in Nowshahr, two approaches for theoretical study of this research is considered which are tourism destinations approach and tourist's satisfaction approach.

One of the theoretical approaches for studying tourism is the product approach (Ovcharov, Vasiljeva, & Shirin, 2015). This approach includes research in the field of tourism products, production process, marketing and consumption of these products (Fedorova, Alekseeva, Konstantinova, Lezhnina, & Medvedeva, 2015). Chang (2006) argued that a product could be physical, tangible, a service, an idea or an experience. A city (tourism destination) simultaneously is a combination of physical goods, services and ideas, which shape the tourism experience. Middleton & Clarke (2001) said, tourism product is a package includes tangible and intangible elements, which has five main components; (1) Environment and destination attractions, (2) destination services and facilities, (3) access to the destination (4) destination image and (5) consumer (tourist) prices. The concept of tourism destination image has been studied in various scientific disciplines including anthropology, sociology, geography, semiotics and marketing (Chen & Phou, 2013; Morozova et al., 2015). However, the concept of image has received attention of tourism researchers, the practitioners in this industry and tourism destination marketers more than others (Reichel, Lowengart, & Milman, 2000). Because the destination image has a crucial role in understanding the process of choosing a destination by tourists (Sankrusme, 2013), consolidation destination strategies (Son, 2005), tourists' shopping behavior (Shani et al., 2010) and its future behavior (Phillips et al, 2013). Destination image can be described as a perception of the place (Chi & Qu, 2008). In other words, the destination image includes a person's mental knowledge of a destination like being beautiful, being safe, etc. (Feliziani & Miarelli, 2012). That are the general perceptions about a destination (Dmitrovic et al., 2009; Ramseook-Munhurrun, Seebaluck, & Naidoo, 2015; Shani et al., 2010). Table 1 shows some previous research about tourism products.

Table 1: Tourism product in literature review

Author/s & year	Research topic	Results
(Roehl, Ditton, Holland, & Perdue, 1993)	Developing new tourism products: Sport fishing in the south-east United States	Examined decision-making process of tourists regarding to new tourism products
(Smith, 1994)	The tourism product	Argued that a production model is existing in tourism and presents a model that describes the product as consisting of five elements: the physical plant, service, hospitality, freedom of choice, and involvement
(MacKay & Campbell, 2004)	An examination of residents' support for hunting as a tourism product	Examined 1300 residents' opinion about hunting as a tourism product and economic purposes. The results showed that they have positive opinion
(Sánchez et al, 2006)	Perceived value of the purchase of a tourism product	Evaluated perceived valued of tourists in different stage of purchasing a tourism product and developed a scale of measurement of the perceived.

(Buckley, 2007)	Adventure tourism products: Price, duration, size, skill, remoteness	Evaluated different aspects of products in adventure tourism activities. Importance of each aspect is different from activity to activity
(Xu, 2010)	Perceptions of tourism products	clarified the definition of tourism product and employed Smith's framework to analyze various tourism products in different tourism sectors
(Elliot & Papadopoulos, 2013)	Of products and tourism destinations: An integrative, cross-national study of place image	Searched about the effect of destination image and product on tourism behavior in two different countries
(Benur & Bramwell, 2015)	Tourism product development and product diversification in destinations	Developed two conceptual frameworks which assist with analyzing and understanding the features, relationships and strategic options associated with tourism product development, concentration, diversification and intensification in tourism destinations
(Pyke et al, 2016)	Exploring well-being as a tourism product resource Sarah	Understanding how tourism investors view the concept of well-being in relation to tourism and the potential to use it as a tourism product resource

Some articles have studied various factors that affected satisfaction and willingness in behavior of tourists on vacation destinations (Fallon & Schofield, 2000). So, some methodological approaches have been developed to measure satisfaction levels, even though there is not an agreement on the best approach. In marketing terms two main ideas are focused on customer satisfaction. The first one is the American notion under leadership of Parasuraman et al and the second one is the North European notion under leadership of Gronroos. The American notion knows the satisfaction of the customer as a reflection of positive and negative gaps between the first primal expectations and their comprehension from function of a product or services. But in European notion, customer satisfaction comes by the real quality of function and comprehension of customer (Hanqun Song, Cheung, & Wiley, 2010). However, the greatest theorist in customer satisfaction Richard Oliver believes that satisfaction is a judgment about whether a product or service features provided a pleasant level of success to customers and also if it has the accessible levels or not accessible levels (Butnaru & Miller, 2012). Therefore, customer satisfaction is defined as after intake evaluation that is affected by expectations and the performance of services or products (Nam, Ekinci, & Whyatt, 2011). Furthermore, it has to be admitted that customer satisfaction is necessary in a commercial business field (Truong & King, 2009). About the tourism as well, satisfaction is defined as an after taking evaluation that has a huge effect on the tourist's judgments about specific product or service (Canny & Hidayat, 2012). Muthinho (2010) believes that satisfaction is related to pre-travel expectation and after-travel experiences (Eusébio & Luís Vieira, 2013). Veber also believes that customer satisfaction has the main role in marketing and a key effect to customer's future purchases, market share and language communication (Lee & Lee, 2015). So, for the most of tourist operators, tourist future behavioral intention is a key for organization profitability. Tourists' future behaviors are affected by tourists' experiences include tendency of a second visit, recommending and positive comments about the destination as a reflection of future behaviors and loyalty of tourist to a destination and tourists' satisfaction (Hau & Omar, 2014).

Tousun and colleagues evaluated shopping experiences in a research. Results showed that tourists submitted different levels of satisfaction, shop outlook and shopping experiences (Gunlu, Aksarayli, & Perçin, 2010). Mendez et al (2010) had evaluated tourists' experiences and finding relation between satisfaction and recommendation a tourism destination (Da Costa Mendes, Do Valle, Guerreiro, & Silva, 2010). They had found causes that lead to dissatisfaction in tourist experiences and based on of structural modeling, proved relations between satisfaction levels of tourist experiences and loyalty to a destination. Okamura & Fukushige (2010) evaluated differences between tourists' goals in first and second visit. Results show that first visit is mostly for watching landmarks, but the second visit is for enjoying the staying time in hotels and taking part in events. Ahmad Puad & Badarneh (2011) evaluated satisfaction and revisiting and also designed a new comprehensive model. Results showed that the new model, expressed new relations between history of a visit (image from destination, searching new special events and distance from destination) with satisfaction and tendency for the second visit. Haque & Khan (2013) evaluated effective factors on loyalty of tourists in Malaysia. The results showed that the destination image, perceived value and quality of services have a positive relationship with loyalty and tourist satisfaction in Malaysia.

METHODOLOGY

This research used a quantitative method and questionnaire to collect data. The questionnaire has been designed in three stages. (1) Determining measure items, (2) refining items after a review by experts, and (3) finalizing the scale with five main factors, destination access, destination facilities, destination image, costs and tourist behavior. A 5-point Likert type scale with "extremely important" at the highest end and "extremely unimportant" at the lowest end measured the questionnaire questions. Demographic questions were the first part of the questionnaire. The second part includes some questions about five dimensions of the tourism product in Sisangan Park. With the questions regarding tourists' satisfaction and future behavioral tendencies this questionnaire has 55 questions overall. Open-ended questions regarding to the first three variables which are Facilities (restaurants, shops and cafes and bathrooms), accessibility (public transportation, parking, benches and emergency services) and cost (Cost of transportation, goods and restaurants). To analysis the collected data Mann-Whitney U test, Independent Samples t-test, One-sample t-test and Simple Linear Regression were used in SPSS 22 software. The validity was determined by experts and reliability by Cronbach's alpha of 8.0, which means the questionnaire has a suitable internal consistency value. Sample study of this research was Iranian visitors who visited Sisangan. Statistical sampling was conducted between July and September of 2015 by random sampling method. A total number of 245 questionnaires were distributed among visitors, and 193 completely and correctly answered questionnaires were collected for evaluation and measurements.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Among the respondents in terms of gender, men constitute the majority (68.6%). In terms of age, ages 15 to 25 years old make up the majority (51%) and in terms of marital status 37.6% were married while 62.4% of tourists were single. Occupationally 36.1% were students and housewives. In terms of level of education, the vast majority of participants (72.2%) had college education (Master/Bachelor/Diploma). in terms of the monthly income, 85.5% of the respondents have recorded less than a million in revenue and 29.9 % of them have recorded more than a million Tomans[1], while 11.3 % elected other options (Table 2). In terms of the duration of staying, it must be said that Sisangan is a destination that the majority of its tourists have stayed two days or more (75.8%). Although Sisangan Park is located in Mazandaran province, the majority of tourists there (54%) come from Tehran (Table 3). Another important point in terms of travel is that only 2.1% of respondents have visited this destination with tours, and the rest have traveled to the destination with friends (62.4%), family (23.7%) or alone (9/11). In terms of transportation, more respondents (49.7%) have used private cars and (25.8%) public transportation to travel to Sisangan.

[1] Each 1000 Tomans equal to 0.28 USD

Table 2: Demographic profile of respondents

Variables	Frequency	percent
Gender	Male	68.6
	female	31.4
Age	15-25	51.1
	26-35	30.8
	36-55	10.5
	56-70	7.6
Marital status	Single	62.4
	married	37.6
Education	Masters	17.5
	Bachelor	39.2
	Collage	15.5
	High school	24.7
	Primary	1-2.1
Monthly income	Less than 300,000 IRR	19.1
	300,000-600,000 IRR	20.1
	600,000-900,000 IRR	19.6
	900,000-1,200,000 IRR	13.9
	More than 1,200,000 IRR	16
Occupation status	Others	11.3
	Specialist	9.3
	Employee	21.6
	Unemployed	7.7
	Freelance business	19.1
	Worker	6.62
	Others	36.1

Table 3: Travel information of respondents

Variables	Frequency	percentage
Length of stay	Several hours	17
	1 day	7.2
	2 days or more	75.8
Place of residence	Tehran	54
	Mazandaran	32
	Ghazvin	8
	Other provinces	6
Type of trip	With friends	62.4
	Family	23.7
	Alone	11.9
	Tour	2.1
Transportation	Personal vehicle	49.7
	Public transportation	25.8
	By foot	13.9
	Others (bicycle or motorcycle)	10.6

First hypothesis: Sisangan's attraction is different for male/female tourists.

For testing this hypothesis, Mann-Whitney U test was used. Results are shown in the table (4). As it could be seen from the total sample, 132 were males and 61 were females. By comparing the average rank, it is shown that Sisangan is more appeal to women than men. But by the amount of obtained error (Sig=0.896, Z=-0.131) it can be concluded that Sisangan's attraction is equal between men and women and there is no perceptible difference between them.

Table 4: Comparison Sisangan attractiveness among men and women

Variables			Mean Rank	Mann-Whitney	Wilcoxon W	Z	Sig
Destination attractiveness	Male	132	97-16	4011000	12922000	-0.131	0.896
	female	61	98.25				
Interest in recreation	Male	132	96.54	3928500	12839500	-0.379	0.704
	female	61	99.60				

Second hypothesis: The interests of male/female towards to recreation is different.

For testing this hypothesis, man-Whitney U is also used and the results are inserted in the table (4). By comparing the average rank, it is shown that entertainment is more appeal to women than men. But by the amount of obtained error (Sig=0.704, Z=-0.379) it can be concluded that tourists' appeal in entertainment is equal between men and women and there is no perceptible difference between them in Sisangan case.

So as a result, two hypotheses "Sisangan attraction for tourists (male/female) is different" and "interest of tourists (male/female) is different regarding to entertainment" is rejected.

Table 5: Comparison feeling safety among men and women

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	F	T	Sig	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	
Male	132	12.195	2.592	0.224	0.08	-1.72	0.077	Equal variances	0.087
female	61	12.868	2.390	0.306		-1.77		unequal variances	0.079
Total	193								Sig (2-tailed)

Third hypothesis: Female tourists feel less secure in the destination rather than male tourists.

To test this hypothesis, T test for independent samples was used and the results is provided in the table (5). Average sense of security in women is slightly more than men (12.86 to 12.19). The standard deviation indicator also suggests that sense of security dispersion is slightly more in men than women (2.59 to 2.39). However, comparing the average error indicates that the index is higher in women than men (30% vs. 22%). Evaluation of F and Sig amount shows the dispersion indicator of safety and error amount of T test represent the realty that there is a slight difference between average of men and women's sense of security. Therefore, it doesn't have the ability to generalize to the statistical population. So this hypothesis is rejected. It has to be claimed that men and women tourist have the same sense of security in tourism destination.

Fourth hypothesis: Tourists are satisfied from perceived image of destination's facilities, accessibility, attractiveness, and expenditures.

Dimension of tourists' products include:
1) Destination facilities like restaurants, shops and lavatories
2) Access to public transportation, parking and benches
3) Destination attraction like amusement parks and Sisangan Park
4) Costs
5) Image from destination

To evaluate the tourists' satisfaction with the performance of these components single-sample T-test was used. This experiment indicates different levels of satisfaction in performance of the tourism product quality in Sisangan Park.

In the term of facilities, the highest satisfaction level regards to "adornment and cleanliness of the shop and buffet" and the lowest level regards to payment methods (cash or credit cards). About the accessibilities factor, the highest satisfaction is for enough parking spaces for vehicles and also the lowest level regards to easy access to sitting benches. In the destination attractions factor, the highest level regards to "presence of attractive events" while the lowest level regards to "enjoying live music". In paid cost factor, the highest level regards to "cost of items and merchandises in buffet and shops" and the lowest regards to taxi fares. In the factor of deducted image of destination, the highest level is for security and the lowest level is for attraction of Sisangan Natural Park.

Table 6: Different levels of satisfaction with the performance of the tourism product quality

		Facility variable	Mean	T	Sig.
Restaurant	1	The meal being fresh and warm	2.26	12.132	0.000
	2	Easy to read and understand the menu	2.17	12.283	0.000
	3	Polite staff	2.35	12.235	0.000
	4	Clean and decent staff	2.38	12.467	0.000
	5	Beautiful decoration	2.37	12.061	0.000
	6	Diversity of Order	2.61	15.892	0.000
	7	Fast preparation and delivery	2.5	13.870	0.000
	8	Different ways of payment	2.37	11.269	0.000
Shopping	9	Polite shopkeepers	2.43	19.208	0.000
	10	Diversity of goods and merchandise	2.45	19.3	0.000
	11	Clean and tidy shops and café	2.97	26.079	0.000
	12	Ability to trust shopkeepers	2.89	21.731	0.000
	13	Knowledge of shopkeeper about goods	2.63	21.156	0.000
	14	Clean and decent Shopkeepers	2.83	22.505	0.000
	15	Standard Goods and merchandise	2.69	19.599	0.000
Bathroom facilities	16	Clean bathrooms	2.23	18.43	0.000
	17	Sufficient bathroom	2.78	23.763	0.000
	18	Easy access to clean and drinkable water	2.7	17.874	0.000

Public transportation	19	Convenience and comfort of vehicles	2.34	13.010	0.000
	20	Clean public transportation	2.57	14.803	0.000
	21	Polite Drivers	2.57	14.102	0.000
	22	Adequate sign for finding the lake	2.61	14.302	0.000
	23	Traffic	2.31	11.659	0.000
Parking	24	Sufficient parking spots	2.91	23.419	0.000
Bench	25	Easy access to benches in the area	2.6	9.34	0.000
Attraction Variable					
Amusement park	26	Polite staff	2.32	13.927	0.000
	27	Safe and secure amusement rides	2.97	18.88	0.000
	28	Beautiful decoration and design	2.55	13.299	0.000
	29	Diversity of amusement rides for everyone	2.77	15.144	0.000
	30	Clean amusement rides	2.71	16.584	0.000
	31	Amusement rides being perfectly located	2.78	17.639	0.000
	32	Easy access to emergency services	3.16	17.805	0.000
	33	Easy access to amusement rides	2.55	16.524	0.000
Sisangan	34	Architectural attractiveness	2.06	15.66	0.000
	35	Perfect place for recreation	2.17	17.238	0.000
	36	Attractive activities in destination	2.81	21.54	0.000
	37	Enjoyable music	2.93	6.955	0.000
Costs	38	Transportation cost	2.68	18.085	0.000
	39	Cost of food	3.2	18.430	0.000
	40	Cost of goods and merchandise in shops and cafes	3.46	27.459	0.000
	41	Ticket price for amusement rides	3.000	17.514	0.000
Perceived image variable	42	Safety	9.88	56.406	0.000
	43	People being friendly	2.52	20.07	0.000
	44	Attractiveness of Sisangan	1.94	14.91	0.000
	45	Witnessing racism	2.62	17.184	0.000
	46	Reminiscent of cultural events and past celebrations	2.39	19.032	0.000
	47	Reminiscent of glorious history	2.28	18.44	0.000

5th 6th and 7th hypothesis: Tourists' satisfaction have positive effect on recommending the destination to others, revisiting the destination and say positive comments about the destination.

In order to evaluate the above hypothesis, simple liner regression and simultaneous method of Enter is used. Results are briefly provided in Table (6). According to statistics and provided information, tourists' satisfaction with revisiting (Sig<0.05, R=0.351), suggesting destination (Sig<0.05, R=0.33) and giving positive comments (Sig<0.05, R=0.383) have significant relations. The "coefficient of determination" for revisiting (0.123), recommending destination (0.109), and positive comments is (0.147) which shows straight relation between tourists' satisfaction and evaluated parameters. Balanced Coefficient of determination for independent variables (tourist satisfaction) is 10.5% for revisiting decision, 9.1% for recommendation to others and 12.9% for positive comments which shows the effect of independent variables on dependent variables. Amount of standard error also shows power of regression equation power. The amount of "F" shows that the independent varieties can explain dependent variety in a proper way (Sig<0.05). So the regression method are useful methods that can predict dependent varieties. Since in interpretation of the regression model, standardized regression coefficient is more preferable than non-standard, standardized values are shown in Table (7). Amount of Beta shows satisfaction of tourists, change in beta would cause a standard deviation in varieties of revisiting, recommending the destination and positive comments. T Test is also relative importance of tourists' satisfaction (independent variable) in the model. As it seems tourist satisfaction has a significant effect on all three variables. So all three above hypothesis include "tourist satisfaction has a proper effect on decision of revisiting, recommending and giving good comments about destination are confirmed.

Table 7: Influence of tourists' satisfaction on future behavior test results

		R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std.Error
1	Tourist satisfaction for re-visit	0.351	0.123	0.105	0.894
	ANOVA	Regression	Residual	F	Sig.
		5.485	39.142	6.867	0.012
	Coefficients	Beta	t	Sig.	
		0.351	2.620	0.012	
2	Tourist satisfaction for recommending the destination to others	0.33	0.109	0.091	0.854
	ANOVA	Regression	Residual	F	Sig.
		4.362	35.677	5.92	0.018
	Coefficients	Beta	t	Sig.	
		0.33	2.448	0.018	

3	Tourist satisfaction for positive word of mouth	0.383	0.147	0.129	1.0667
	ANOVA	Regression	Residual	F	Sig.
		9.575	55.758	8.415	0.006
	Coefficients	Beta	t	Sig.	
		0.383	2.901	0.006	

CONCLUSION

Understanding and measuring the tourists' satisfaction is one of the most important issues in the tourism industry (Costa et al., 2004; Mccleary, Weaver, & Hsu, 2007; Pan, 2015). Because satisfied tourists probably intend other potential tourists to revisit the destination by transferring their positive experience and provide positive comments about it (Araslı & Baradarani, 2014; Heung & Cheng, 2000; Ruth & Schofiel, 2011; Kheiri & Nasihatkon, 2016)

Results of this research showed that the tourist satisfaction from tourism product quality in Sisangan Park, has a positive impact on the future behavioral tendencies of tourist, such as the intention to revisit, suggesting the destination to others and provide positive comments about destination.

Accordingly, park authorities should provide a variety of facilities and services based on various demographic characteristics and interests of each group in the future. In this way, tourists with different tastes would be satisfied and also loyal to the destination. The majorities of tourists visiting the Sisangan are single and are college educated. Due to the popularity and influence of social networks in Iran such as Facebook, Instagram and telegram, destinations marketers should use the power of these networks to communicate with the potential tourists.

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Developing a family friendly tourist destination: the case of Byala, Bulgaria

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents part of the results from an applied research project on developing the small seaside town of Byala, Bulgaria, as a family-friendly tourist destination. In particular, the paper evaluates the level of satisfaction of family tourists with various destination attributes and their recommendations for their improvement. Data were collected using self-administrated questionnaires completed by 110 respondents. Results reveal that local authorities need to concentrate on two key issues in order to make Byala a family-friendly destination: greening the destination with more parks and areas where families can spend more time together, and constructing/ upgrading playgrounds for kids. Limitations and future research directions are also discussed.

Keywords: family tourism, destination management, Bulgaria

INTRODUCTION

This applied research note focuses on the development a family-friendly tourist destination. Families are an important market segment for tourist destinations for several reasons. First, they represent a significant portion of the leisure travel in any country (Schänzel, Yeoman & Backer, 2012). Second, families are the social terrain where children learn not only the language and the cultural values of society, but the buyer behavior and travel habits as well. The children within today's families are the potential customers of tomorrow – their consumption, experiences, and impressions will shape the way they will organize their vacations in the future. Third, the family provides financial basis for the collective consumption of its members, including those who do not have income like the children – e.g. family vacations. Fourth, although the children do not usually contribute to family's income, they may have an important role in the decision-making process (Thornton, Shaw & Williams, 1997) – either explicitly (i.e. the children actively participate in the decision-making process) or implicitly (the parents make the decision taking into account the needs and wants of their children). Ultimately, family holidays and leisure activities are positively associated with family bonding and stability (Shaw, Havitz, and Delemere, 2008: 14) and are a means of easing out the tensions and aspirations of everyday family life (Hall & Holdsworth, 2016). The importance of families and family tourism has triggered significant research dealing with the development of family-friendly destinations (Habibah et al., 2015), socialization of families during holiday trips (Schänzel & Smith, 2014), the role and influence of young children on parents' hotel choice (Khoo-Lattimore, Prayag & Cheah, 2015), the roles of the family members in the decision-making process (Kim et al., 2010; Wang et al., 2004), children's day programs and parental satisfaction (Agate, Agate & Birchler, 2015) and other issues.

This research note contributes to the growing body of literature on family tourism and destination management by presenting part of the results of an applied research project on developing the small seaside town of Byala, Bulgaria, as a family friendly destination and the opportunities to attract family tourists during the summer season. Each destination is a bundle of attributes like attractions, accessibility, safety and security, entertainment, climate, activities, accommodation, image, etc. (Morrison, 2013) that have variable appeal to different market segments: for example, elderly tourists are not attracted by discos and cheap alcohol that appeal to young adults. That is why, destination management organizations and tourist companies need to be familiar with the needs, wants and preferences of their target market segments. In regard to family tourism, prior research has indicated that family vacation is usually mostly associated with beaches, good weather, and eating out (Cullingford, 1995) although visiting cultural sights is seen as a family-friendly activity by many families as well (Mintel, 2009). Furthermore, Gram (2005) and Small (2008) point out that children want activities, sensory experiences and play, where they are active and can spend time with other children. Therefore, destinations need to provide attractions for children and opportunities for socialization of the family members if they target family travelers. In this context, the current paper aims to evaluate the impact of gender, age, number of children, nationality and repeat visitation of family tourists on their level of satisfaction with various destination attributes and their recommendations for improvements that would make the destination more family-friendly.

METHODOLOGY

Data collection took place in June-July 2014. The authors adopted survey as the research methodology and questionnaire as a data collection instrument. A pilot survey of 10 random respondents was undertaken in order to check the clarity and the consistency of the questions. No significant issues arose from the pilot study. The authors distributed printed questionnaires to 300 respondents. Of these, 110 questionnaires were completed yielding a 33% response rate. The questionnaire was translated into English, Bulgarian and Russian languages due to the nationality of tourists visiting the destination (mostly Bulgarian and Russian-speaking tourists). The questionnaire was distributed in different hotels and in the tourist centre of Byala. Respondents volunteered to participate in the survey. Table 1 summarises the sample characteristics.

Table 1: Sample characteristics

	Number	**Percent**
Gender		
Male	20	81.8
Female	90	18.2
Age		
18-24	10	9.1
25-34	31	28.2
35-44	25	22.7
45-54	11	10.0
55+	33	30.0
Number of children		
1	76	69.1
2	27	24.5
3 or more	7	6.4
Nationality		
Bulgarian	11	10.0
Russian	91	82.7
Other	8	7.3
Number of visits		
1	19	17.3
2	23	20.9
3	23	20.9
4	19	17.3
5+	26	23.6
Total	**110**	**100.0**

The questionnaire had several blocks of questions. The first question was used to identify the target respondents, i.e. the families. The second block included questions regarding the demographic characteristics of respondents. The third and fourth blocks included questions about respondents' perceptions of Byala as a family tourist destination, their activities during the visit and their opinion about the destination's attributes. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov z-test revealed that the distribution of respondents' answers were significantly different from normal. That is why the role of gender, age, number of children, nationality and repeat visit on respondents' answers was analysed via nonparametric tests: Mann-Whitney U-test and Kruskal-Wallis $\chi 2$-test.

FINDINGS

Table 2 presents respondents' evaluations of Byala as a tourist destination. We see that families were mostly satisfied with the events (m=3.73) and F&B outlets (m=3.76) in the destination, but not so much with the accommodation (m=3.28), infrastructure (m=3.09), and accessibility of the destination (m=2.90). It is interesting to note that respondents had below the average level of satisfaction with the services on the beach (m=2.82) and playgrounds for kids (m=2.89) meaning that the destination was not meeting family customers' expectations.

Table 2: Evaluation of Byala as a tourist destination

	Mean	M-W U-test	Kruskal-Wallis $\chi2$-test			
	[standard deviation]	Gender	Age	Number of children	Nationality	Number of visits
F&B outlets	3.76 [0.676]	807.5	8.896*	1.315	2.879	8.485*
Events	3.73 [1.031]	791.5	7.709	1.122	2.459	15.043***
Accommodation	3.28 [0.969]	827	5.811	1.065	12.701***	9.494**
Infrastructure	3.09 [0.819]	782.5	6.012	1.533	7.159**	5.022
Accessibility of the destination	2.90 [0.928]	678*	5.210	0.543	0.345	5.161
Playgrounds for kids	2.89 [0.942]	838	3.227	6.618**	0.723	4.037
Services on the beach	2.82 [1.006]	856.5	5.208	6.358**	10.883***	9.683**
Transportation services within the destination	2.33 [0.836]	886	4.598	4.971*	2.186	10.852**

Notes: 1. Coding: 1-very unsatisfied, 5-very satisfied; 2. Grouping: Gender (male, female), Age (18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55+), Number of children (1, 2, 3+ children), Nationality (Bulgarian, Russian, Other), Number of visits to Byala (1, 2, 3, 4, 5+ time); 3. *** Significant at 1% level, ** Significant at 5% level, * Significant at 10% level.

Respondents were quite unanimous in their evaluations and no major differences were found in their answers on the basis of gender and age of respondents. However, we found that the number of children, nationality and repeat visits played significant role in tourists' evaluation of the destination. For example, Bulgarian tourists were more satisfied with the services on the beach ($\chi2=10.883$, $p<0.01$), the accommodation ($\chi2=12.701$, $p<0.01$) and the infrastructure ($\chi2=7.159$, $p<0.05$) compared to Russian and other foreign tourists. This suggests that Bulgarian tourists had lower expectations about the destination, probably due to their familiarity with it. Surprisingly, respondents with 3 or more children were more satisfied with the services on the beach ($\chi2=6.358$, $p<0.05$) and with the playgrounds for kids ($\chi2=6.618$, $p<0.05$). The result was not expected, one would have thought that families with more children would need more and diverse facilities, and therefore, it would have been more difficult to satisfy them than families with fewer kids. Finally, we find that the number of visits had a positive impact on respondents' level of satisfaction with the destination – respondents who visited the destination 4 or more times were more satisfied with the events ($\chi2=15.043$, $p<0.01$), services on the beach ($\chi2=9.683$, $p<0.05$), accommodation ($\chi2=9.494$, $p<0.05$) and transportation within the destination ($\chi2=10.852$, $p<0.05$) compared to tourists with fewer visits. This finding was expected because prior research indicated that the repeat visitation to a destination is positively related to tourists' level of satisfaction (Osti, Disegna & Brida, 2012).

Table 3 presents respondents' recommendations of how to make Byala more attractive to families with children. Findings indicate that local authorities need to focus on the development of more parks where families could walk with their children (m=4.26) and more playgrounds (m=3.85) as these activities are by far the most important recommendations of respondents (the paired samples t-tests with the other activities are all significant at $p<0.01$). It was surprising that animation for kids (m=2.63) and babysitting services (m=1.24) were not considered as important for improvement, probably because these services matched respondents expectations or because the respondents preferred to spend more time with their kids and did not need these services.

Table 3:What to be improved to make Byala more attractive to families with children?

	Mean	M-W U-test	Kruskal-Wallis χ2-test			
	[standard deviation]	Gender	Age	Number of children	Nationality	Number of visits
More parks where families can walk with their children	4.26 [0.964]	794	2.110	8.551**	3.062	5.496
More playgrounds	3.85 [1.102]	759.5	3.804	4.766*	2.532	7.136
More entertainment attractions	2.97 [1.018]	531.5***	2.057	1.514	5.641*	9.933**
Animation for kids	2.63 [1.065]	676.5*	1.304	0.993	8.180**	7.383
Babysitting services	1.24 [0.690]	843	6.442	5.144*	0.739	1.391

Notes: 1. Coding: 1-very unimportant, 5-very important; 2. Grouping: Gender (male, female), Age (18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55+), Number of children (1, 2, 3+ children), Nationality (Bulgarian, Russian, Other), Number of visits to Byala (1, 2, 3, 4, 5+ time); 3. *** Significant at 1% level, ** Significant at 5% level, * Significant at 10% level.

Statistical analysis revealed that age did not influence respondents' recommendations, while the other characteristics of the respondents (gender, number of children, nationality and number of visits) had only marginal impact. For instance, men were more concerned with improving the entertainment attractions in the destination ($U=531.5$, $p<0.01$), which we attribute to the fact that women were probably spending more time with the children than men, and the latter had more free time for entertainment. Surprisingly, families with one child considered the development of parks as more important than families with more children ($\chi2=8.551$, $p<0.05$), probably because in families with 2 or more kids, the children can play together which decreases the necessity for their parents to walk them to parks to play with other kids. Russian tourists considered the improvement of animation for kids as more important than Bulgarian and other foreign tourists did ($\chi2=8.180$, $p<0.05$). Finally, respondents' number of visits to Byala was positively associated with the importance they put on the improvement entertainment facilities and attractions in the destination ($\chi2=9.933$, $p<0.05$; Pearson $\varrho=0.261$, $p<0.01$) due to their greater experience with the destination.

CONCLUSION

This applied research note analysed family tourists' evaluation of Byala, Bulgaria, as a tourist destination. From a tourism policy perspective our findings show that local authorities need to concentrate on two key issues in order to make Byala a family-friendly destination: greening the destination with more parks and areas where families can spend more time together, and constructing/upgrading playgrounds for kids. These activities would contribute to family tourists' experience with the destination, improve their level of satisfaction and stimulate repeat visits. Transportation within the destination was also considered a major issue and a source of dissatisfaction among respondents. Considering the size of the town, taxi services are not viable. However, passenger mini-tractor pulled trams connecting the main areas of the town (e.g. the town centre and the beach) would add value to the destination's product and tourists' experience.

The main limitation of the paper is that it focuses on only one destination and the questions were destination-specific. Therefore, any conclusions are generalisable only in this context. Future research may discuss the role of the different family members in the decision-making process when selecting a destination for the family holiday. Additionally, research may shed light on the impact of the level of satisfaction of the family members (e.g. kids, spouses) on the level of satisfaction of the other family members (e.g. parents).

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Thermal tourism and the innovation process

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ABSTRACT

The innovation process, and its application to tourism, has been gradually gaining ground in the academic community as a field of study. Similarly, in recent decades, tourism has received greater attention from researchers in various sciences, varying only by the different emphasis considered: economic, social, cultural and environmental. This study seeks to gather and present the main aspects related to the innovation process in a specific tourism context, thermal tourism. This study intends to provide a better understanding regarding the essence of the innovation process and entrepreneurship: theoretical and practical implications, in specific contexts of thermal tourism. Regarding the methodology used here, this is a conceptual paper with a literature review that brings together the major components of entrepreneurship and its implications tourist perspective and conceptual model of the dynamic nature of the triggering process and innovation.

Keywords: innovation, process creation, thermal tourism, wellness

INTRODUCTION

According to Ma and Tan (2006, p.705), "there has been an increasingly popular trend of cross-fertilization among strategic management research and entrepreneurship research, two fields deeply concerned with wealth creation and heavily influenced by Schumpeter's seminal work on innovation and creative destruction." With regard to its proximity to the concept of innovation, Schumpeter (1934) argues that innovation can be seen as a phenomenon, including technical, non-technical aspects as well as innovations in product and process innovations. The creation process contributes to business success and increased competitive advantage (Sousa & Lopes, 2012), which is a theme that has clearly captured the attention of researchers in the field of management. For instance, according to Thomas, Shaw and Page (2011), three main research strands can be identified, namely the impact of e-tourism as an innovation in small businesses, the nature of innovation in small firms and thirdly the ability of such businesses to obtain and absorb knowledge of innovation. The first has already been discussed but it is worth pointing out here that e-tourism is increasingly being seen as an important innovation for small businesses in developing economies by various agencies (Buhalis & Costa, 2006), although other studies have examined impacts in western economies (Martin, 2004). In terms of the nature of innovation in small businesses, studies are rather limited and have tended to expose the problems of innovation.

Innovation is the adoption of a change that results in something new to the organization and relevance to the environment. The creative idea and its development is the seed germinated by innovative, effective for the market economy (Dosi, 1988). In this sense, innovation has attracted the attention of several scholars and entrepreneurs together with entrepreneurship. This makes it possible to open new doors and open new markets, enabling greater efficiency in business, economic growth, and new ways of targeting an increasingly competitive market (Kastenholz, Davis & Paul 1999), in specific the case of thermal, wellness, and health tourism contexts.

INNOVATION AS A SOURCE OF COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

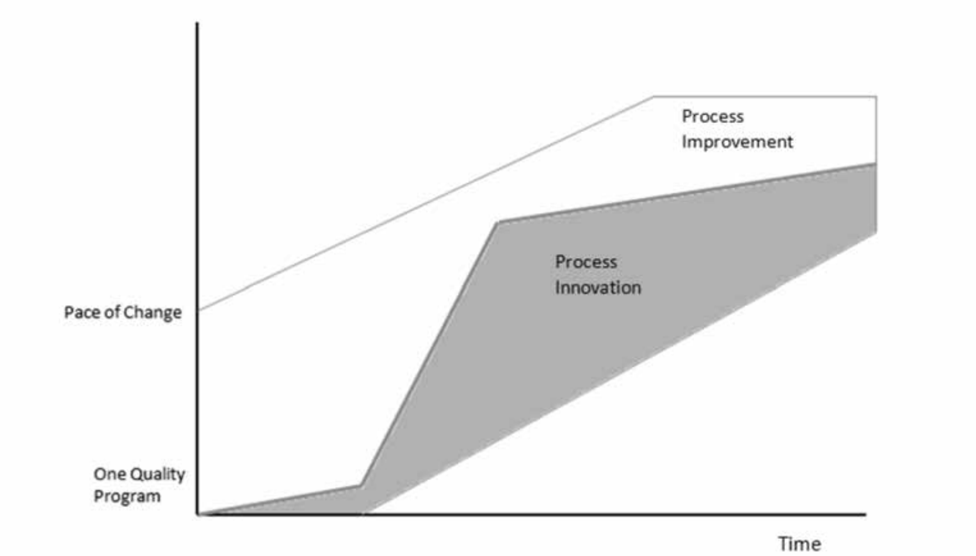
Innovation can be seen as a specific tool of entrepreneurs, the means with which exploit change as an opportunity for a different business or service, being able to be understood and, as such, to be practiced, leading to a common distinction between invention and innovation (Drucker, 1993). Almost all innovations reflect existing knowledge, combined with new uses, including the concept of innovation as a shift towards emphasis on the interaction between institutions, focus on interactive for the creation, dissemination and sharing of knowledge and relevance of the role of government processes as an important actor in an innovative environment.

It is important to clarify the difference between two concepts that, for different times, tend to be confused: Process Innovation and the Innovation Process. Innovation Process is essentially related to the set of steps that tend to incorporate both the market and technology. Companies have the ability to go seizing, building a knowledge base and thus make continuous improvement in process management (Tidd, Bessant & Pavitt, 2003). Monitoring the internal and external environment and analyzing the relevant signals are the starting points. After this, is the decision about how to respond. Finally, a project is implemented with the development of technology and the domestic and foreign market.

Process Innovation, on the other hand, combines the adoption of a process view of the organization's business with the application of innovation to key processes. This is the big difference, compared with the Innovation Process, but it allows us to understand its complexity. Process Innovation encompasses the prediction of new work strategies, the actual process activity, and the implementation of change in their complex human, technological and organizational dimensions (Davenport, 1993).

According to Davenport (1993), in practice, companies need to combine the two concepts in a continuous quality program (shown in Figure 1). Ideally, the organization will seek to stabilize the process and start continuous improvement, to later create the ambition to go on the innovation processes. The differences between these two concepts can hinder the combination, so one of the possibilities to minimize this problem may be the assignment of different roles to different managers, with high levels of cooperation. According to the Davenport (1993), the company must be aware that the risk of innovation processes is at least proportional to the rewards for that in reduced competitiveness continuous improvements environments may be the preferred choice. Highly competitive environments (e.g. greater balance between enterprises, reduced rate of market growth, high barriers to exit) may encourage the bet on a change with the greatest impact (process innovation). Access to information and the challenge of the information revolution is also the base of the reach of competitive advantage, in order to maximize innovation in the process and, consequently, greater differentiation from competitors (Porter & Millar, 1985).

Figure 1: Relationship between Innovation in Product and Process



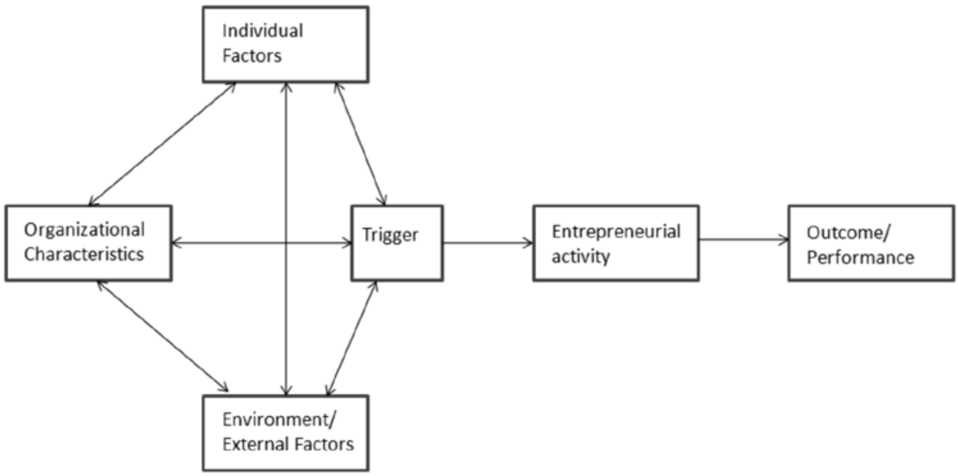
Source: Davenport, 1993

NATURE OF TRIGGERING AND ENTREPRENEURIAL PROCESS

Entrepreneurial activity is seen as a process: includes a set of steps, is subject to management, continuous and applicable in many contexts (Stevenson & Jarillo 1990). This process becomes a source of competitive advantage on a global scale. This entrepreneurial process is, as a rule, inextricably linked to certain factors that allow initial "take the leap" (circumstances, triggering events). Shindehutte *et al*. (2000) present a conceptual model (shown in Figure 2) that summarizes the dynamic nature of the triggering process in an attempt to summarize the various contributions on this topic.

The entrepreneurial process is conceptualized as a response to the awakening of the event. However, the nature of the trigger, relevance and impact depends on the dynamic interaction between the characteristics of managers / employees (e.g., personal life), firm characteristics (e.g., size, culture) and external developments of the environment (e.g., competitiveness). The different types of entrepreneurial activities are probably the result of different types of triggers.

Figure 2: The dynamic nature of Triggering Process



Source: Shindehutte et al., 2000

Shindehutte *et al*. (2000) present a summary which reflect the main differences between conventional marketing and entrepreneurial marketing. The entrepreneurial process results in corporate contexts, rather than individual traits of an increasingly conscious need to provide the organization with innovative behavior and can, according to Sharma and Chrisman (1999), take many forms. The prospect of Schollhammer (1982) is the most cited and identifies five types of corporate entrepreneurship: administrative, opportunistic, acquisitive; incubative, imitative. Traditionally, innovation management and entrepreneurship tends to be excluded from the domain of conventional marketing department (Shindehutte *et al*., 2000).

THE CREATION PROCESS IN THERMAL TOURISM CONTEXT

Tourism is a phenomenon that moves millions of people around the world, taking as a major driver of the global economy. Every year, much due to the frequent changes in the tourism environment, fosters competition between and within tourist destinations (Bigné & Andreu, 2004; Farhangmehr & Simões, 1999). It is multifaceted and geographically complex activity, where different services are ordered and delivered in different stages, from origin to destination (Pearce, 1991). Moreover, tourism is a sector of great importance to the economy, responsible for creating a large number of jobs. For instance, female entrepreneurship in the tourism sector has been rather neglected as a field of study and women's employment opportunities and the segregation of occupations are the major focus of research on women's situation in the tourism context (Costa, Carvalho & Breda, 2011).

As a psychological phenomenon, a tourist trip is preceded by a specific need that generates a reason to travel and sets a goal for the trip, which follows the search for information (Gursoy & McCleary, 2004; Pearce & String, 1984). Like other emerging sectors in a modern economy, tourism is a dynamic and ever-changing industry (e.g. Wellness and thermal tourism).

As such, comes an increasing need to understand the consumer behavior of thermal destinations contexts. According to Lordkipanidze *et al*. (2005), the growth of the tourism sector and increasing demand with regard to new types of tourism, makes it even more visible and required its connection with the emerging trends in entrepreneurship (e.g. Termalism, Thalassotherapy, Spas and quality of life, Senior Thermalism). Since tourism is composed of many of small firms, they are constantly called upon to respond quickly to new trends and market demands (assuming as a source of innovation). The role of each actor in the distribution channel, within the operational management of tourism, will be critical to appreciate the range and nature of the emerging changes. The use of technology has profound implications to satisfy tourist demand as it enables the interconnection between consumers, intermediaries and producers, providing at the same time, tools for strategic marketing development (Buhalis, 2003; Kim, Lee & Hiemstra, 2004).

According Costa, Quintela & Mendes (2015), wellness and thermal tourism has become an emerging market segment directed not only for those who pursue solely thermal treatments but also for those seeking illness prevention, physical improvement and spiritual balance or even for those eager of cultural and relaxation programs. In this sense, this specific niche tourism has become more complex and creative, demanding high quality equipment and infrastructure, providing a wide range of products and services related not only with the diversity of spa treatments but also with complementary recreational activities regarding the connection to nature and to cultural patrimony as well as to other regional resources, creating effective links to the territory and becoming a significant force that will shape the regional development, by creating a positive pressure on local economic bases with spillover effects on the territory. For instance, and according Araujo *et al*. (2015), thermal spa treatment is a touristic product that is highly recognized for its potential in the exploration of endogenous regional resources. Consequently, the development of new and competitive thermal tourism products can play an important role in the development of the inland regions, contributing effectively to addressing the economic asymmetries of the region. The development of dermocosmetics based on thermal water carried in nanobiotechnological systems is proposed for its contribution to the differentiation amongst local, unique and genuine products, especially relevant in the case of products with high economic impact in tourism markets (Araujo et al., 2015).

According to the Portuguese Thermal Association data, demand for wellness packages in 2005 registered a growth of 37.1% in relation to 2004, while, in the same period, classical therapeutic thermalism showed negative growth, with a 6% loss in clients. The same trend occurred in the following year, with a fall in the number of classical thermalism users, from 80,309 users in 2005 to 76,999 users in 2006, and growth in the number of wellness thermalism users, to a total of 22,049 users compared to the 17,730 seen in 2005. In 2008, there were 38 active hot springs, 19 of which were located in the centre of Portugal (50% of the total), 16 in the North (42%) and 3 in the South (8%). Wellness has become an important topic of research, as well as a rapidly increasing business. There is demonstrable growth in health and wellness tourism across Europe, as the result of a number of social circumstances (Quintela et al., 2010:2).

Similarly, Loutraki has a long history in Spa & Thermalism. The water derived from the Loutraki natural thermal springs was characterized as "The Water of Life" since antiquity. The geothermal springs derive from many faults of the coastal area in a 750 -m-wide zone. The natural spring hot waters, at the bottom of Mount Geraneia, are discharged from a great mineral depth. Nowadays, visitors enjoy balneology, spa treatments & wellness sessions in a luxurious environment in the modern Loutraki Thermal Spa.

Similarly, wellness tourism is promoted through various services that are practiced in order to relax and rejuvenate. Hot springs have been one such effective method that has tremendously added to the dimensions of the wellness tourism. Naturally occurring hot springs and the use of their water is highly important in various wellness therapies as well as the procedures that are required to provide rejuvenating experience to the guest. Geothermal energies and hot spring waters are the basis of the wellness therapies like balnoetherapy, thermalism etc. The water of these naturally occurring hot springs usually possesses a very high quantity of mineral content that is used extensively for clinical purposes. Spas and other wellness centers run on the mercy of these waters for these waters are the basis for nearly all the wellness therapies (Jagyasi, 2010).

Also in thermal tourism context, the process of creation and innovation have been increasingly used to describe business behavior, the destinations, the tourism sector as well as all their planning (Dredge, 2009). However, tourism is going through significant changes, facing new challenges that require new perspectives and implementing ideas (Stamboulis & Skayannis, 2003).

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

In an increasingly global world, which tends to promote competitiveness and change, the difference is, so often, the ability to create discontinuities in the external environment. Many times the success is the ultimate goal, which focuses on searching for new products, new markets, new organizational forms and new sources of customer value. In this field it inevitably highlights the thermal tourism as some of the examples mentioned in this paper, as vehicles of innovation, and that may prove suitable choices of context for the operationalization of the proposed study. For instance, the creation process associated with wellness and spa reservation systems, mechanisms and information sharing as a form of competitive advantage over other tourist destinations (social networks), the marketing of thermal and health tourism products and services as well as other related activities that can leverage the increased business synergies.

It should be noted generators entrepreneurship factors that may trigger an entrepreneurial activity (particularly in thermal tourism contexts) and whose origin may be associated with internal, external factors and characteristics of the organization.

This paper constitutes a preliminary contribution to better understand the relationship between Thermal tourism and the innovation process. Following an interdisciplinary perspective, the research included inputs from areas of marketing and tourism. Future research ought to develop an empirical study to test the relationships addressed in the research model. It would be relevant to identify specific profiles of tourism consumers - exploring motivations, determinants and purchase decision in thermal and wellness tourism contexts. Understanding tourism consumer behaviour in specific contexts (ie thermal and wellness) may provide valuable information into destination planning and decision making. Such knowledge would have managerial implications as, for example, improving the elements that most influence the tourist satisfaction.

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Notes for contributors / sumbission guidelines

Manuscript Submission Procedure:

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Full papers should be between 6,000-9,000 words, excluding references. Research notes or case studies should be between 1,500-2,000 words long, excluding references. Commentaries should be about 1,200 words long. Book and conference reviews should be about 1,000 words long. Full papers and research notes must have up to six key words to indicate to readers the topic of the paper.

Manuscript style and preparation

- All submissions (full papers, research notes, case studies, commentaries, and book or conference reviews) must have a title of no more than 14 words.

- Manuscripts should be double-line spaced, and have at least a 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 sheet of paper 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.
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For submission, manuscripts of full papers, research notes and case studies should be arranged in the following order of presentation:

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In the text, references should be cited with parentheses using the "author, date" style - for example (Ford, 2001; Jackson 1998, 2002). Page numbers for specific points or direct quotations must be given. The Reference list, placed at the end of the manuscript, must be typed in alphabetical order of authors. The specific format is:

- *For journals:* Tribe, J. (2002) The philosophic practitioner. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 29(2), 338-357.
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