Marketing tourism and hospitality products worldwide: Introduction to the special issue

Drew Martin [a,*], Mark Rosenbaum [b,1], Sunny Ham [c,2]

College of Business and Economics, University of Hawaii at Hilo, 200 West Kawili Street, Hilo, HI 96720, USA
College of Business Administration, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL 60115, USA
Department of Tourism Management, Gachon University, 65 Bokjung-dong Soojung-gu, Seongnam-si, Kyungki-do, Korea

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

This *Journal of Business Research* special section includes 8 articles selected from papers presented during the 2012 Global Marketing Conference held July 19–22, 2012. The Conference's theme was "Globalization and Marketing Performance," and this special edition introduces current topics concerning researchers and practitioners about marketing and consumer behavior in the dynamic global world. This special section includes research about destination promotion, technological–social interfaces, technology adoption, and travel motivations to better understand and manage international consumer behavior in the context of hospitality and tourism.

© 2015 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Hospitality and tourism managers need to deliver service products in a dynamic global world. Arguably, the term "global service" sounds paradoxical and oxymoronic. Global suggests a uniform standard. A successful service encounter often requires that each customer touch point unfolds in a manner that matches an individual customer's unique expectations. Although this outcome may seem easy to accomplish, ecological influences, unconscious thoughts, and price influence consumers' expectations. Achieving customer satisfaction becomes an overwhelming challenge. Indeed, the following articles illustrate how some service providers successfully deliver global services.

The "Marketing Services Globally" track showcases research from some of the world's leading tourism and hospitality scholars. Twenty-seven manuscripts were presented at the 2012 Global Marketing Conference held in Seoul, Korea. This special edition features eight articles selected after several rounds of reviews and revisions. Major themes include travel planning using social media information, country image, and tourist behavior.

2. Social media's influence on tourist behavior

Strong memories from travel derive from experiences meeting people. Perhaps, these past travel experiences encourage people to engage in online information sharing with complete strangers. Cue utilization theory postulates that specific information about a person serves as a proxy for other attributes (Olsen, 1977). Kunz and Seshadri examine how online travel communities help to create these communal relationships. Their study finds the online community's reputation, a person's communication behavior, and perceived similarities among travelers affect whether or not the foundation for building an offline relationship exists. Of course, communications between and among participants require time to create, to develop trust, and to generate sympathy.

The impact of these online communications is profound. Leisure travel decisions are complex and risky requiring extended information searchers (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005). Consumers increasingly turn to online sources to help make their trip planning decisions. Online reviews of destinations serve as an important source because consumers find their fellow travelers' comments more credible than information from other sources (Lin, Jones, & Westwood, 2009). Are all travel blogs created equal? Casaló, Flavián, Guinalíu, and Ekinci investigate the perceived usefulness of online consumer reviews. They find high-risk adverse travelers tend to focus on negative reviews. Their study results suggest positive reviews require different signaling tactics in order to influence high-risk adverse travelers. A combination of expert reviews and product pictures that include brand names increase the effectiveness of positive online reviews.

3. Country image

Viewing online reviews from a broader perspective, Költringer and Dickinger demonstrate how the aggregation of online materials creates a gestalt destination image. Prior research investigating online destination representation tends not to consider the diversity of

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +1 808 974 7553.
E-mail addresses: drmartin@hawaii.edu (D. Martin), mrosenbaum@niu.edu (M. Rosenbaum), sham@gachon.ac.kr (S. Ham).
1 Tel.: +1 815 753 7913.
2 Tel.: +82 31 750 8669.

sources (e.g., Stepchenkova, Kirilenko, & Morrison, 2009). Using a web content mining approach, the researchers' findings demonstrate different destination representations between user-generated content (i.e., travel blogs) versus news media and destination marketing organization samples. This result suggests destination marketing organizations need to monitor user-generated content to identify areas most germane to travel communities and to adjust their communication strategies and performance measures accordingly.

Country image formation comes from cognitive, affective, and symbolic country connotations. Gestalt country images most likely are formed from a country's products and destination image (d'Astous & Boujbel, 2007). Understanding images consumers evoke is fundamental to managing a country brand and essential in today's global marketplace. Zeunger-Roth and Žabkar unite country-of-image and destination image research streams by developing and testing a holistic model. The study results demonstrate the influence of affective and symbolic mental representations in forming distinct country impressions. By leveraging these distinct images, tourism planners may provide opportunities to distinguish both products and tourism services.

4. Tourist behavior

Designing ecotourism experiences for visitors creates an experience appealing to both destinations and tourists. Surprisingly, the extant literature lacks an integrate framework to understand ecotourism. Hultman, Kazeminia, and Ghasemi conduct a longitudinal study of Swedish and Taiwanese tourists to determine why tourists engage in ecotourism and their willingness to pay price premiums. Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behavior helps to explain tourists' attitudes toward ecotourism and their willingness to pay premiums. The study results offer insights on how tourists' cognitive and affective attitudes influence decisions to engage in ecotourism. Motivations partially moderate these positive attitudes toward ecotourism. Specifically, personal seeking motivations affect tourists' attitudes; however, escaping from life routines does not.

Self-service technology (SSTs) is now part-and-parcel of the travel experience, as consumers use SSTs throughout their travel experiences in hotels, rental agencies, airlines, and so forth. As practitioners invest in every-increasingly complex SST systems, they may question why their customers under-utilize many of these systems. Researchers traditionally have considered that customers may shun SSTs because of inexperience or unfamiliarity with technology (Parasuraman & Colby, 2001); however, research conducted by Rosenbaum and Wong show that other reasons exist. Their results reveal that many high-end luxury customers in Macau shun a hotel's SST system because they view themselves on a "technological pause" during vacation. This pause results in tourists avoiding technology usage during their sojourns. Further, many customers prefer interacting with service staff in lieu of an SST, while others do not find all SST options as equally useful. Thus, customer disenfranchisement with SSTs stems not from an inability to use the technology, but rather, a desire not to do so.

The international healthcare business industry is growing rapidly, appealing to both medical travelers and tourism destinations. Medical travel takes the decision-making process inherent in vacation decision making to an even higher risk level for consumers. Potential risks and consequences of traveling to another country for medical treatment often push consumers to extreme levels of uncertainty (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Surprisingly, little research exists about medical hotels and patient travelers' decision-making process. Han, Kim, Kim, and Ham address this research void in medical tourism by examining relationships among a medical tourist's attitudes, desires, and perceived outcomes associated with staying in a medical hotel. The authors' results reveal that attitudes and desires positively relate to four key outcomes. A qualitative research approach identifies these four outcomes as financial saving, convenience, medical service, and hospitality product. These

perceived outcomes have a moderating role in forming future behavioral intentions.

Travel exposes visitors to consumer goods and often visitors spend a significant portion of their trips shopping for both utilitarian and hedonic goods. Surprisingly, tourist shopping gets little attention in mainstream tourism research. This paper addresses the void by exploring how shopping relates to the visitor experience. Oliver's (1981) expectancy-disconfirmation model suggests that consumers evaluate their post-shopping experiences relative to expectations. A positive outcome leads to high satisfaction and influences future intentions. Sirakaya-Turk, Ekinci, and Martin investigate the effect of utilitarian and hedonic shopping values on destination repatronage and word-of-mouth. Their study results suggest that a tourist's overall shopping experience is more than just a transaction. Interacting with locals and finding a bargain or unique keepsake positively affects a tourist's overall destination impression and influences intent to return and to spread positive word-of-mouth.

5. Conclusion

The articles in this special section offer important insights to hospitality and tourism managers and scholars about emerging global service issues. The research findings offer guidance to practitioners to help them to better compete in the turbulent global environment. People are finding new reasons to visit destinations and information sources are no longer solely under control of destination managers. Rather than take a defensive stance, practitioners need to embrace these changes.

For academics, this special issue serves as starting point to push the boundaries and to encourage looking at the current global environment through difference lenses. For example, medical tourism and medical hotels are not the same products. The latter suggests a very different type of service and a convergence of health care and hospitality. New approaches need not be limited to different services. The well-known Indian tale of six blind men describing an elephant metaphorically explains the complexity of behavioral research. Multiple approaches are useful for collecting and analyzing information to challenge the dominant logic in academic research (see Woodside, 2011). One approach potentially leads to describing just one facet of a more complex issue. Should the tail be the result, a fair bit of the elephant remains a mystery!

Finally, the reviewers' insightful comments helped to select and revise the manuscripts for Conference track and this special edition. Both the authors and guest editors appreciate the time and efforts from the following colleagues for providing timely and rigorous reviews of papers selected for this special edition: Taehong Ahn (Seoul School of Integrated Sciences & Technologies), Seyhmus Baloglu (University of Nevada, Las Vegas), Antonella Capriello (Università del Piemonte Orientale), Alexandra Ganglmair-Wooliscroft (University of Otago), Juergen Gnoth (University of Otago), Salah Hassan (The George Washington University), Sameer Hosany (Oxford Brookes University), Metin Kozak (Mugla University), Gang Li (University of Surrey), Sam Min (University of New Orleans), Milena S. Nikolova (American University in Bulgaria), Haemoon Oh (University of Massachusetts), Girish Prayag (SKEMA Business School), Ben Wooliscroft (University of Otago), and Andreas Zins (MODUL University Vienna).

References

Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 50*, 179–211.

Ajzen, I., & Fishbein, M. (1980). *Understanding attitude and predicting social behavior.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

d'Astous, A., & Boujbel, L. (2007). Positioning countries on personality dimensions: scale development and implications for country marketing. *Journal of Business Research, 60*, 231–239.

Lin, P. J., Jones, E., & Westwood, S. (2009). Perceived risk and risk-relievers in online travel purchase intentions. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management, 18*, 782–810.

Oliver, R. L. (1981). Measurement and evaluation of satisfaction processes in retail settings. *Journal of Retailing, 57*, 25–48.

Olsen, J. C. (1977). Price as an informational cue—effects on product evaluations. In A. G. Woodside, J. N. Sheth, & P. D. Bennett (Eds.), *Consumer and Industrial Buying Behavior* (pp. 267–286). Amsterdam: Elsvier.

Parasuraman, A., & Colby, C. L. (2001). *Techno-ready marketing: how and why your customers adopt technology.* New York: Free Press.

Sirakaya, E., & Woodside, A. (2005). Building and testing theories of decision making by travellers. *Tourism Management, 26*, 815–832.

Stepchenkova, S., Kirilenko, A. P., & Morrison, A. M. (2009). Facilitating content analysis in tourism research. *Journal of Travel Research, 47*, 454–469.

Woodside, A. (2011). Responding to the severe limitations of cross-sectional surveys: commenting on Rong and Wilkinson's perspectives. *Australasian Marketing Journal, 9*, 153–156.