

Marketing, sustainable development and international tourism

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Focuses on five prominent themes in the tourism field

Introduction

This review of the journal *Tourism Management*, spans a six-year period, focusing on five prominent themes within the tourism field (see Appendix):

- (1) destination planning;
- (2) marketing and promotion;
- (3) new products;
- (4) sustainable tourism;
- (5) transport.

These themes are by no means exhaustive but they are indicative and representative of articles published during the review period, from 1989-1994.

The aim of the review is to determine the major themes and trends evolving in the tourism industry, as well as report, both in tabular and written descriptions, research and industry developments affecting both tourism organizations and their environment.

Destination planning

The main theme arising in Table I is that of the benefits to be gained, both economically and socially, from developing a tourism product. In order to succeed, the development needs to be carefully planned, so as to extend and harness its life cycle. Table I reflects different parts of the world that are hoping to use tourism as a way of generating employment as well as improving the local infrastructure. Examples are taken from both areas and countries within each of the major continents, ranging from third world destinations such as Cuba and Nigeria, through to a specific area within the USA.

It is noted that tourism in the USA is a highly developed industry. However, according to research undertaken in a mining community in Virginia[1], the increase in tourists

has not brought economic benefit to the area. The local community realizes the potential that tourism offers, and attempts to develop a product that focuses on their area. Any economic benefits received are channelled back into improving the locality. In essence tourism is used to augment the local economy.

The developing countries of the world are particularly renowned for using tourism as a way of supplementing economic output. Recent examples include Thailand and Indonesia. Two areas that are using tourism planning are the Caribbean and Africa. Hinch[2] defines Cuba's expansion plan as "returning the country to its former position of one of the most visited destinations in the Caribbean". For this to be achieved, interaction between locals and tourists is desirable, resulting in the tourist actually feeling part of the local community. Enhancing tourism prospects is a necessity for Cuba, at present suffering in terms of economic downturn. Africa is also using tourism revenue to improve infrastructure as well as the economy and, according to Olokesusi[3], Nigeria is seeking to emulate successful projects in Kenya and Tanzania. The lack of infrastructure in parts of Africa has meant that Nigeria, like Kenya and Tanzania, is attempting to develop game reserves as its primary tourist attraction.

Moving on, tourism planning in Latin America[4] focuses on the challenge of attracting tourists from neighbouring Latin American countries. The aim is to use tourism as a means of fuelling economic growth, enhanced by both local and regional visitors. Schluter[4] concludes that "Latin American countries are losing a large percentage of tourists through their effort to attract far-away markets". The prevailing view is that good economic opportunities exist if more efforts can be devoted to attracting tourists from local and regional markets.

Finally, Table I reflects a common strand of thinking; namely the economic benefits that tourism can generate for a given country or region. If this is to be achieved successfully there is the necessity to develop a tourist

product that offers the visitor a real feeling for the local environment, allowing the local and tourist to interact.

Marketing and promotion

After considering tourism planning, the next issue relates to organizational participation in marketing and promotion. The articles in Table II reflect a requirement for different marketing activities depending on the product that is being offered. The techniques include innovation marketing for products competing in a highly competitive marketplace, through to societal marketing, where the concern focuses on the requirements of the consumer and not just the marketing mix. The most widely-used promotional method appears to be the use of brochures. This is partly because of the intangible nature

of the product and the fact that the customer can only sample the product through print.

Yacoumis's[8] research focuses on the South Pacific islands, which have developed a promotional strategy for the area. The islands are promoting and marketing their message together, in an effort to increase the number of visiting tourists. Each island is too small to market and promote its message on an international scale, but through the tourism councils they are seeking to "improve their tourism industry significantly over the long term". A different perspective on this issue is discussed by Middleton[10], who notes that the day-visitor tourist attractions, which in recent years have seen supply far outweigh demand, need to address two key areas. First, products need to ensure that the customer

Table I. *Destination planning*

Authors	Focus	Sub-theme
Chon[1]	The development of a tourism product within a depressed coal mining region; Virginia, USA	Economic benefits
Olokesusi[3]	Developing the game reserves in Nigeria, in order to help improve the country's employment	Tourism and employment potential
Hinch[2, pp. 214-16]	The development of Cuba's tourism industry through strict planning controls	Locals and tourists
Barucci and Becheri[5]	The use of tourism, rather than manufacturing, as the development tool within southern Italy	Improvements within public infrastructure
Schluter[4]	Tourism development in Latin America does not take account of native South Americans	Local tourism
Holder[6]	Caribbean tourism needs to consider both micro- and macro-environmental trends	Enhance tourism prospects
Buckley[7]	Northern Ireland needs to consider the tourist strategies adopted by the Irish Republic, when developing tourist attractions	Potential for tourist development

Table II. *Marketing and promotion*

Authors	Focus	Sub-theme
Yacoumis[8]	The setting up of the South Pacific tourism councils enables these countries to market their unique image around the world	Marketing of small islands
Gilbert[9]	The requirement for marketing in both the planning and promotion of rural tourist centres	Marketing within a rural community
Middleton[10]	The need to market attractions to the day-visitor as well as the repeat-visitor as tourism demand has not matched supply	Innovation marketing
Gilbert[11]	More effective marketing is required by public organizations involved in tourism throughout England and Wales	Product-oriented marketing
Haywood[12]	The need to balance community and customer orientation	Collaborative planning
Ryan[13]	Tourism marketing needs to consider other aspects of the marketing mix, and not just promotion	Societal marketing strategies
Wicks and Schuett[14]	The tourist brochure is referred to as being the major marketing tool, as well as helping customers with their decision making	Importance of brochures

feels involved, while the second consideration is that of providing a quality product in order to increase the number of repeat visitors.

Research undertaken by Ryan[13] explains the need for societal marketing strategies – in essence tourism marketing will increasingly focus on the customer. He notes that “companies and governments in tourism have applied only part of the marketing mix to tourism – promotion”. So, to be successful in the future, organizations may need to adapt aspects of the marketing mix; in particular the product, price and place. This development is likely to enhance competitive product positioning. Companies that operate a professional planning approach need to ensure that, through marketing, their product is offered and targeted in the most appropriate way. A concern for tourism marketing is that aspects of promotion are overemphasized. According to Ryan[13], promotion should take up no more than a quarter of organizational marketing resources, and without due concern for the other three variables (product, price and place) the organization may suffer from an unbalanced marketing approach.

New products

Throughout the period of this review, certain areas of the tourism industry have been referred to as operating in a mature marketplace, for example the package-holiday market. Therefore, to remain competitive, new products or concepts need to be developed (Table III). It can be noted that because of this competitiveness, product research appears to be focusing on prevailing new ideas, which are likely to bring both financial and competitive benefits.

According to Cossons[16], heritage tourism is a comparatively recent development. It is becoming increasingly

recognized as an identifiable tourism product, and is set to grow as governments donate money through both heritage funding and grants. A key concern in developing heritage tourism is consideration of conservation matters and visitor capacity numbers.

One of the most adventurous products for the future is space tourism. According to research by Ashford[17], “space tourism will become big business within ten years from the start of serious development”, as people are both interested and mystified by space. Other developments include the concept of shopping tourism[18], which is perceived as a way to develop or revitalize traditional urban centres. Getz[20] notes that shopping villages combine both visitor-oriented services with natural or historical attractions. The shopping village is developed alongside a natural attraction, allowing the visitor to combine both shopping and tourism.

It has to be noted that those future tourism products are speculative, but that the need for something new arises when a marketplace has become saturated and highly competitive.

Sustainable tourism

One of the most important issues affecting the tourism industry in recent years is sustainable tourism. As noted in Table I, tourism is increasingly being used as an economic development tool by many third world countries, thereby helping to generate employment as well as improve the local infrastructure. The problem arises when development is rushed, taking little or no consideration of the product’s life cycle or the environment. Research on sustainability therefore seeks to address the issues that developers need to be aware of, especially in relation to environmental protection (Table IV). According

Table III. *New products*

Authors	Focus	Sub-theme
Getz[15]	Special events are being used in the tourism industry to develop new tourism products	Events and attractions
Cossons[16]	Heritage conservation in the UK is being increasingly recognized as an identifiable tourism product	Funding needs to be provided
Ashford[17]	It has been suggested that, from the start of serious development, the first passenger flights to space could take place within ten years	Space tourism
Jansen-Verbeke[18]	Shopping tourism could become a major activity as well as revitalizing urban centres	Investment costs versus costs of failing to meet market demand
Viant[19]	There is evidence to show that the tourism industry will see a large rise in the numbers of elderly people travelling	Elderly travel needs
Getz[20]	Entrepreneurial development of tourist shopping villages, complemented by natural attractions	Retailing and tourism
King[21]	A movement with the industry towards ethnic travel which is motivated by purpose of reunion	Tourism and migration

to May[22] tourism development in recent years has not considered either local inhabitants or the environment in sufficient measure proposes measures that planners can take to improve the prospects of sustainability. It is therefore increasingly important that future products are linked to the tourism industry, and according to Klemm[24], "to sustain product development in the future there needs to be collaboration between both the public and private sectors".

As tourism developers begin to concentrate more attention on providing a sustainable product, research by D'Amore[25] concludes that environmental problems across the globe are actually getting worse. Tourism is clearly a contributing factor, and so organizations may be required to develop and implement ethics and guidelines for sustainable development. Overall these development problems can be resolved, by responsive tourism planning as well as by government and industry working towards sustainability.

In concluding, it is evident that there are many examples of tourism developments which fall short of the principles of sustainability. The problem though with following a short-term profit-driven approach is that once the product has in some way damaged the environment then people will no longer pay to consume. On the other hand, a product that works in harmony with the environment is likely to remain successful for much longer, generating income for both the public and private sectors.

Transport

A good deal has been published in relation to the importance of transportation and the tourism industry, especially in support of long-haul destinations and products. Table V reflects this and concentrates on airlines and the Channel Tunnel, two important components of the transportation infrastructure of the 1990s. The articles cited in Table V also reflect the notion that transport development plays a major role in helping the

worldwide tourism industry, in terms of both visitor numbers and the products on offer to the customer.

The airline industry is facing change, as a result of legislation imposed on the industry by the Single European Act 1992. Airline companies are therefore working hard to develop infrastructure and route networks to take advantage of this. Research by Wheatcroft[28] predicts that air traffic will grow at an annual rate of 6-7 per cent in the 1990s, as a result of improvements in technology, infrastructure and the desire for people to travel. This increase will bring a competitive edge to the airline market, as carriers fight for the most profitable routes. According to Wheatcroft[28], "the introduction of the Single European market will accelerate the trend towards multinational ownership". As multinational airlines increase in size, the growth in regional services will become important[32]. Regional airlines perform a crucial role in feeding traffic on to the larger trunk routes, providing travellers with access from their local communities. The likely outcome according to Hanlon[32] "is the development of partnerships between the major and regional airlines". These partnerships however, create barriers for the newest airlines in seeking to become better established.

The second key development in recent years is the Channel Tunnel. Research by Garnett[33] examines both the significance of the opening, and the introduction of a new means of travel to the continent. The tunnel will compete directly with both ferry and airline companies, benefiting the customer as a result of increases in competition, as well as providing the missing link in the development of the European high-speed rail link. The introduction of a through train service between Britain and continental Europe represents a change in the quality and volume of international travel. According to Heslop[34], "the continued growth of the European high-speed rail network will provide further stimuli to the international passenger market".

Table IV. *Sustainable tourism*

Authors	Focus	Sub-theme
May[22]	In tourism, developers need to be more aware of the concern for sustainability and environmental protection	Sustainable tourism
Ruschmann[23]	The need to monitor and install ecological tourism infrastructures in the Brazilian rainforest	Conservation and ecology
Klemm[24]	When considering sustainability, there is a requirement for both public and private sectors to work in collaboration	Tourism and the environment
D'Amore[25]	Research implies that tourist developers need guidelines to help support sustainable development	Planning and decision making
Cater[26]	If Third World countries are to continue using tourism as a money-earner then a sustainable approach is needed	Ecotourism

Table V. *Transport*

Authors	Focus	Sub-theme
Hanlon[27]	Airlines are increasingly competing for connecting traffic in scheduled air transport by co-ordinating flights through hubs	Flights
Wheatcroft[28]	World air traffic could in theory grow continuously as a result of improvements in technology, infrastructure and market support	Airline technology
Heslop[29]	The opening of the Channel Tunnel should be economically beneficial to all UK industries	Economic benefits
Heraty[30]	Transport infrastructure is paramount to the successful development of tourism in both developed and developing countries	Tourism planning
Wheatcroft[31]	Environmental restrictions may affect the growth rates of the world air transport industry	Airline environmental policies
Hanlon[32]	The rapid growth of regional airline services will play an important part in future airline competition	Airline deregulations
Garnett[33]	Considers the significance of the Channel Tunnel for the UK tourism industry	Channel Tunnel
Heslop[34]	The key missing link in the European high-speed rail network has now been addressed with the opening of the Channel Tunnel	International rail

These recent developments in the transportation and infrastructure are likely to have a major impact on the European tourism industry. The increase in competition will lead to improved services and reductions in prices, as industry players fight among themselves to achieve capacity targets. Further, competition will increase across the differing transport options, as the Channel Tunnel will now compete directly with the ferries and the airlines for cross-channel business. The rail network from the UK will also link in with the European network, enabling rail competition to unfold on routes to and from Britain, which at one stage were completely dominated by the airline industry.

Conclusion

The international tourism industry faces a number of key challenges that are likely to affect its operations. These are summarized as follows:

- Tourism development is seen as a way of improving a country's economy and social well-being, but if this development is not handled carefully, tourists will migrate to competing destinations or attractions. In the future, there will be mounting pressures to develop tourism products with a sustainable focus, helping to fit in with the local environment and ensure its preservation.
- To ensure that the tourism product is recognized and accepted by the public, organizations need to spend more of their business time focusing on marketing, and in particular promotion.

- Some of the airlines in Europe are currently undergoing a transition from state control to private company status, and the customer should benefit as a result of price reductions as well as an increase in destinations served.

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Appendix: Editor's summary table and thematic relationship diagram

Table A1. Marketing sustainable and development and international tourism– themes, sub-themes and observations based on a review of 144 entries (1989-1994) in *Tourism Management*

Themes	Sub-themes	Observations
Theme 1: destination planning	The economic benefits of tourism; tourism and its employment potential in developing nations; local communities and tourists; tourism development as a means of improving the public infrastructure; regionally-based tourism; tourism and environmental eco-systems; tourism development and collaboration between different communities	Tourism development is seen as a way of improving a country's economy and social wellbeing, but if this development is not handled carefully, tourists will migrate to competing destinations or attractions. In the future, there will be mounting pressures to develop tourism products with a sustainable focus, helping to fit in with the local environment and ensure its preservation
Theme 2: marketing and promotion	Marketing small island destinations; rural community marketing action; tourism marketing and innovation; regional marketing promotions; balancing social, community and tourism marketing needs; the role of brochures in tourism marketing	To ensure that the tourism product is recognized and accepted by the public, organizations need to spend more of their business time focusing on marketing, and in particular promotion. In an industry dominated by both multinationals and sole operators, firms that can gain competitive advantage through marketing will be those tourism companies which continue to reap the high benefits associated with this industry

(Continued)

Table A1.

Themes	Sub-themes	Observations
Theme 3: new tourism products	Events and attractions; heritage conservation; space exploration; tourism and shopping; meeting the needs of elderly travellers; retailing and tourism; ethnic travel and tourism	New products that seem likely to develop include shopping tourism whereby shopping becomes an improved leisure experience linked to the idea of a full day out. A more futuristic vision is the concept of space tourism as people are intrigued by this experience, and the concept of ethnic tourism whereby individuals are attracted to long-haul destinations motivated by purpose of ethnic reunion
Theme 4: sustainable	Sustainable tourism; conservation and ecology; tourism and the environment; tourism planning and decision-making; eco-tourism	
Theme 5: transport	Flight connections; airline technology; economic benefits and the Channel Tunnel; transport planning; airline environmental policies; airline deregulation; tourism and the Channel Tunnel; international rail travel	Some of the airlines in Europe are currently undergoing a transition from private company status and the customer should benefit due to price reductions as well as an increase in destinations served. The recent opening of the Channel Tunnel brings Britain closer to continental Europe, and more importantly creates a high-speed rail network throughout the major countries of Europe. The transport sector plays an important part in generating business for tourism destinations and attractions as the easier it becomes to access destinations the more tourists are likely to travel

Figure A1. Sustainable travel and tourism development

