
Editorial

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Biographical notes: Metin Kozak, with Master and PhD in tourism, is Professor of Marketing in the School of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Mugla University, Turkey. He is author and co-author of various books and has widely published in a variety of tourism and hospitality journals. His main research interests focus on consumer behaviour, benchmarking, competitiveness, destination management and marketing, and Mediterranean tourism.

The tourism industry had been ignored in the global research for development and wealth until 1950s. Along with the end of World War II, tourism movements began to improve especially in western societies, the developed countries of our present time. In relation to the recognition of its economic importance, tourism has become the fastest growing industry along with telecommunication and information technologies in the 21st century of global economy. In this context, tourism movements have lost the feature of exclusively addressing upper-levels of income or aristocrats with free time and high incomes. Tourism has attained a characteristic that enables middle- and lower-income segments to get involved in both domestic and international tourism movements and thereby millions of people to move temporarily from their homelands to other regions or countries in order to meet their psychological, social, cultural needs, i.e., sightseeing, fun, resting, learning, etc. Such a movement makes one country a popular tourist destination while taking in a more or less proportion of international tourism figures.

In the figures of 2007, 908 millions of people who accounted for approximately 7% of the world's population involved in tourism movements, and tourism revenues amounted to US\$ 856 billions. According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), these figures are expected to be 1.6 billion people and US\$ 2 trillions in 2020 and 2.0 billions people and US\$ 2.1 trillions in 2050, respectively (WTO, 1996). Moreover, it is estimated that the total revenues of both domestic and foreign tourism will amount to US\$ 24.2 trillions in 2050 (Pizam, 1999). In such a fast growing industry, the attempts of countries to increase their shares has accelerated competition in tourism and given way to new research perspectives. That is why a growing number of tourism countries are in competition to take part in the international tourism market in order to acquire foreign

exchange, create new job opportunities, and increase their annual GNP, which are surely required for the development of their national economies.

It seems that tourist destinations are accepted to be a key component of the tourism system. Through the development of mass tourism over the past few decades, we can observe that the competition between tourist destinations and individual tourist businesses have turned into benefit for the former group. This is due to fact that the individual business establishments might have felt themselves to be under the pressure driven by the internationally strong tour operators which have paid more attention to the promotion of tourist destinations as a significant product of both the local and international tourism industry than the presence of tourist businesses operating in such locations. As a consequence, individual businesses have merged their powers to create a general umbrella and utilise more economic benefits through such a system called the management and marketing of tourist destinations in a much broader context.

Thus, this special issue is devoted to understanding those elements that are directly or indirectly linked with the issue of destination management and marketing and includes six papers presented at the *4th Graduate Research Conference in Tourism, Hospitality and Leisure* held in Antalya, Turkey, 23–27 April 2008 (Kozak and Kozak, 2008). Altogether we have invited ten papers for a possible publication consideration in the *International Journal of Tourism Policy*, all of which were subsequently sent out for a blind review. Through a careful assessment of the reviewers' reports, we have decided to include only those papers with a favourable feedback in terms of their quality, rigour and potential contribution to expanding the horizons of tourism research, specifically in the field of branding, image measurement, network management, and promotion techniques.

The issue begins with the study by *Huang, Busby* and *Bosdou* who examine the construct of destination image in relation to the views of a sample of 209 visitors about Plymouth through specific pictorial elements. Co-authored by *Özdemir* and *Kozak*, the second paper introduces the 2005 Universiade Summer Games held in Izmir, Turkey, as a case study, and provides a broader assessment from various perspectives in the context of destination marketing, such as event and network management. In the third paper, *Wagner, Peters* and *Schuckert* approach the topic of internal destination branding from its possible influence on destination stakeholders. Next, *Huang* tries to measure the effectiveness of internet marketing of food tourism at the destination level and in a specific case of China. This is followed by another paper co-authored by *Okumus* and *Yasin* who examine how the university students' image perceptions of the above-referenced three countries correlate with, or differ from, each other. The issue is concluded with the paper in which *Karipis, Tsimitakis* and *Skoultzos* emphasise the contribution of visitor information centres to promoting natural and cultural resources in emerging tourism destinations.

We really thank the reviewers for their constructive inputs and the authors for their contribution to coming up with such a fruitful output and also for their continued cooperation and patience throughout the journey of compiling this special issue that, we believe, will be of helpful for the audience who have similar interests in the field.

References

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