
Editorial

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Biographical notes: Rajagopal is a Professor of Marketing at Graduate Business School (EGADE) of Monterrey Institute of Technology and Higher Education (ITESM) in Mexico City Campus and Fellow of the Royal Society for Encouragement of Arts, Manufacture and Commerce, London. He is also Fellow of Institute of Operations Management and Professional Member of Chartered Management Institute. His biography is listed in various international directories including Who's Who in the World and International Biographic Center, Cambridge, UK since 2008. He holds a Doctoral degree from Ravishankar University, India and has been conferred the award of National Researcher Level-II of Mexican National System of Researchers.

Continuous improvement in leisure and tourism services has become an essential strategy for success and survival of firms in today's competitive situation, as leisure and tourism services are sprouting at an incredible rate. Customer satisfaction is perceived to be a key driver of long-term relationships between service providers and customers, especially when customers are well acquainted with competitive market offerings. The key services indicators include effective communication, cross-functional teams and integration among various providers of various services, develops the long-term relationships between the leisure and tourism firms and help in customer value creation (Rajagopal, 2010). As an initiative to develop effective services marketing strategies, this firms are leaning towards analysing comprehensively socio-demographic and travel characteristics, cognitive constructs of consumers, motivations and environmental values using an on-site intercept survey. Some studies have indicated that the motivational drivers play significant role in acquiring new consumers and creating value among them (Kim et al., 2006).

Creation of customer value has long been considered as a milestone in the path towards gaining profitability in the services companies. It is widely acknowledged that effective value creation leads to higher market share and incremental revenues. The relationship between customer satisfaction levels and quality of customer services influences acquisition of new customers. In fact, there seems to be little guidance towards convergence of the marketing strategies with the cognitive elements involved in providing customer satisfaction in services (Cugini et al., 2007). Value of relationship with the customer reveals significant quality and behavioural outcomes in marketing of leisure and tourism services. Consumer value illustrates a stronger impact on satisfaction than on commitment and trust, and also directly impacts a customer's intention to expand business with the firm. Perceived strength of the relationship with the customers would

help firms in improving the technical ability, services experience, pricing requirements, response time efficiency, frequency of customer contact, degree of cooperation, trust and length of relationship.

This issue of the journal includes six papers on cognitive and marketing related subjects and discusses the issues on value creation among consumers in leisure and tourism services. *Stavrinoudis and Livadioti* discuss motivation issues among human resources towards improving value creation and improving the efficiency of leisure services in a hotel industry. In their study, the principal factors motivating human resources have been identified and interrelationship with performance of services was analysed. This paper breaks the myth of self-perception of firms as performing well and focus on improving the quality human resources by designing effective motivational measures. It has been revealed also in previous research studies that search for high-quality service pushes the leisure industry more towards best practice of human resources (Alleyne et al., 2006). Advancement in technology has driven travel services multidimensional within the leisure and tourism industry. The travel sector has witnessed a transition from traditional brick-and-mortar channels to virtual channels of distribution. In this context, *Khare, Dixit and Chaudhary* argue that travel firms in India, operating on the online business models are revolutionising the travel sector. Authors have directed their research towards measuring the customers' attitude towards online travel firms related to website design, service attributes and trust. It has been observed that online travel agencies face intense competition, and thus have a great need to evaluate the e-service quality of their websites to succeed or even just to survive. In the success of online travel services website functionality is the most powerful factor in predicting customer satisfaction and the repurchase intention (e.g. Fu Tsang et al., 2010).

Destination images also help in customer value creation in leisure and tourism industry. Attractive destination images and referred experience with the destinations significantly influence customer value and intentions to revisit the destination for leisure and tourism activities (Kaplanidou and Vogt, 2007). *Aziz and Zainol* have addressed this issue by analysing 60 articles published in various professional journals during 1974–2008. Authors have presented various image definitions and discussed implications on tourism industry. The following paper authored by *Trujillo and Vera* focuses on creation of customer value by measuring the loyalty and occasion of consumption through an empirical study. This study analyses the customer loyalty in reference to special occasion restaurants vs. customers of convenience restaurants. Authors have examined the potential effect of the consumption occasion and social context on perceived values of consumers and price sensitivity of the services. This study would supplement results to some existing studies, which revealed that consumers' price sensitivity is in fact driven by both personal and social consumption situations and that consumer value moderates these effects (Wakefield and Inman, 2003).

Urban tourism has been always supported by the ecological development plans though conserving biodiversity in urban areas of developing countries has become a big challenge. Green ambience plays a very important role in promoting urban leisure and tourism activities. In this planning process, value creating for the leisure and tourism services is converged with the development of urban ecology and facilities planning. *Chaudhry* argues that every fourth Indian is a city-dweller and it is estimated that more than 40% of India's population will reside in urban areas by 2030. He develops a paradigm integrating the urban forestry plans and tourism attractions in the context of an Indian city. The urban tourism is largely leaning on ecological attractions and demand for

eco-tourism is rapidly increasing to drive profit by creating destinations. Such trend in tourism industry has emerged as an outgrowth of globalisation (Rajagopal and Rajagopal, 2009). The last paper in this issue is also related with the environment issues in leisure management. *Rajagopal* discusses the attributes of street markets in Mexico as a leisure destination for urban dwellers. He explores the impact of street markets in urban geo-demographic settings and analyses vending patterns with ethnic values enhancing the consumer satisfaction. Author also discusses interrelationship among urban dwellers, marketplace ambiance and conventional shopping wisdom of customers and interactive customer relations.

We expect that the collection of these papers would contribute to the existing literature on leisure and tourism marketing, and provide directions to the future research on the subject. This anthology of papers would drive thoughtful managerial implications in leisure and tourism activities around the global destinations. The papers published in this issue demonstrate that leisure and tourism research have diversified scholarship.

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