
Editorial

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The leisure industry is growing rapidly in the recovery phase of the recent economic downturn and the competition in the leisure and tourism services increasing. There are many new categories of leisure services emerging in the market such as leisure learning on social perspectives of health and education through community initiatives. The contemporary research studies have revealed that there is a positive connectivity between the realisation of leisure activities and the level of educational of individuals as higher levels of education stimulate interest in recreation as cognitive revitalising agent (Nicolau, 2011).

The global competition in the leisure industry has boosted the tourism-leisure behavioural continuum, which is surrounded with two central factors that influence individual behaviour as *enduring* and *tourist culture*. The enduring culture deals with the leisure behaviour of individuals that is confined to home environment and more habit-driven while tourist culture influences the inquisitive behaviour they exhibit towards exploring destinations following the hedonic instincts (Gibson, 2006). Event-based shopping has emerged as an outgrowth concept leisure product that has recognised multiple benefits in promoting the events as well as shopping. It has seldom explored variations in consumers' ways of experiencing or practicing such shopping and individuals engaged in this form of shopping have typically been analysed and described as a secondary segment of shoppers, characterised by certain traits. In socio-cultural sense, shopping is commonly regarded as an act of consumption which incorporates more facets than those present in the momentary store visit and thus must be understood in relation to its wider social and cultural context (Kim and Kim, 2008).

Over the past tourism and leisure have been regarded as two separate areas of research and study, there has been relatively little exchange of theories between them. However the contemporary researchers could develop the convergence between these distinctive services. Some classical theories suggest that tourism differs from leisure by

space, as vacations occur in destinations separate from place of origin but in accordance with the neo-classical school of thought there exists the leisure-tourism continuum that drives the business dynamics. At one end of this continuum there is the leisure behaviour exhibited by people which is influenced by the innovative services in the industry. At the opposite end of the continuum is tourist behaviour, influenced by the socio-cultural and hedonic factors (Carr, 2002). The classical approach to leisure and tourism marketing is oriented at the management of services, promotion, and marketing methods. The classical approach involved a study of the critical management processes of planning, organising, and controlling the leisure and tourism activities, while the contemporary researchers consider that leisure and tourism are exchange processes, an experience which has value to the consumers. These processes are co-created by the consumers and firms in this sector.

Considerable attention has been driven by the leisure and tourism firms to attracting new, innovative strategies to attract urban consumers through the process of co-creating of leisure and tourism opportunities and stay competitive in the industry. In fact, creativity runs throughout the leisure and tourism industry and markets need creative implementers as well as innovative ideas to gain competitive advantage. A creative profile for the firms competing in the leisure and tourism sector requires diversity of marketing approaches, congruency among service providers and consumer behaviour, particularly if the leisure and tourism products and services to have a unique brand identity or image (Trueman et al., 2007). Increasing competition in the leisure and tourism industry in the developing countries has affected the socio-economic and cultural paradigms in urban areas, and consumer behaviour is significantly influenced by the customised preferences which demonstrate the need for customer centric marketing approaches. Individual, social and environmental factors also determine the leisure destinations for the consumers seeking competitive advantages based on personality motivated leisure and tourism activities (Rajagopal, 2011).

Bridging the gap between classical and contemporary ideologies on the leisure and tourism services in the competitive marketplace, this issue of the journal presents five academic papers on event-related leisure consumer behaviour, operational performance of hospitality industry, eating-out attributes of consumers as leisure destination, medical tourism, and the role of technology in tourism marketing. These papers lay focus primarily on the culture and consumption pattern that plays an important role in determining the attributes of leisure and tourism services and set direction for firms to develop business relations. The trajectory of market evolution and transformation in the marketing strategies can be viewed in reference to economic history, consumption patterns and the structure of consumption.

We hope that the anthology of five research papers included in this issue would contribute to the existing literature on leisure and tourism marketing, and scope for future research on the subject. The managerial implications suggested in the above studies would drive thoughtful insights in improving the performance of customer centric measures in leisure and tourism firms around the global destinations. The papers published in this issue demonstrate that leisure and tourism research has diversified scholarship.

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