
Editorial

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Biographical notes: Marianna Sigala is an Associate Professor at the University of the Aegean, Greece. Prior to her current position, she lectured at the Universities of Strathclyde and Westminster in the UK. She also has professional hospitality industry experience. Her interests include service management, information and communication technologies (ICT) in tourism and hospitality, and e-learning. Her work has been published in several academic journals, books and international conferences. She is currently the Editor of the journal *Managing Service Quality* and the *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Cases*. She is the former President of EuroCHRIE and has served on the board of directors of I-CHRIE, IFITT and HeAIS.

Evangelos Christou is a Professor of Tourism Marketing at the Department of Business Administration of the Alexander Technological Institute of Thessaloniki, in Greece. He has teaching and research experience at the University of the Aegean, the Hellenic Open University, and the University of Bolzano. He received his PhD in Tourism Marketing from the University of Wales, and he is a Chartered Marketer. His research interests include: tourism and hospitality marketing, wine tourism, wine marketing, culture/heritage tourism, e-marketing, and tourism education. He has published extensively in refereed journals and conferences and has authored two books. He is the Editor of the journal *Tourismos*.

Sport tourism is at the heart of global tourism's growth and as the fastest growing sector in the international travel and tourism industry, accounted in 2009 for an astonishing US\$700 billion of the international tourism market. The economies of cities, regions and entire countries (in the case of mega sport events like the Olympic Games) are ever more dependent on creating synergies between sports and tourism to jump start economic and socio-economic development and change, as sports tourists appear to be high-spenders and stimulators of tourism multiplier effects. However, similar to other sectors, sports

tourism is currently challenged by numerous trends and issues such as sophisticated demand, global competition, technological advances and environmental concerns.

In this vein, this special issue aimed to identify and discuss some of the most important challenges of sports tourism and provide useful implications to educators, sport managers and organisations, as well as destination managers alike. To achieve that the special issue invited the submission of papers seeking to investigate the management and marketing of sport tourism, to explore the future of sport tourism destinations, and to identify sports tourism's economic, managerial, developmental, socio-cultural, and political impacts. Overall, six papers were submitted to the special issue from which four were finally accepted for publication in the special issue. The published papers represent two studies addressing the topic of the special issue from a micro perspective and two papers focusing on the macro management of sport tourism.

Analytically, the first paper explores the impact of new technologies on the marketing of sports events. The paper is co-authored by Jeremy J. Sierra, Harry A. Taute and Michael R. Hyman and it is titled 'Efficacy of sporting event ads with textese (SMS-type copy)'. Specifically, the paper investigated the efficacy of SMS advertising in relation to other traditional advertising methods (e.g., outdoor advertising). Findings from a primary research provided evidence that the ads containing textese outperform ads with traditional copy on viewers' responses about ad novelty, attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand, emotions toward the ad, perceived brand trust, ad persuasiveness, and intent to purchase the advertised brand.

The second paper is co-authored by Joon-Seo Andrew Choi, MyoungJin Kim and Sung-Bae Roger Park and it is titled 'Globalising sport management curriculum: an analysis of benefits of a short-term study abroad programme'. The authors aimed to develop an academic model for updating the curriculum of sports tourism in order to prepare sports managers who would be capable to address the globalisation and current needs of sports organisations. To achieve that, the authors proposed and tested the educational benefits of including a short-term study abroad class in a sports management course in order to give the opportunity to students to experience international aspects of sport in their curriculum. Overall, findings from the students' feedback reveal that the suggested academic model fosters personal growth, cultural diversity, and of course, an understanding of international aspects of sport industry.

The third paper is entitled 'Exploring perceptions for Cyprus as a sustainable golf destination: motivational and attitudinal orientations of golf tourists' and is co-authored by Nikolaos Boukas and Vassilios Ziakas. The paper focused on investigating the sustainability issues of sports tourism by using golf tourism in Cyprus as a case study. Specifically, the paper examined the perceptions of golf tourists in Cyprus about their golf holiday experience and the sustainable character of golf practices through a series of statements that examines their motivation for travelling to Cyprus and the corresponding attributes of the Cypriot golf tourist product that they experienced. The findings of this study provide insight for the Cypriot tourism policy-makers to understand the perceptions of golf tourists and hence to design the golf tourism product of Cyprus accordingly. Moreover, the paper provides a useful perspective for examining comprehensively the meaning and shaping of sport tourist experiences within a sustainability context.

The last paper titled "'Tell me who's your host and I'll tell you who you are": Olympic Games image before and after the 2008 and 2010 Olympic Games' is co-authored by Anahit Armenakyan, Louise A. Heslop, John Nadeau, Irene R.R. Lu and Norm O'Reilly. The purpose of this paper was to explore the images of the Olympic

Games and their host countries, as a country and as a tourism destination, before and after the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games (BOG) and 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games (VOG). To achieve that, the paper reports on a questionnaire-based study completed by 1,292 American respondents who were approached two months before and two months after both the 2008 and 2010 Games. Results indicate a significant decrease in the attitudes towards the OG in the case of the 2008 BOG and some improvement in the case of the 2010 VOG. This contrast between the OG hosted in a developed country and one held in a developing country is an important contribution to the sport events literature and offers useful implications to countries wishing to bid or are organising mega sports events. Furthermore, as the findings also showed that the evaluations of the OG as a destination are influenced (mediated) mainly by the evaluations of the host country as a destination, the paper also provides useful implications to destination managers in terms of how to best exploit and manage sports events for the benefit of their destination.

We would like to thank all those that have contributed and supported the development of this special issue namely the authors of the submitted and published papers, as well as the anonymous reviewers who have spent considerable time for reading the papers and providing useful comments to the authors.

We hope that you will enjoy reading the papers of this special issue and that you will find them useful to your research and professional life.