
Editorial: Changing travel markets: restructuring adventure, wellbeing, and eco-tourism strategies

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Tourism is one of the key financial resources for many service-dominated countries. The inflow of tourists to Asian and Latin American countries has been critically declined since the beginning of 2020 as a pandemic effect. Consequently, it has become necessary for tourism-dominated developing countries in South-East Asia (e.g., Thailand, Malaysia, India, the Philippines and Indonesia) and Latin America (e.g., Mexico, Columbia, Peru and Caribbean) to restructure the destination tourism strategies. Among the other tourism sectors, adventure, wellness, and eco-tourism segments need special attention in the post-pandemic business recovery period. Adventure tourism is growing fast among the tourism sectors and constitutes a major part of the tourism industry in the developing countries. The demand of adventure tourism is driven by the increasing urbanisation and digitisation of services that blends online and offline (O-to-O) processes to facilitate consumers in buying and enjoying the adventure tourism. Consumers seeking active and authentic experiences look for tourism services that can converge natural (ecological), ethnic, and cultural values of adventure tourism. The benefits of adventure tourism encompass reaching out to high-end and high-value customers, offering sustainable practices and green products, and developing alliances with the local players in tourism industry to support local and regional economy (Cheng et al., 2018). Adventure tourism is dynamic and innovative, which embeds co-created activities that are frequently introduce.

Adventure tourism varies on physical features across destinations, as psychological and community centred elements drive emotions such as excitement and fear among tourists. There are also clusters of adventure tourism dimensions across the destinations, which are dominated by the ethnic, social, and cultural practices (e.g., Amazon Rainforest, mountaineering in Asia and rafting in Latin America). The blueprint for adventure tourism suggests identification of the above dimensions as perceived by consumers (Triantafyllidou and Petala, 2016). Social media and information technology play a significant role in generating awareness among the adventure tourism. Social networks help tourism companies to understand customer needs and co-create adventure tourism services. Some studies revealed that young adults seek micro-adventures within their neighbourhood, while health and wellbeing have also been a stronger focus in adventure tourism. Firms focusing on health (wellbeing) and sustainability to promote adventure tourism can develop a market competitive framework of services in this segment (Gross and Sand, 2020). The stakeholder engagement is often critical to sustainable tourism development, as this is a niche area of the tourism industry, firms need to integrate this tourism segment with the triple bottom line comprising people

(stakeholders), planet (sustainability and green adventure tourism), and profit (co-creating value, profit and revenue streams). However, tourism firms at the grassroots have yet to define the roles of stakeholders clearly and co-evolve network of relationships among adventure tourism stakeholders. There exists a significant opportunity in this segment of the industry, which needs to be exploited by a systematic approach to plan adventure tourism. The collective intelligence and crowd-based business modelling could be implemented to effectively manage the adventure tourism services (Kent et al., 2012).

Historically, wellbeing as a social concept contributes to an in-depth understanding of tourism as a phenomenon of continuous learning and motivates tourists for more meaningful, transformational, or eudemonic tourist experiences. Integrating wellbeing with tourism activities and services has emerged as a collateral structure for social, cultural, and economic growth. The association of both utilitarian and hedonic values with the wellbeing blended tourism services has significantly developed the tourism experience and value system of modern society (Carlisle et al., 2009). Fundamentally, the concept of wellbeing has evolved around the hedonic and the utilitarian perspectives, which integrate the psychosocial concepts such as life satisfaction and desire fulfilment. Consumption behaviour is built around two prime maxims – utilitarianism and hedonism. Utilitarian consumption emphasises gaining the consumer surplus and long-term association with the products or services, whereas hedonic consumption behaviour grows over the emotive and multisensory cognition supported by the societal values and shopping experience (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982). Conspicuous behaviour is developed with cognitive focus on societal-value and attention to hedonic elements. Such consumption experience is elicited from emotive and multisensory elements that focus on affective consumer behaviour. Emotional attachments lead to stronger consumer self-image congruence on brands. Affective and hedonic behaviours stimulated by the peer and social consciousness play positive role in driving consumer-brand congruence (Jiang and Benbasat, 2007).

Wellbeing-enhanced tourism marketing is based on the hedonic and eudemonia spectrum value-chain as the tourism services in this segment offer long-term transformational benefits. Broadly, the optimum tourist wellbeing services combine hedonic, altruistic, and meaningful experiences, which are often co-created by the firms through effective stakeholder engagement. However, destination tourism firms need to adopt a utilitarian approach for promoting the wellbeing tourism often combined with the medical tourism (Smith and Diekmann, 2017). The consumer homophily often drives consumers to compartmentalise their social values and lifestyles because of either superiority or inferiority cognitive attributes. Such state of mind drives inferiority-driven consumers to adapt to conspicuous consumption behaviour (Ghiglini and Goyal, 2010). Indeed, low and middle-income individuals face complex desires and curiosity to attain hedonic experience of wellness tourism, as they compare themselves to typically richer individuals in a random network (Immorlica et al., 2017).

This issue of the journal includes five papers that broadly address adventure tourism, sustainable tourism, and the wellbeing perspectives related to tourism. The research papers with the above focus represent study areas of India, the USA, South Africa, Ethiopia and Oman. These papers discuss contemporary research propositions and attempt to establish convergence between the role of consumers and companies in managing brand awareness, brand knowledge, and brand affinity among competitive leisure and tourism brands in the marketplace. I hope the collection of research papers

appearing in this issue will enrich the existing literature on the topic and stimulate future research.

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