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 GVK Union Catalogue & Foundation of Prussian Cultural Heritage
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Editorial

 **Marina Y. Sheresheva**, Guest Editor
Lomonosov Moscow State University, Russia

JEL Classification: L83, M1, O1, Z3

Biographical note: Dr. Marina Y. Sheresheva is Professor at the Department of Applied Institutional Economics, Director of the Research Center for Network Economy, Head of the Laboratory for Institutional Analysis, Faculty of Economics, Lomonosov Moscow State University, Russia (m.sheresheva@gmail.com).

1 INTRODUCTION

This is the tenth publication of JTHSM (volume 6, issue 1), starting its sixth year of publication. In previous issues, this journal presented original refereed papers, both conceptual and research-based, focused on various topics of tourism, heritage, and services with an emphasis on marketing and management. Volume 6, issue 1 is a Special Issue (the first ever published by JTHSM) and we focus on furthering the journal's scope and consolidating its position in both conceptual developments and practical applications in tourism, heritage, and services through publication of five quality manuscripts that were initially included in 6th International Conference on Contemporary Marketing Issues (ICCMi) that was held in Greece in 2018. These papers were further improved by their authors and subsequently underwent additional rigorous double-blind reviewing.

2 PRESENTATION OF THE FIRST ISSUE OF 2020

The present issue of JTHSM contains five manuscripts written by sixteen authors located in different countries and affiliated with eight different universities.

The first paper is written by V. Daskalaki, M.C. Voutsas, C. Boutsouki from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece, and L. Hatzithomas from the University of Macedonia, also in Greece. The authors investigate the factors that affect museum visitors' satisfaction and their future behavior. A survey discussed in the paper was carried out on a sample of 632 visitors in two most popular and frequently visited museums in Thessaloniki (Greece), namely the Archaeological Museum and the Museum for Science and Technology, that are highly different in terms of atmosphere, exhibits and activities. The obtained empirical results confirmed that the five dimensions of SERVPERF successfully determine the degree of visitors' satisfaction and predict future behavior. The type of museum, as well as the visitors' place of residence, are significant factors affecting satisfaction and future behavior.

Online reservation systems in e-Business and decision making in e-tourism are the subject of the research discussed in the second paper in this issue written by C. Halkiopoulos, K. Giotopoulos, D. Papadopoulos, E. Gkintoni, H. Antonopoulou from the Technological Educational Institute of Western Greece. The paper shows how the development of the Internet has significantly changed the market conditions of tourist organizations providing new tools for tourism marketing and management. As up to date, e-Tourism is oriented towards consumers and technology that surrounds them, providing dynamic communication with tourist organizations. Through online booking systems, consumers have become very powerful and more able to determine the elements of tourism products especially students who are tourists of the lower budget. The study focuses on the exploration of knowledge of online booking systems and the views of local students-users concerning the booking rate based on these online systems. Another perspective of this project is to investigate the decision-making process (emotion-focused). Three scales were administered E-WOM and Accommodation Scale, Emotion-Based Decision-Making Scale and Trait Emotional Intelligence Scale. Survey data was collected and analyzed based on Data Mining techniques evaluating the results. Classification and association algorithms were utilized to manage to describe hidden patterns. The research results approve that innovations in technology can help in interaction, personalization, and networking. Therefore, it is necessary to design tourism organizations strategies that will take advantage of ICT opportunities.

In the third paper, A. Skapinaki and M. Salamoura from the University of the Aegean, Greece, examine the impact of teachers' job satisfaction and self-efficacy in improving service quality. They discuss findings of the study conducted in 2016 through structured questionnaires among teachers of primary education in Chios Island, Greece, in both urban and rural areas. Based on the obtained empirical data, the authors indicated three clusters of respondents according to their behavior, as teachers emphasized different aspects of marketing: external, interactive and internal marketing. Factor analysis revealed that their satisfaction was affected



by "Workplace Relationships with the Director and Colleagues", "Educational Management", "Social Recognition and Professional Development", "Relationships with Parents and Students", "Infrastructure" and "Working Conditions and Nature of Work", while "Class and Students' Relationships Management" and "Students' Engagement and Educational Strategies" were influencing parameters of teachers' self-efficacy.

The fourth paper is authored by Chrysoula Chatzigeorgiou and Evangelos Christou, both affiliated with the International Hellenic University, in Greece. The study reported in this paper explores consumers' experiences with technology-assisted service encounters by investigating the applicability of Mick and Fournier's paradoxes of technology adoption to the social media as distribution channel in tourism scenario. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore consumers' experiences when using social media distribution services and the results were compared to those of Mick and Fournier. The findings are similar, suggesting that when consumers adopt online technology like social media, they can simultaneously develop positive and negative attitudes. The findings of this study also suggest that the nature of some of the paradoxes experienced by consumers may depend on the industry (tourism in this study) and the technology (social media in this study) being investigated.

The fifth article provides a better understanding of marketing issues relevant to sustainable tourism development in Russia. The authors of this research note, M. Y. Sheresheva, A. N. Polukhina and M.S. Oborin represent different Russian universities, namely Lomonosov Moscow State University, Volga State University of Technology, Plekhanov Russian University of Economics, and Perm State National Research University. The Mari El Republic, one of the 85 Russian regions, was in the focus of the research presented in the paper. The empirical study conducted in the form of in-depth interviews with key informants as well as by means of a survey that involved 225 residents of three rural settlements of the Mari El Republic. The sample covered three-quarters of the adult population permanently residing in these settlements. The main goal was to study the socio-cultural and behavioral characteristics of the local population, in relationship to the development of business activities in the field of rural tourism. The research has shown that the main obstacle for sustainable tourism development is the absence of the right positioning for target audiences. For Mari El Republic ethno-tourism concept, based on preserving paganism, the traditional religion of the Mari people, can become a solid basis for positioning, but there is a need to understand and take into account socio-cultural specifics of tourism destinations to ensure positive impact on the prosperity of local communities that are among the most important stakeholders in destination marketing. Based on the above, I trust that you will enjoy reading this new – and Special Issue – of the Journal of Tourism, Heritage & Services Marketing!



Service quality, visitor satisfaction and future behavior in the museum sector

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Abstract

Purpose: Visitor satisfaction has become of significant importance and is a substantial asset in a museum's strategic development plan. The present study elaborates on the issues of service quality, visitor satisfaction and future behavior intentions taking into consideration distinct museum settings in Greece.

Methods: A survey through a self-administered questionnaire based on the dimensions of SERVPERF among 632 visitors in two distinct in terms of atmosphere, exhibits and activities museums, the Archaeological Museum and the Museum for Science and Technology in Thessaloniki provides empirical evidence.

Results: The results indicate that the five dimensions of SERVPERF can successfully determine the degree of visitors' satisfaction and predict future behavior. Future behavior is often subject to visitors' place of residence. The type of museum is also a significant factor affecting satisfaction and future behavior. on and loyalty.

Implications: Findings are somewhat consistent with prior studies in museums and support the significance of service quality on satisfaction. The correlation analysis for both museums shows that there is a moderate positive correlation between all SERVPERF dimensions with future behavior. Path analysis with structural equation modeling revealed a statistically significant positive effect only of tangibles for Science and Technology Museum and reliability for the Archaeological museum on visitors' satisfaction.

Keywords: Service Quality, Museums, Satisfaction, Future Behavior, SERVPERF

JEL Classification: L8, L15, L83

Biographical note: Vasiliki V. Daskalaki holds an MSc in Business Administration. She is currently an Office Administrator at RE/MAX Analogia, Greece. Maria C. Voutsas is currently a Ph.D. Candidate in Advertising and Consumer Behavior at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and a Research Fellow at the University of Macedonia, both in Greece. Christina Boutsouki is currently an Associate Professor in Marketing at the Economics Department, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece. Leonidas Hatzithomas is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Business Administration at the University of Macedonia. Corresponding author: Christina Boutsouki (chbouts@econ.auth.gr)

1 INTRODUCTION

Over the past few years there has been a considerable interest by both academics and practitioners in the museum sector. Museums a cornerstone of cultural inheritance, are also source of creativity capable of producing economic and technical innovation, furthering knowledge and understanding of arts and history, and developing viable opportunities in the future (Sepe & Di Trapani, 2010). If cultural inheritance can be considered an important factor of

growth, it is imperative that it is preserved and transferred to future generations in a manner comprehensible and acceptable to everyone. As is the case with any enterprise, a museum needs organization of its operation and a conscious and constant effort to make its service widely known and appreciated by the public as a source of competitive advantage (Kotler et al., 2008; Mensah & Mensah, 2018). In today's competitive environment, museums should determine specific goals and develop a marketing plan to enhance their attractiveness and increase the number visitors along with their revenue (Kotler et al., 2008). Within this



setting, visitor satisfaction becomes of absolute importance and is a significant asset in a museum's strategic development. The present study elaborates on the issue of visitor satisfaction and future behavior taking into consideration distinct museum settings, the Archaeological Museum and the Museum for Science and Technology in Thessaloniki (Greece).

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Museum service quality

Service quality in museums is a complex concept linked to many aspects of the museum experience. It refers to the collection of exhibits as well as their presentation and includes the competence and expertise of the staff (Markovic et al., 2013). Rentscher & Gilmore (2002) claim that dimensions such as education, accessibility, communication, relevance and the frequency of temporary exhibitions are also important elements for the delivery of quality services. According to Negri et al. (2009), there are two approaches on how museum service quality should be defined and measured. In the first case, the issue is approached from the visitor's point of view, the so called "public quality of a museum" (Negri et al., 2009). The public quality of a museum is the extent to which it meets the needs and desires of visitors (Negri et al., 2009) and can be assessed by an evaluation of the difference between visitors' expectations and their perceptions of the services provided by the museum (Christou & Kassianidis, 2002; Maher et al., 2011; Chatzigeorgiou et al., 2016). The second approach defines and measures the professional quality of a museum (Pachucki, 2012) or as it is reported by Negri et al. (2009), the private quality. This kind of quality depends on the importance and value of the collections exhibited in the museum, the way they are preserved (Pachucki, 2012), the efficiency of their classification and cataloguing, and the staff's ability to provide information for the exhibits (Negri et al., 2009). If all these do not apply, visitors will not be able to enjoy their experience in a museum.

The most widely accepted method measuring service quality is SERVQUAL introduced by Parasuraman, Zeitham and Berry in 1985. SERVQUAL measures the gap between customers' expectations and their service perceptions on the basis of five dimensions: Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Many subsequent studies have examined the efficiency of the model in different sectors such as retail (Carman, 1990; Finn & Lamb, 1991), the dental sector (Carman, 1990), and hospitals (Babakus & Mangold, 1992; Vandamme & Leunis, 1993). Most of these studies resulted in modifications that were eventually implemented in a modified SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman et al., 1991). A number of studies questioned the usefulness of collecting data on customer expectations with a unanimous agreement that the predominant component of SERVQUAL is actual perception (Babakus & Boller, 1992; Boulding et al., 1993; Brown et al., 1993; Carman, 1990; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; 1994). As a follow-up to this criticism, Cronin & Taylor (1994) proposed a new service quality measurement tool based on SERVQUAL's logic. In line with the notion that

only perceptions are significant in measuring quality, a new model, SERVPERF was introduced. SERVPERF consists of the twenty-two (22) questions of SERVQUAL that refer to perception. Their model was tested in several industries like banking, fast food and dry-cleaning, to demonstrate the superiority of their scale over SERVQUAL (Babakus & Boller, 1992) both in terms of its predictive value and its ease of use. The present study adopts the SERVPERF model in order to provide evidence on the level of satisfaction and future behavior of visitors in the museum sector. It is thus the objective of the present study to (a) test the validity of the SERVPERF model and (b) provide an understanding of the drivers of customer satisfaction and future behavior in the museum sector. In this attempt emphasis is given on the type of museum as a distinctive factor affecting both satisfaction and future behavior.

2.2. Visitor satisfaction and future behavior

Customer satisfaction is important, especially in tourism services (Yüksel & Yüksel, 2002; Christou, 2006), as it can affect future behavior (Harrison & Shaw, 2004). Future behavior involves the concept of re-visit as well as word-of-mouth. Prior studies have attempted to clarify how satisfaction affects repeated visits and word-of-mouth. McLean (1994) and Bendall-Lyon & Powers (2004) agree that behavioral intentions are the result of overall satisfaction. Lau Pei & Badaruddin (2010) argued that the stronger the psychological benefits of their visit to the museum, the more positive their attitude towards the overall service quality is expected to be. Future behavior is also subject to the above factors.

2.3. Previous studies & Research Questions

SERVQUAL has been extensively used in research studies to evaluate the quality of museum services. Maher et al. (2011) examined the model's credibility in a small children's museum in the USA. Their results indicate that museums should invest in the dimension of empathy, as this is an important factor affecting visitors' participation in the museum experience. Nowaski (2005) used the model to assess the service quality of the National Museum in Poland looking into visitors' expectations, perceptions and satisfaction levels as well as the correlations between the dimensions of the model and visitors' overall satisfaction. Hui Ying & Chao Chien (2008) examined the service quality of the National Museum in Taiwan as well as the degree of visitors' satisfaction. An adjustment of the SERVQUAL model to cater for historic sites and museums is the HISTOQUAL model, developed by Frochot & Hughes (2000). Chen & Wan (2012) employed HISTOQUAL to examine the service quality provided by museums in Macao. Their results indicate that both foreign and local visitors had a good attitude towards museums, with the first group appearing more satisfied. Demographics, such as the level of visitor education, seemed to have an impact on their degree of satisfaction. Moreover, they concluded that visitor perception is subject to the type of the museum. Putra (2016) adopted a similar approach to his study at the Bandungin Geology Museum in Indonesia. His study highlighted significant museum weaknesses, mainly concerning staff responsiveness and empathy. Lau Pei & Badaruddin (2010),

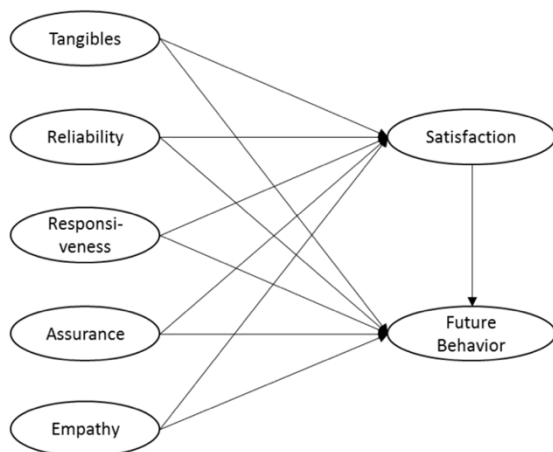
employed SERVPERF in a pilot survey that examined the service quality of museums in Malaysia, through an assessment of visitors' perceptions, satisfaction and future behavior. A common denominator of the above studies is the general consensus and widespread acceptance of SERVPERF as an effective tool in the prediction of customer satisfaction and future behavior.

SERVPERF has been adopted for the purposes of the present study as an effective tool in capturing true quality in museums. The dimensions introduced by SERVPERF and the interactions addressed in the study are presented in Figure 1.

Based on the above analysis the study addresses four research questions.

- *Is visitors' satisfaction positively affected by (a) tangibles, (b) reliability, (c) responsiveness, (d) assurance, and (e) empathy of a museum environment?*
- *Is visitors' future behavior positively be affected by (a) tangibles, (b) reliability, (c) responsiveness, (d) assurance, and (e) empathy of a museum environment?*
- *Will visitors' satisfaction will have a positive effect on their future behavior?*
- *Is there a difference on visitor satisfaction and future behavior based on the type of the museum?*

Figure 1. Conceptual model



3 METHODOLOGY

A survey of visitors in two museums, the Archeological Museum and the Museum of Science & Technology in Thessaloniki, provide the empirical evidence of the study. The two museums were selected out of twenty-one (21) museums the city due to the great number of visitors they attract throughout the year and the very distinct and different style, themes and exhibits they display. The Archeological Museum, located in the city center includes artifacts dating from the Prehistoric era to the end of Antiquity. With eight (8) permanent and numerous temporary exhibitions throughout the year the museum attracts numerous visitors. Exhibitions are static and people have to follow a predetermined specific path that guides visitors through the museum. The museum of Science and Technology, on the other hand, is an educational foundation that promotes

technology and its main objective is to inform the public on the latest science and technological developments.

A self-administered questionnaire was administered to visitors in the museums. The first part of the questionnaire (SERVPERF) consists of twenty-one items and refers to respondents' perception of the museum: tangibles ($\alpha=.667$), reliability ($\alpha=.756$), responsiveness ($\alpha=.774$), assurance ($\alpha=.744$), and empathy ($\alpha=.863$; Cronin & Taylor, 1994). A nine (9) item scale was used to address visitors' satisfaction ($\alpha=.836$; Black, 2005), six (6) item scale was used to measure visitors' future behavior ($\alpha=.905$; Zeithaml et al, 1996). Sample demographics (gender, age, level of education, employment status, annual income and place of residence) were used to assess visitors' profile. All scales were measured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5) to assess the visitors' answers.

Table 1. Visitor demographics

Demographics	Archeological Museum (N = 320)		Noesis (N = 312)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Gender				
Women	162	50.6%	165	52.9%
Men	158	49.4%	147	47.1%
Age group				
16-24	37	11.6%	46	14.7%
25-34	49	15.3%	67	21.5%
35-44	53	16.6%	132	42.3%
45-54	73	22.8%	49	15.7%
55-64	51	15.9%	13	4.2%
>65	57	17.8%	5	1.6%
Level of Education				
Primary / Secondary school	29	9.1%	34	10.9%
Student	27	8.4%	43	13.8%
Bachelor degree	131	40.9%	118	37.8%
Master or Doctor degree	109	34.1%	105	33.7%
Other	24	7.5%	12	3.8%
Employment Status				
Employee of the private sector	93	29.1%	108	34.6%
Civil servant	61	19.1%	37	11.9%
Self-employed	43	13.4%	94	30.1%
Retired	74	23.1%	10	3.2%
Student	31	9.7%	42	13.5%
Currently not working	17	5.3%	21	6.7%
Other	1	.3%	-	-
Annual Income				
No income	41	12.8%	64	20.5%
Up to 10,000€	32	10.0%	60	19.2%
10,001-15,000€	39	12.2%	79	25.3%
15,001-20,000€	29	9.1%	56	17.9%
> 20,001€	179	55.9%	53	17.0%
Place of Residence				
Greece	86	26.9%	311	99.7%
USA	42	13.1%		
Germany	40	12.5%		
France	33	10.3%		
UK	24	7.5%		
Canada	11	3.4%		
Cyprus	11	3.4%		
Italy	10	3.1%		
the Netherlands	8	2.5%		
Switzerland	7	2.2%	1	.3%
Sweden	7	2.2%		
Belgium	6	1.9%		
Other	35	11%		

Twenty-two (22) field researchers, were trained on sampling techniques and the process of approaching and interviewing visitors. Visitors were approached at the foyer of each museum and were asked to participate in the survey only if they had completed their visit. Data was collected between the 23rd and 28th of October 2017, in the Archeological Museum and on the 4th, 5th and 11th of November 2017 in Museum of Science and Technology. A total of 796 questionnaires were administered (632 valid responses – 320 in Archeological Museum and 312 in Science and

Technology). Identical time intervals throughout the day were kept in both museums.

4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The demographic characteristics of visitors in each museum are summarized in Table 1. The proportion of males to females was quite similar in both museums (51.1% vs 48.9%). Almost 50% of respondents belonged to the 35 - 44 and 45 - 54 years age groups. Over 70% of respondents had a bachelor's, master's or doctoral degree and the majority of them were private sector employees or self-employed. In terms of their annual income, 37.0% of participants earned over 20.000€ per annum and 18 per cent ranged between 10.000€ to 15.000€ a year. Participants in the Archaeological Museum originated from 30 countries (26.9% were Greeks). Most visitors came from the United States (13.1%), Germany (12.5%), France (10.3%) and England (7.5%). In contrast, visitors in the Science and Technology Museum were in their vast majority Greek (99.7%).

Descriptive statistics, reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha) and inter-correlations (Spearman's rho) are illustrated in Table 2. For visitors of both museums, there is a positive moderate statistically significant correlation of the five dimensions of SERVPERF, satisfaction, and future behavior. IBM SPSS Amos 22.0 was used for a multi-group analysis. Confirmatory factor analysis indicated a seven-factor model with an acceptable model fit ($\chi^2(371) = 1100.83$, $p < 0.01$, CFI = .934, TLI = .923, IFI = .935, RMSEA = .056). Convergent validity analysis indicated that all standardized coefficients were statistically significant (ranged from .52 to .95).

Table 2. Means, standard deviations, Chronbach's alpha and correlations

	M	D	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Tangibles	4.28	.62	$\alpha=.667$	.398***	.393***	.373***	.237***	.386***	.471***
2. Reliability	4.01	.60	.305***	$\alpha=.756$	.575***	.559***	.455***	.522***	.525***
3. Responsiveness	4.08	.61	.321***	.538***	$\alpha=.774$	.734***	.527***	.577***	.559***
4. Assurance	4.38	.58	.355***	.425***	.605***	$\alpha=.744$	.525***	.614***	.610***
5. Empathy	3.47	.79	.282***	.300***	.515***	.455***	$\alpha=.863$	.515***	.445***
6. Satisfaction	4.08	.61	.433***	.384***	.539***	.560***	.445***	$\alpha=.836$	.651***
7. Future Behavior	4.39	.58	.362***	.456***	.395***	.438***	.337***	.629***	$\alpha=.905$

Note. *** $p < .001$; M – mean; SD – standard deviation; Inter-correlations (Spearman's rho) for visitors of Archaeological Museum (N=320) are represented below the main diagonal; Inter-correlations for visitors of Science & Technology Museum (N=312) are represented above the main diagonal; in the main diagonal Cronbach's alpha for each measurement is represented

Structural equation model analysis revealed a non-significant difference between the unconstrained and the constrained model ($\Delta\chi^2(18, N=632) = 74.131$, $p < .001$), signifying that the two groups are different at the model level (Byrne, 2010). All effects, apart from that of Empathy to Satisfaction ($t(18) = 1.698$, $p = .09$), Tangibles to Future Behavior ($t(18) = 3.652$, $p < .001$), and Satisfaction to Future Behavior ($t(18) = 4.592$, $p < .001$), indicated a statistically significant difference between the two museums (Table 3).

As far as Archeological Museum of Thessaloniki is concerned, tangibles ($\beta = .247$, $p < .001$) and assurance ($\beta = .529$, $p = .002$) have a statistically significant positive effect on satisfaction, while reliability ($\beta = .191$, $p = .011$) and satisfaction ($\beta = .978$, $p < .001$) have a statistically significant effect on future behavior. As far as the Science Museum is

concerned, tangibles ($\beta = .236$, $p = .042$) and empathy ($\beta = .252$, $p = .026$) have a statistically significant positive effect on satisfaction, while reliability ($\beta = .327$, $p < .001$) and satisfaction ($\beta = .302$, $p < .001$) have a statistically positive effect on future behavior once again. Responsiveness seems to have a statistically insignificant effect on satisfaction and future behavior for both museums.

Table 3. Path analysis results

Path	Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki		Thessaloniki Science Center and Technology Museum - Noesis		Path difference's significance
	β (S.E.)	t-value	β (S.E.)	t-value	
Tangibles \rightarrow Satisfaction	.247 (.06)	4.016***	.236 (.12)	2.036*	$t(18) = .084$, NS
Reliability \rightarrow Satisfaction	.088 (.08)	1.133 ^{NS}	.018 (.15)	.124 ^{NS}	$t(18) = .01$, NS
Responsiveness \rightarrow Satisfaction	.035 (.12)	.28 ^{NS}	-.267 (.46)	-.584 ^{NS}	$t(18) = .646$, NS
Assurance \rightarrow Satisfaction	.529 (.17)	3.071**	1.095 (.73)	1.51 ^{NS}	$t(18) = .769$, NS
Empathy \rightarrow Satisfaction	.036 (.06)	.605 ^{NS}	.252 (.11)	2.219*	$t(18) = 1.698$, $p = .09$
Tangibles \rightarrow Future Behavior	-.085 (.07)	-1.314 ^{NS}	.327 (.09)	3.519***	$t(18) = 3.652$, $p < .001$
Reliability \rightarrow Future Behavior	.191 (.08)	2.555*	.085 (.10)	.834 ^{NS}	$t(18) = .842$, NS
Responsiveness \rightarrow Future Behavior	-.039 (.12)	-.337 ^{NS}	-.294 (.34)	-.877 ^{NS}	$t(18) = .726$, NS
Assurance \rightarrow Future Behavior	-.149 (.17)	-.871 ^{NS}	.575 (.55)	1.039 ^{NS}	$t(18) = .266$, NS
Empathy \rightarrow Future Behavior	.003 (.06)	.052 ^{NS}	.012 (.08)	.149 ^{NS}	$t(18) = 1.993$, NS
Satisfaction \rightarrow Future Behavior	.978 (.12)	8.254***	.302 (.09)	3.503***	$t(18) = 4.592$, $p < .001$

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, NS: non-significant

5 CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The objective of the present paper was to test the applicability of SERVPERF in the Greek museum sector and compare the effectiveness of the dimensions of SERVPERF in predicting visitors' satisfaction and their future behavior. The analysis is based on data collected in two distinctively different types of museum, the Archeological museum which displays exhibits of historical interest with limited interaction among visitors and the exhibits and the Science and Technology Museum that promotes visitors active role in the exhibition. The correlation analysis for the Archaeological museum indicates that there is a moderate positive correlation between all dimensions of SERVPERF with the visitors satisfaction. However, path analysis with structural equation modeling revealed only a statistically significant positive effect of tangibles and assurance on satisfaction. Similarly, the correlation analysis for Science and Technology Museum shows that there is a moderate positive correlation between all SERVPERF dimensions with satisfaction, while path analysis with structural equation modeling revealed this time a statistically significant positive effect of tangibles and empathy on visitors' satisfaction. These findings are somewhat consistent with prior studies in museums and support the significance of service quality on satisfaction (Nowaski, 2005; Chami & Kaminyoge, 2019). Besides, many of the items that are examined through the 5 dimensions, such as the building, the relaxation areas, the behavior of the staff, the exhibition and the exhibits, can have an impact on the overall visitor satisfaction (Harrison & Shaw, 2004; Huo & Miller, 2007). Furthermore, the correlation analysis for both museums shows that there is a moderate positive correlation between all SERVPERF dimensions with future behavior. Path analysis with structural equation modeling revealed a statistically significant positive effect only of tangibles for Science and Technology Museum and reliability for the Archaeological museum on visitors' satisfaction.

As previously noted, the level of satisfaction depends on the quality of services. Many surveys concluded that the better the quality of services, the greater the satisfaction will be and

the greater the satisfaction, the greater the intention to revisit and recommend the museum to others (Simpson, 2000; Kuo, 2003; Huo & Miller, 2007; Nella & Christou, 2016). Therefore, satisfaction serves as a link between service quality and future behavior. Both the correlation and the path analysis in this study verify the claim. However, it is noteworthy that the positive effect of satisfaction on future behavior was statistically significantly greater for the Archaeological Museum than the Science Museum ($t(18) = 4.592, p < .001$).

Visitors in the two museums seem to be significantly different. Visitors in the Archaeological Museum aged between 45 and 65+ years of age, while the majority of visitors in Science and Technology Museum aged between 25 and 44. Only 1.6% of visitors were over 65. This could be attributed to the fact that the Science Museum focuses on technology, a factor clearly of interest to younger people, who are clearly more familiar and competent with new technologies. At the same time, exhibitions are presented in an interactive amusing manner, attracting younger generations, children and families with young children.

In our study, the majority of visitors in both museums were of a higher education with either a bachelor's, postgraduate or doctorate degree. For museums this could signify that they have to cater for the needs of an informed, potentially demanding and more difficult to satisfy audience. This could potentially explain why tangibles, assurance and empathy have been determined as significant factors affecting satisfaction in the two museums as visitors are looking for a better atmosphere reliability of information and a more personalized experience within the museum.

The demographic data also indicate a lack of foreign visitors at the Science and Technology Museum. This could be attributed to the fact that technology is of no interest to foreign visitors in a country not known for its technological advancements but rather for its long ancient culture and history.

On a final note, this study has specific limitations, that could provide avenues for future research. The empirical evidence is based on a convenience sample obtained from only two museums. Even though they are the most popular and frequently visited museums in the city, a wider sample from most museums in the city would help validate our findings and support the predictability of SERVPERF. Future research could also use a different model and various types of museums (open air archaeological sites etc.) in order to test the reliability of the information and analysis provided by SERVPERF.

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Online reservation systems in e-Business: Analyzing decision making in e-Tourism

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Abstract

Purpose: The study focuses on exploration of knowledge for online booking systems and on the views of local students-users concerning the booking rate based on these online systems. Another perspective of this project is to investigate the decision-making process (emotion-focused) that they follow in order to choose a tourist destination via online booking systems.

Methods: For the purposes of this study, three scales were administered: E-WOM and Accommodation Scale, Emotion-Based Decision-Making Scale and Trait Emotional Intelligence Scale. Survey data were collected, preprocessed and analyzed based on Data Mining techniques evaluating the results. More specifically, classification and association algorithms were utilized to manage to describe hidden patterns.

Results: Findings showed how development of the Internet have significantly changed the market conditions of tourist organizations providing new tools for tourism marketing and management. It allows interaction between tourist organizations and users and as a result changes the entire process of development, management and marketing in tourism.

Implications: There are many opportunities for further research in this field, because the complex nature of human behavior, the constant changes in the environment and the various e-technologies create many chances to tourist companies for innovative activities and use of new and still unrecognized opportunities.

Keywords: Online Booking Systems, Hotel Selection Factors, e-Tourism, Expert System

JEL Classification: L83, D7, L81

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1 INTRODUCTION

The electronic commerce is defined as the activity of sale and marketing for products and services through an electronic system such as, for example, the Internet. It involves the electronic data transfer, the distribution management, e-

marketing (online marketing), online transactions, electronic data changes, the automated inventory of used management systems, and automated data collection. E-Tourism (electronic tourism) is a part of electronic commerce and unites one of the fastest development technologies, such as the telecommunications and information technology,



hospitality industry and the management / marketing / strategic planning.

The aim of this research is to study student's views on the use of electronic booking tools and to investigate the decision-making process in travel planning via these electronic tools. The online booking platforms in the tourism sector are constantly increasing, as mentioned above. This method of booking benefits both tourists and hotel owners. Several researches have been made about identifying and satisfying the services provided by these modern booking systems on the part of travelers. Few have been made for this group of students with their peculiarities as a group. The aim is therefore to identify these views that determine their choices and the decision-making process they follow in travel planning through electronic tools. Also, the areas that are examined through current project (Western Greece and Ionian Islands) is considered as an ideal research population. that has been tourism all year round.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Use of Word of Mouth in Travel Planning

Word of mouth (WOM) communication refers to interpersonal communication among consumers concerning their personal experiences with a firm or a product. Previous studies illustrate the significance of WOM for consumers' purchase decisions especially within a service context. Because service products are intangible and cannot be easily described, consumers tend to rely on word of mouth from an experienced source to lower perceived risk and uncertainty. Word-of-mouth information search is greater in circumstances when a consumer is unfamiliar with a service provider, which is often the case for travel-related decisions. WOM has long been recognized as one of the important external information sources for travel planning. As the use of the Internet for travel planning becomes ever more prevalent, travel decision making processes are expected to become increasingly influenced by e-WOM.

Consumer reviews and ratings are the most accessible and prevalent form of e-WOM. Consumer reviews serve two distinct roles: First, they provide information about products and services; and, second, they serve as recommendations. Consumer reviews are perceived as particularly influential because they are written from a consumer's perspective and, thus, provide an opportunity for indirect experience (Sigala & Christou, 2006, 2007). They are also perceived as more credible than information provided by marketers. Online consumer reviews appear to play an increasing role in consumer decision making processes (Gretzel et al., 2012). Importantly, almost half of those whose purchasing decision was influenced by consumer reviews said that consumers' opinions actually caused them to change their mind about what they purchased. Clearly, online consumer-generated information is taking on an important role in online travelers' decision making (Stack et al., 2004).

2.2. Emotional Based Decision-Making Framework

Most theories of human reasoning and decision-making fall between two different positions. The first one argues that we make decisions in a way similar to that of solving problems

in formal logic. According to this view, when faced with a problem, we form a list of all different options and their possible outcomes, and then we use logic in its best sense to perform a cost/benefit analysis that will provide us with the best possible choice. The second view considers reasoning and decision-making to be associative. That is, when confronted with a situation that requires a decision, we compare it to similar situations that have been encountered in the past and tend to act accordingly. Emotion-Based Decision Making that models important aspects of emotional processing, and integrates these with other models of perception, motivation, behavior, and motor control. A particular emphasis is placed on using some of the mechanisms of emotions as building blocks for the acquisition of emotional memories that serve as biasing signals during the process of making decisions and selecting actions such as the choice of a traveling destination via booking services (Schaarschmidt & Höber, 2017; Christou & Nella, 2016). Although the two positions in decision-making framework vary in description and terminology seem to represent two streams: the first one - the logical thought based in rules and particular steps - and the second one - is more intuitive emotion-based form of reasoning. Additionally, most of the theories highlight that there is interaction between these two positions. Social behavior is determined by both reflective and impulsive processes which formulate behavioral decisions based on one hand on knowledge about facts and values (problem decision-making) and on the other hand on the impulsive system which elicits behavior through associations and motivational orientations (Chaudhry et al, 2012; Li & Petering, 2018).

2.3. Emotional Intelligence of Travelers

Emotional intelligence, a type of social and personal intelligence, is important in managing interpersonal relationships and interactions, especially in the business sphere. Businesses that involve frequent customer contact and interaction, such as those in the field of tourism, can benefit from the application of multiple intelligences. The notion of emotional intelligence its applications to business is a vital theme in order to suggest an application to tourism, a sector based largely on the interaction between people. Emotional intelligence can be an effective tool and a benefit to tourist services, to reflection the tour operator's role as cultural mediator between tourists and host community, and to explore how emotional intelligence can help in this tourist/host relationship. From the literature review, emotional intelligence can be cultivated through education and training and can contribute to various areas of one's personal and professional life (Gkintoni et al., 2016). According to Salovey and Mayer, emotional intelligence allows the appropriate use of emotions enhancing thinking, problem-solving and adaptability to everyday life, promoting creative thinking and motivation. Another theorist of emotional intelligence, Goleman highlights that emotional intelligence is considered as a mixed form of intelligence that consists of cognitive ability and personality aspects. Goleman indicates two dimensions: personal competencies – self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation and social competencies – empathy, social skills. Thereafter, theorists such as Law, Wong and Song refer that emotional

intelligence is separate from personality and also is a notable predictor of job performance ratings (employee creativity). Creativity as a basic ingredient of emotional intelligence is beneficial in tourist services and is considered to be a key point for better promotion of tourist products to recipients who can emotionally moving through expert electronic applications (Chatzigeorgiou et al., 2017).

2.4. E-WOM and Accommodation Scale (E-WOM)

An online questionnaire was created using the E-WOM Accommodation Scale and was sent to the study sample by email and social networks. The questionnaire was primarily composed of closed-ended questions measured using a 7-point Likert-type scale. The sample was selected along purposive lines with a focus on identifying travelers who had recently read ORs when searching for information on accommodations while planning their holidays. This scale is analyzed in the following dimensions:

- Information timeliness refers to information that is up to date, current, and represents the state of the art of a product/service. In comparison to traditional WOM, ORs are available 24 hours a day. The most recent ORs are displayed first on COPs, so consumers can easily access the latest reviews published on specific accommodations.
- Information understandability refers to readability, interpretability, and ease of understanding, as well as language, semantic, and lexical expressions used by reviewers (Murphy, 2019).
- Information relevance refers to the extent to which a review is applicable and helpful for a task at hand and depends on different customer needs in specific situations ORs are relevant if they provide the kind of information a customer is looking for.
- Information accuracy is defined as the correctness in the mapping of stored information to the appropriate state in the real world that the information represents. The accuracy of information depends on travelers' perceptions that information is accurate, correct, believable, and credible.
- Value-added information is the extent to which information is beneficial and provides advantages from their use. ORs may empower a traveler's capacity to make informed decisions by providing information that is generally not easy to access through traditional marketing communications Chenini & Touaiti, 2018).
- Information completeness is defined as the extent to which information is of sufficient breadth, depth, and scope for the task at hand. Accordingly, a customer may judge a review as complete based on the degree to which information from ORs is comprehensive and exhaustive for booking accommodation.
- Information quantity is the extent to which the quantity or volume of available data is appropriate for a specific task Information quantity represents the number of ORs per accommodation; it is a peripheral cue to information processing since it is a short cut that consumers may use to make a decision.

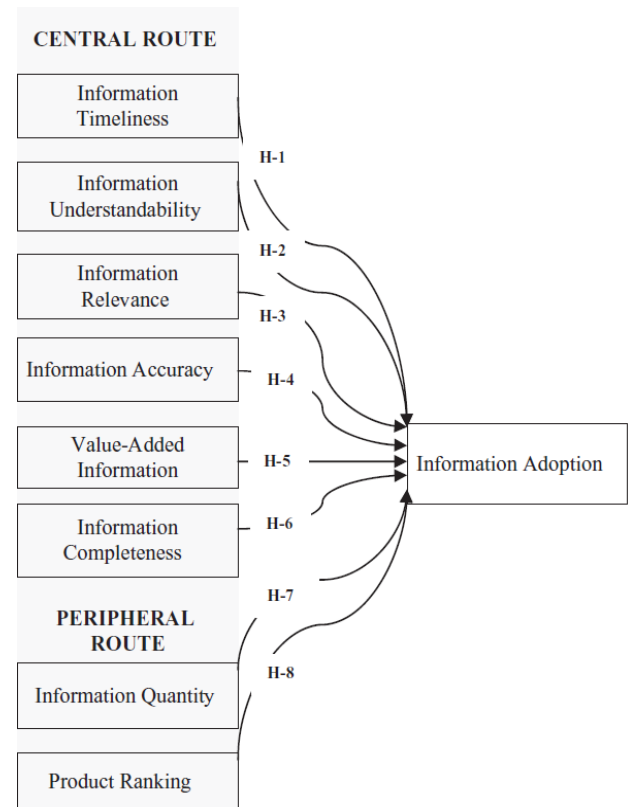
Product Ranking refers to a typology of categorical or numerical information based on travelers' overall (average)

evaluation of accommodations in a destination. The ranking or numbers of stars represents the average customer's evaluation of accommodation and summarizes the proportion of positive, neutral, and negative reviews.

2.5. Emotion-Based Decision-Making Scale (EBDMS)

The Emotion-Based Decision-Making Scale (EBDMS) attempts to measure a person's tendency to rely upon emotions and "gut reactions" in making decisions. It has 10 items that use a 5-point Likert response scale. Five items are reverse-coded. Four items of the scale indicate the influence of feeling in decision-making process e.g. "I listen to my heart rather than my brain when making decisions". Likewise, four, three and two items were used to assess the role of emotions or feelings in performance evaluations, decision implementation and resource allocation process, respectively.

Figure 1. E-WOM Research Model



2.6. Trait Emotional Intelligence (EI)

For recording, tracing and evaluation concerning the emotional intelligence was used the standardized scale Trait Emotional Intelligence (TEIQue) which examines the Trait model of EI as proposed by K.V. Petrides (Petrides et al, 2006; Gkintoni, 2015). The Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire is a self-report questionnaire that has been developed to cover the trait EI sampling domain comprehensively. Questionnaire measures of EI have been proliferating over the past few years, and it is important to mention three advantages of the TEIQue over them to justify the focus of this research. First, the TEIQue is based on a psychological theory that integrates the construct into mainstream models of differential psychology. Second, the

TEIQue provides comprehensive coverage of the 15 facets of the trait EI sampling domain. Several independent studies have demonstrated the ability of the TEIQue to predict criteria (outcomes) significantly better than other questionnaires. Third, the full TEIQue has excellent psychometric properties. Finally, the TEIQue has been used in numerous studies wherein the assessment of affective aspects of personality was required. These include research in the areas of neuroscience, relationship satisfaction, psychopathology, addictions, reaction time, general health, and behavioral genetics. The TEIQue provides an operationalization for the model of Petrides and colleagues that conceptualizes EI in terms of personality. The test encompasses 15 subscales organized under four factors:

- **Well being:** The Well-being factor comprises three different traits: Happiness, Optimism and Self-esteem. They measure how people judge their general level of life satisfaction.
- **Self control:** The Self-control factor describes how far people think they can control their impulses or are controlled by them. It comprises three different traits: Impulse Control, Stress Management and Emotional Regulation.
- **Emotionality:** The Emotionality factor comprises four different traits: Empathy, Emotion Perception, Emotion Expression and Relationships. Together they indicate how aware you may be of your own emotions and feelings, as well as those of other people.
- **Sociability:** The Sociability factor describes how comfortable people feel in different social contexts, from parties and social gatherings to formal business meetings.

Figure 2. Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue)



3 METHODOLOGY

In this paper were applied Machine Learning and Data Mining methods in order to evaluate the booking behavior of Greek tourists using Emotion-Based Decision-Making Scale

(EBDMS), the E-WOM and Accommodation Scale (E-WOM) and Emotional Intelligence Quotient (TEIQue) The methodology, that was adopted, consists of three concrete phases. During the first phase electronic questionnaires were created and posted through the website <http://www.cicos.gr>. Subsequently, data were collected and preprocessed from the questionnaires. The data set for analysis was consisted of demographics elements of responders, such as the gender, the birth-place, the place of present residence, educational background of both the respondents and their parents, professional occupation of parents and also of subscales of the EBDMS, E-WOM and TEIQue tests. During the third phase, the data set was analyzed based on Data Mining techniques and evaluate the results. More specifically, we utilized classification algorithms so as to manage to describe the hidden patterns underlying in the data. Decision trees are a powerful way in order to represent and facilitate statements analysis (psychological) principally, comprising successive decisions and variable results in a designated period.

3.1. Booking Behaviour Personal Traits of Greek Tourists during Economic Recession

Global financial community, it has been entered in a new and unknown economic phase. The huge crisis of the financial system, which has been arises in the developed countries results a risk of insolvency and has led to unstable economies and create millions of unemployed worldwide. Today, national economies are closely dependable each other. In addition, commercial and financial information is moving at breakneck speed through the Internet and mobile networks. It is true that unfavorable economic circumstances have a repercussion in the sector of travel industry which there is a need to be adjusted in an economic environment full of uncertainty, in order to address even the most demanding and needs of travelers. A useful element that travels industry, it is necessary to take into account is the different personality traits of travelers that interfere with their booking behavior and determine their decision-making towards their choice when they have to select a travel destination.

As far as the repercussion of personality traits in booking behavior, recent advances in personality psychology can help us predict tourist motivation. Traits are defined as enduring and stable patterns of behavior, attitudes, emotions, that vary between individuals. Traditionally, researchers were interested in understanding how individuals differ, and so they put a great deal of effort into discovering how to measure, map, and define personality traits. An effort was made through trait theory in order to define personality traits. Trait theory suggests that personality is made up of a set of quantitative measurable characteristics or units known as traits. Traits are pre-dispositional attribute and are relatively stable. Every personality has a unique combination of traits and given its stability, people with a given combination of traits can be expected to behave consistently across situations and over time. The development of trait theory is attributed to the pioneering works of psychologists such as, Gordon Allport, Henry Odbert Raymond Cattell and Hans Eysenck.

3.2. Data Mining Techniques

Data Mining is an emerging knowledge discovery process of extracting previously unknown, actionable information from

very large scientific and commercial databases. It is imposed by the explosive growth of such databases (Petrides & Furnham, 2006). Usually, a data mining process extracts rules by processing high dimensional categorical and/or numerical data. Classification, clustering and association are the most well-known data mining tasks. Classification is one of the most popular data mining tasks. Classification aims at extracting knowledge which can be used to classify data into predefined classes, described by a set of attributes (Revilla Hernández et al., 2016). The extracted knowledge can be represented using various schemas. Decision trees, "if-then" rules and neural networks are the most popular such schemas. A lot of algorithms have been proposed in the literature for extracting classification rules from large relational databases, such as symbolic learning algorithms including decision trees algorithms (e.g. C4.5) and rule based algorithms (e.g. CN2), connectionist learning algorithms (e.g. back{propagation networks), instance-based algorithms (e.g. PEBLS) and hybrid algorithms. Association rules can be used to represent frequent patterns in data, in the form of dependencies among concepts attributes. In this paper, we consider the special case, that is known as the market basket problem, where concepts-attributes represent products and the initial database is a set of customer purchases (transactions).

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Classification Trees

Classification methods aim to identify the classes from some descriptive traits. They find utility in a wide range of human activities and particularly in automated decision making. Decision trees are a very effective method of supervised learning. It aims is the partition of a dataset into groups as homogeneous as possible in terms of the variable to be predicted. It takes as input a set of classified data, and outputs a tree that resembles to an orientation diagram where each end node (leaf) is a decision (a class) and each non- final node (internal) represents a test. Each leaf represents the decision of belonging to a class of data verifying all tests path from the root to the leaf. The tree is simpler, and technically it seems easy to use. In fact, it is more interesting to get a tree that is adapted to the probabilities of variables to be tested. Mostly balanced tree will be a good result. If a sub-tree can only lead to a unique solution, then all sub-tree can be reduced to the simple conclusion, this simplifies the process and does not change the final result. Ross Quinlan worked on this kind of decision trees.

Decision trees are built in "ctree (Conditional Inference Trees)" by using a set of training data or data sets. At each node of the tree, "ctee" chooses one attribute of the data that most effectively splits its set of samples into subsets enriched in one class or the other. Its criterion is the normalized information gain (difference in entropy) that results from choosing an attribute for splitting the data. The attribute with the highest normalized information gain is chosen to make the decision. During the construction of the decision tree, it is possible to manage data for which some attributes have an unknown value by evaluating the gain or the gain ratio for such an attribute considering only the records for which this attribute is defined. Using a decision tree, it is possible to

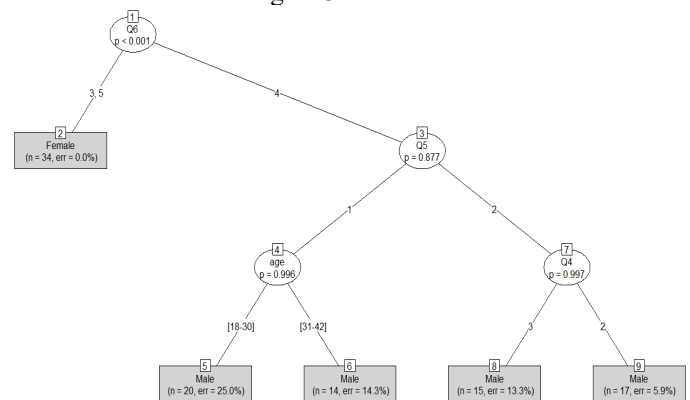
classify the records that have unknown values by estimating the probabilities of different outcomes. Ctree builds decision trees from a set of training data in the same way as ID3 or C4.5, using the concept of information entropy.

The training data is a set of already classified samples. Each sample consists of a p-dimensional vector, where the represent attribute values or features of the sample, as well as the class in which falls. At each node of the tree, "ctree" chooses the attribute of the data that most effectively splits its set of samples into subsets enriched in one class or the other. The splitting criterion is the normalized information gain (difference in entropy). The attribute with the highest normalized information gain is chosen to make the decision. The "ctree" algorithm then recurs on the smaller sublists. In order to specify the best result, it was necessary to fit the data to the model in a proper way. This task was carried away by changing and testing the controls of "ctree".

The parameters in the control function that were altered are:

- mincriterion: The value of the test statistic (for testtype == "Teststatistic"), or 1 - p-value (for other values of testtype) that must be exceeded in order to implement a split.
- minsplit: The minimum sum of weights in a node in order to be considered for splitting.
- mtry: The number of input variables randomly sampled as candidates at each node for random forest like algorithms.
- maxdepth: The maximum depth of the tree.

Figure 3. Tree 1



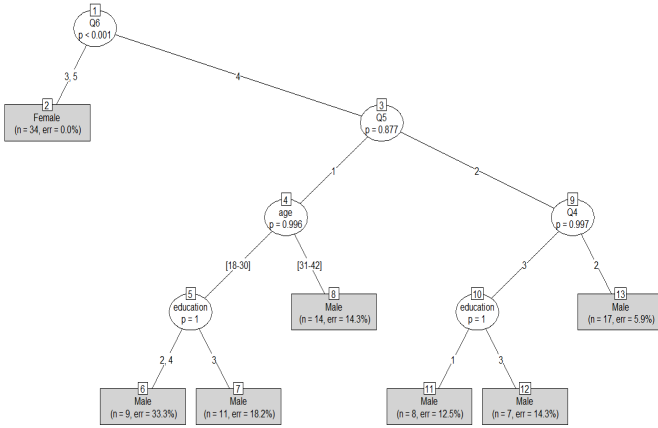
Note:

- Depended variable: sex
- Independed variables:
 - 'mincriterion' value: 0.0005
 - 'minsplit' value: 10L
 - 'mtry' value: Inf (Infinite)
 - 'maxdeph' value: Inf (Infinite)

4.2 Association Rule Learning

Association rule learning is a rule-based machine learning method for discovering interesting relations between variables in large databases. It is intended to identify strong rules discovered in databases using some measures of interestingness (Zafiropoulos et al., 2015). They are usually required to satisfy a user-specified minimum support and a user-specified minimum confidence at the same time.

Figure 4. Tree 2

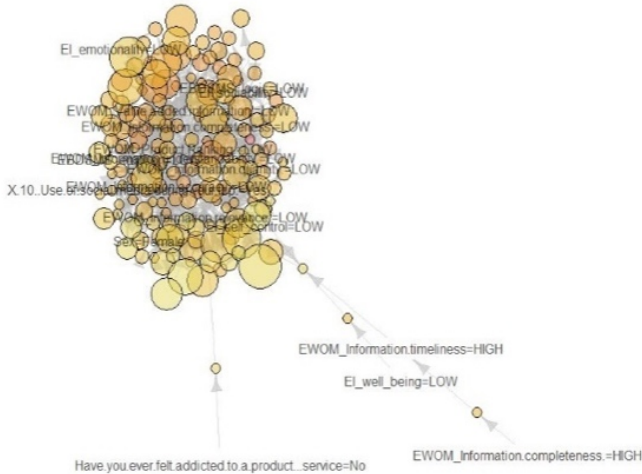


Note:

- Depended variable: sex
- Independed variables: Rest
 - 'mincriterion' value: 0.0005
 - 'minsplit' value: 10L
 - 'mtry' value: Inf (Infinite)
 - 'maxdeph' value: Inf (Infinite)

Apriori uses a "bottom up" approach, where frequent subsets are extended one item at a time, and groups of candidates are tested against the data. The algorithm terminates when no further successful extensions are found. Apriori uses breadth-first search and a tree structure to count candidate item sets efficiently. It generates candidate item sets of length k from item sets of length $k - 1$. Then it prunes the candidates which have an infrequent sub pattern. According to the downward closure lemma, the candidate set contains all frequent k -length item sets. After that, it scans the transaction database to determine frequent item sets among the candidates.

Figure 5. Graph diagram of 169 rules



Association rules present association or correlation between item sets. An association rule has the form of $A \rightarrow B$, where A and B are two disjoint item sets.

The Goal: studies whether the occurrence of one feature is related to the occurrence of others.

Three most widely used measures for selecting interesting rules are:

- Support is the percentage of cases in the data that

contains both A and B ,

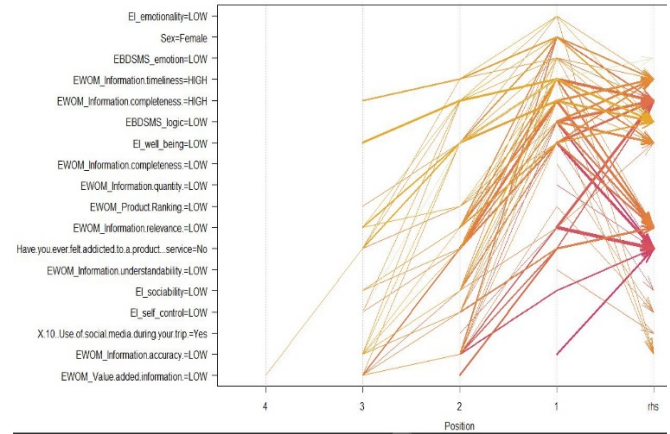
- Confidence is the percentage of cases containing A that also contain B , and
- Lift is the ratio of confidence to the percentage of cases containing B .

4.3. Visualizing Extracted Rules

Visualization has a long history of making large data sets better accessible using techniques like selecting and zooming. In this paper we use the R-extension package "arulesViz" which implements several known and novel visualization techniques to explore association rules. Below, we represent the extracted rules in a variety of ways with different techniques (Maimon & Rokach, 2010).

Graph-based visualization offers a very clear representation of rules, but they tend to easily become cluttered and thus are only viable for very small sets of rules.

Figure 6. Parallel coordinates plot for 169 rules



Parallel coordinates plots are designed to visualize multidimensional data where each dimension is displayed separately on the x-axis and the y-axis is shared. Each data point is represented by a line connecting the values for each dimension

5 CONCLUSION

This paper showed how the development of the Internet has significantly changed the market conditions of tourist organizations providing new tools for tourist marketing and management. It allows interaction between tourist organizations and users and as a result changes the entire process of development, management and marketing in tourism. By reviewing literature, one can notice that research in the field of e-Tourism still has many unanswered questions and that numerous questions are yet to be raised (Mensah & Mensah, 2018; Moro & Oliveira, 2018). As up to date, e-Tourism will continue to be oriented towards the consumers and the technology that surrounds them, providing dynamic communication with tourist organizations. Through on-line booking systems, consumers have become very powerful and more able to determine the elements of tourist products especially students who are tourists of lower budget. Also, they have become more sophisticated and experienced, and

thus have become harder to satisfy. Innovations in technology will help in interaction, personalization and networking therefore it is necessary to design strategies that will take advantage of the opportunity's ICT has to offer and turn them in favor of tourist organizations. There are many opportunities for further research in this field, because the complex nature of human behavior, the constant changes in the environment and the various e-technologies create many chances to tourist companies for innovative activities and use of new and still unrecognized opportunities (Nair & George, 2016). Given the mass of participants in tourist transactions, it is relatively easy and possible to collect a large number of data with the help of current technology.

Even repeated studies can be meaningful, because of the rapid changes in modern economy can induce new results. Technology offers many opportunities about which a lot has been written in this paper, but technology itself cannot provide answers to all questions if they are not asked. As the potential customers today are exposed to a (too) large number of options thanks to fast growing access to information, so are the service providers sometimes lost in the possibilities of the technology that extend the budget to various sides (Volgger et al., 2017). Although they all care to monitor the profitability of investments in each information channel, profit maximization is still missing in the numerous examples, and corrective measures are taken too late. It is evident that it is crucial to understand your customers, as well as to act in accordance with that knowledge (Misirlis et al., 2018). Knowing the cause and the consequence is, in simple terms, what should be achieved. In this direction many issues can and should be raised that question the relationship of the customers, their characteristics, the way they 'came' to the hotel (information search, booking and paying for accommodation) as well as various factors that led to their decision.

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Investigating primary school quality using teachers' self-efficacy and satisfaction

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Abstract

Purpose: The current study aims to examine the impact of teachers' job satisfaction and self-efficacy in improving service quality. Furthermore, the research explores the various clusters of the respondents according to their behavior, as teachers emphasizing on different aspects of marketing: external, interactive or internal marketing.

Methods: Questionnaire survey, on a sample of 193 teachers in a total number of 420 has been used. The 74-item questionnaire was divided into 4 parts: The first included 7 items about respondent characteristics, the second 16 items about school quality, the third 18 items about teachers' self-efficacy, and the fourth 33 items about job satisfaction.

Results: The results, using clustering, indicated three groups of respondents according to their behavior, as teachers emphasizing on different aspects of marketing: external, interactive and internal marketing. Moreover, factor analysis, revealed that their satisfaction was affected mostly by "Workplace Relationships with the Director and Colleagues", "Educational Management", and "Social Recognition and Professional Development", while "Class and Students' Relationships Management" and "Students' Engagement and Educational Strategies" were influencing teachers' self-efficacy.

Implications: Findings have implications for teachers and education managers; as education is fundamental to a country's development, annual surveys should be planned from the government educational policy makers to highlight teacher's self-efficacy and satisfaction, and students' and parents' satisfaction and school quality.

Keywords: Teachers' self-efficacy, teachers' job satisfaction, service quality in schools, service marketing triangle.

JEL Classification: A20, P36, I2

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1 INTRODUCTION

In a highly competitive environment organizations implement marketing policies to increase business performance and customers satisfaction. At the same time, "the becoming business-like of nonprofit organizations (NPOs) is a well-established global phenomenon that has received ever-growing attention from management and organization studies" (Maier, Meyer, and Steinbereithner,

2014), making thus many non-profits to view marketing as a main activity. Since Kotler and Levy believed that marketing can be applied to social problems and organizations, which "perform marketing-like activities whether or not they are recognized as such" (Kotler and Levy, 1969:11), many remarkable changes have been made to nonprofit organizations. Also, designing and managing services has become critical over the last decades, with service firms trying to achieve excellence in marketing. According to Kotler and Keller (2012: 365) "Marketing excellence with



services requires excellence in three broad areas: external, internal, and interactive marketing”.

On the other hand, education is an intangible service (Shostack, 1977), with a wide latitude in its delivery from the contact personnel to the customers (Lovelock, 1983). Elboim- Dror (1970) investigated the intangibility of educational goals, as a distinctive characteristic of Education Policy Formation System, while many authors studied the intangibility of services in business world (McDougall and Snetsinger, 1990). Donlagic and Fazlic, used the SERVQUAL model to overcome the difficulties in assessing quality in education due to its intangibility, by using a multiple-item scale for measuring the gap between customer expectations and perceptions (Donlagic and Fazlic, 2015). Furthermore, teachers in primary education could be viewed as internal customers, with their level of job satisfaction becoming a vital part of the total school quality offered, because “Only if internal customer relationships work can the quality of the outcome be excellent, thus creating satisfied, or even better, delighted external customers”. In other words, “the employees are viewed as a customer market and with the overall objective of enhancing the service quality” (Gummesson, 2000:28 qtd. in: Aburoub, Hersh and Aladwan, 2011: 109, 110).

Therefore, the implementation of basic service marketing principles in Public Primary Education, as a nonprofit service provider are being investigated in the current study. The aim of this research is to examine the impact of teachers’ job satisfaction and self-efficacy in improving service quality in an educational environment. More specifically, the main purpose of the study is to investigate the factors influencing job satisfaction and self-efficacy in the case of a total sample of 193 teachers from primary schools in Chios Island, who responded to the self-administered questionnaire. Furthermore, the research explores the various clusters of the respondents according to their behavior, as teachers emphasizing on different aspects of marketing: external, interactive or internal marketing.

The research is organized as follows. Following this brief introduction, a general overview of teachers’ self-efficacy, teachers’ job satisfaction, school quality and service marketing triangle are presented in the literature review. The research hypotheses and methodology used in this study are then discussed. Results are outlined in the next section using univariate, bivariate and multivariate data analysis. Finally, conclusions, limitations and recommendations are considered in section six.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Measuring teachers’ self-efficacy

Since the first definition of self-efficacy as a person’s belief about his ability to succeed or accomplish a task in specific situations (Bandura, 1997; Valachis et al., 2008) several researchers measured teacher efficacy. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2010) claim that teacher self-efficacy is related to instruction, motivating, adapting, discipline, cooperating, coping. Chen and Yeung (2015) identify three categories of influential factors for teachers’ self-efficacy: a) teacher factors (language, pre-service teaching training, experience,

understanding of students) b) student factors (students’ responses, classroom discipline, motivation, student-teacher relations, age) c) contextual factors (culture, influence from other teachers, class size, resources). Poulou (2003) identifies personality, skills, motivation, preparation, enactive mastery, vicarious experiences, social, verbal persuasion, physiological state and university training as sources of teachers’ self-efficacy. In addition, internationally recognized instruments measure teachers’ self-efficacy. TSES - Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale - (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 2001 qtd. in: Duffin, Patrick and French 2012) shows three areas of teaching efficacy: a) classroom management, b) student engagement and c) instructional strategies. PSES – Principals’ Sense of Efficacy Scale - (Tschannen, Moran and Gareis, 2004, qtd. in: Isik and Derinbay, 2015) consists of three subscales: efficacy for management, efficacy for instruction, and efficacy for moral leadership.

2.2 Measuring teachers’ job satisfaction

Locke (Locke, 1976 qtd. in: Sempane, Rieger and Roodt, 2002: 23) defines job satisfaction as “a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences”. Many factors, environmental and personal, have been investigated concerning their effect to job satisfaction. Personal factors include: gender (Tefera, 2016; Msuya, 2016), age, years of service in public education (Saiti and Papadopoulos, 2015; Msuya, 2016) and marital status (Muhanji, 2017; Msuya, 2016; Lyons, & Branston, 2006). Giagometti (2005) support that teachers’ job satisfaction depends on: a) compensation and benefits, b) preparation in teaching curriculum, managing and accessing students, c) school and community support, d) culture shock, e) instructional support and f) emotional factors. Grammatikou (2010) claims that infrastructure, superior management, relationships with manager, school climate, relationships with students and parents, and professional development influence teachers’ job satisfaction. Antoniadi (2013) agrees with Grammatikou and adds working hours and salary. Korb and Akintunde (2013) stated that salary, principal – teacher relationship, instructional materials, teaching as a last resort career, attitude toward the teaching profession and social contribution are related to teachers’ job satisfaction. Nganzi (2014) identify three factors of teachers’ job satisfaction: personal growth and development, recognition and encouragement, and opportunities to meet personal goals. Moreover, international recognized instruments measure job satisfaction. JDI - Job Descriptive Index (Smith et al. 1969, qtd. in: Kinicki et al., 2002; Gholami et al., 2012) measures five factors: work, supervision, pay, co-workers and promotion. Additionally, “salary, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent, rewards, operating procedures, co-workers, work and communication” are work factors included in JSS - Job Satisfaction Scale (Spector, 1985, qtd. in: Saane et al., 2003:194).

2.3 Service quality in schools

A vast literature on service quality conceptualization and dimensions has been used during the last decades, defining quality as “fitness for use” (Juran 1988: 21), or

“conformance to requirements” (Crosby 1979, qtd. in: Elshaer, 2012:4). Gronroos (1984) investigated service quality in three dimensions: functional, technical and image and states that the quality of service depends on two variables: the expected and perceived service. SERVQUAL, a widely used method to assess service quality comparing customer's perception with expectation, suggested five dimensions to describe quality: reliability, tangibles, responsiveness, assurance and empathy (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1985; 1988). Since then, SERVQUAL scale has been used in service organizations in the context of education, as a basis for continuous monitoring of service quality, which provides a framework about students' expectations and perceptions of teaching quality (Christou et al., 2000; Oliveira and Ferreira, 2009; Çerri, 2012; Beaumont, 2012; Yousapronpaiboon, 2013; Krsmanovic, Horvat and Ruso, 2014; Fu & Kapiki, 2016; Nair & George, 2016). In other words, education institutions can improve their services and decrease the gap between their students' expectations and perceptions, considering that “Education services are often intangible and difficult to measure, since the outcome is reflected in the transformation of individuals in their knowledge, their characteristics, and their behavior” (Tsinidou, Gerogiannis, and Fitsilis, 2010: 227).

2.4 The service marketing triangle and marketing mix in education

The use of marketing principles in education sector is not something new. The importance of marketing in student recruitment have been recognized by many authors. Cubillo et al. (2006) identified the parameters influencing students' decision making process of international students, while (Ivy, 2008), investigated the implementation of the traditional service marketing mix (7Ps) in the selection of a specific business school. Furthermore, the service marketing triangle of Kotler and Armstrong (2006, qtd. in: Kotler and Keller, 2012) describes the developing relations among the provider and the external customer (external marketing), the external and the internal customer (interactive marketing) and the internal customer and the provider (internal marketing). The combination of external marketing, which “describes the normal work of preparing, pricing, distributing, and promoting the service to customers”, internal marketing, which “describes training and motivating employees to serve customers well” and interactive marketing, which “describes the employees' skill in serving the client” constitutes marketing excellence with services (Kotler and Keller, 2012; Christou & Sigala, 2002). Bellaouaied and Gam (2012), investigated the effect of internal marketing on customer orientation to the contact employee, which in turn affects service quality. In a similar way, Dabhade and Yavad (2013) concluded that marketing triangle plays an important role in services organizations, with external customers being connected to internal services between the different functions of a service provider.

3 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The literature review, presented on the earlier sections, led to the formation of the following hypotheses:

H1: Internationally recognized indicators determine teachers' self – efficacy: a) students' engagement b) instructional strategies c) classroom management.

H2: Internationally recognized indicators determine teachers' job satisfaction: a) infrastructures b) sources c) nature of work d) working conditions e) school management f) school climate g) job status h) job perspectives.

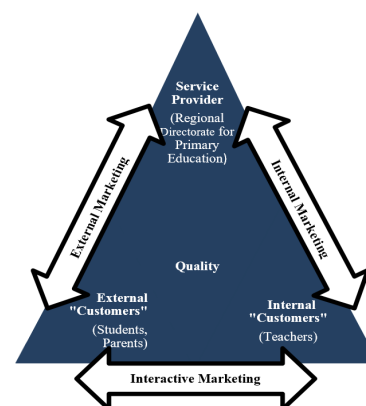
H3: Teachers' Personal characteristics such as work position, family status, teachers' studies and working experience affect their job satisfaction.

H4: Internationally recognized indicators of service quality determine school quality: a) security b) reliability c) responsiveness d) empathy e) tangibility.

H5: Teachers can be grouped in three different types, according to achieving excellence in external, internal and interactive services marketing.

All the above hypotheses were used to investigate the purposes of the current research. In particular, the last one could be associated with the implementation of service marketing triangle in education and school reality. More specifically, external marketing in education describes the relationships between the “Regional Directorate for Primary Education” and “students with their parents”. Similarly, interactive marketing describes the relationships between “teachers” and “students with their parents”, while internal marketing describes the relationships between the “Regional Directorate for Primary Education” and “teachers” (Figure 1).

Figure 1. The service marketing triangle in education



Source: An adapted form in Education from Kotler, P., Keller, K. L. (2012), Marketing Management, p.365

4 METHODOLOGY

The questionnaire design has been the result of an extensive review of the relevant international and Greek literature, which was presented in the previous sections. At the same time, questions have been adjusted to reflect the current educational system in the frame of economic crisis as well as students' and teachers' needs according to daily school reality.

On the ground of this theory, the current study was conducted through structured questionnaires, in teachers of primary education in Chios Island, Greece, in both urban and rural areas, during the period from 1/5/2016 to 30/6/2016. Participants were asked to complete a 74-item questionnaire

divided into 4 parts: The first part included 7 items about personal characteristics: sex, age, family status, studies, work position (principal, teacher etc.), work commitment (permanent / non-permanent staff.) and work experience. The second part included 16 items about school quality (e.g. modern equipment, facilities, understandable and up to date material, willing and helpful personnel etc.). The third part included 18 items about teachers' self – efficacy (e.g. help my students make friends, work out a problem, establish positive relationships among students etc.). The fourth part included 33 items about job satisfaction (e.g. satisfaction with the building facilities, the working relations and working conditions etc.). The above items are presented analytically in table 3. At the end of the second and fourth part there were two general questions. The first one measured the extent to which teachers' quality assumptions are reaffirmed in school reality. The second one measured teachers overall job satisfaction, by asking them whether they would suggest their profession to young people or not, in a 5-point Linkert type scale, ranging from (1) = totally disagree to (5) = totally agree.

For the purposes of the current research, a sample of 193 teachers in a total number of 420 has been used, resulted in a response rate of approximately 46%, which was quite satisfactory to proceed with the findings (Skapinaki, 2016; Skapinaki and Salamoura, 2018).

5 RESULTS

SPSS version 23.0.0 was used for statistical analysis of the survey data: univariate, bivariate and multivariate data analysis.

5.1 Demographic Profile

Participants were mostly women (75.26%), permanent in their work position (70.1%), teachers of Primary Education category: 70 (74.74%) (Teachers P.E. 70 = teachers for all classes and lessons apart from English, French, Gymnastic, New Technologies), graduates of higher education universities (69.07%). Table 1 presents analytically the demographic profile of the respondents.

Table 1. Teachers' demographic profile

Gender		Marital status		Education Level	
Male	24,74%	Single	38, 14%	Bachelor's degree	73,204%
Female	75,26%	Married	56,7%	Master's degree	26,281%
Work Commitment		Divorced	5,155%	Doctorate degree	0,515%
Permanent	70,1%	Age		Past Experience	
Non-Permanent	29,9%	22-30	26,804 %	-5	13,4%
Work Position		31-39	15,979%	5-10	27,32%
Basic lessons	74,74%	40-49	31,443%	11-15	11,34%
Secondary lessons	25,26%	50+	25,773%	16-20	19,07%
				20+	28,87%

At first, Cronbach Alpha Test (Table 2) tested the internal consistency of our variables. More specifically, the Alpha

coefficient for the sixteen items of our first basic variable - school quality - was .917, for the eighteen items of our second basic variable - teachers' self – efficacy - was .926 and finally for the thirty three items of the third basic variable - teachers' job satisfaction - was .939. The above values were close to 1 and there were no important increases if items deleted, which suggests that the items have relatively high internal consistency - considering that a reliability coefficient of .70 or higher is acceptable in most social sciences (Hair et al., 2010).

Table 2. Cronbach's α (alpha) reliability test

School Quality		Teachers' Self-efficacy		Teachers' Job Satisfaction	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.917	16	.926	18	.939	33

5.2 Multivariate Data Analysis

5.2.1 Factor Analysis

Factor analysis was conducted to summarize the determinants of our basic variables. The suitability of our data was checked by Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) and Bartlett's test of sphericity. Again, values varied to the desired limits (quality's KMO: .920 and sphericity sig: .000 < .05, self – efficacy's KMO: .945 and sphericity sig: .000 < .05, satisfaction's KMO: .906 and sphericity sig: .000 < .05). To test the statistical significance of factors and determine the number of factors loadings we used Maximum Likelihood Extraction Method. Factor characteristics were simplified by Varimax Rotation Method due to preserving their authenticity and focusing on major items.

As it can be seen in the following table, factor analysis resulted in ten factors. The first two, "Reliability" and "Tangibility" were related to school quality and explain almost 61% of the variance of the original fifteen items. These two factors are bibliographically verified in SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman et al., 1985; 1988) and in SERVQUAL questionnaire for education (Oliveira and Ferreira, 2009) and they were included in our fourth hypothesis. The only unverified factors according quality were: "Security", "Responsibility" and "Empathy". "Security" probably was not mentioned because it is regulated mostly by curriculum orders that cannot be changed by teachers' efforts. As far as it concerns the "Responsibility" we suppose that it was not revealed as a separate factor, because it was concluded in the reliability factor - in fact many questions of our questionnaire detecting teachers' level of responsibility are included in the field of reliability. Finally, "Empathy" with the meaning of customization probably was not mentioned because personalization is already consisted as a fact in primary education where different classes, educational techniques and methods make each lesson a different experience for every student. The next two, "Class and Students' Relationships Management" and "Students' Engagement and Educational Strategies" were related to self – efficacy and explain almost 59% of the variance of the original eighteen items. These factors are also bibliographically verified and internationally recognized in self-efficacy's measurement tools such as TSES (Tschannen-

Moran and Hoy, 2001 qtd. in: Duffin, Patrick and French 2012) and PSES (Tschannen, Moran and Gareis, 2004, qtd. in: Isik and Derinbay, 2015) and they were included in our first hypothesis. The other factors, “Work Place Relationships with the Director and Colleagues”, “Educational Administration and Management”, “Social Recognition and Professional Development”, “Relationships with Parents and Students”, “Infrastructure” and “Working Conditions and the Nature of work” were related to job satisfaction and explain almost the 68% of the variance of the original thirty-two variables. The above factors are bibliographically researched as internal and external factors of job satisfaction and they are measured by certified tools, such as JDI (Smith, Kendal and Hulin, 1969, qtd. in Kinicki et al., 2002) and JSS (Spector, 1997, qtd. in Saane et al. 2003: 194) and they were included in our second hypothesis. The only unverified factor from hypothesis 2 was: “Sources”. Perhaps, economic crisis and limited educational investments forced teachers to focus more on the existing “Infrastructures” than to “Sources” as a factor of their satisfaction. Consequently, all the above factors confirm our first, second and fourth hypotheses about the multidimensional structure of our variables (Table 3).

Table 3. Factor analysis rotated component matrix

School Quality	Self-efficacy		Job Satisfaction							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Modern Equipment	.848		Friends	.639	Building Facilities				.868	
Facilities	.821		Problems & Disagreements	.762	Means of Teaching				.756	
Appropriate Presence	.642		Positive Relationships	.791	Safety Conditions				.689	
Material	.490		Cooperation	.560	Rate of School Building	.653				
Flexible Time Commitments	.652		Bullying & Teasing Issues	.665	Income	.668				
Sincere Interest	.723		Respect	.766	Organization Structure	.656				
Operations' Execution	.717		Disruptive Behavior	.689	Number of School Units	.770				
Time Deadlines	.721		Disruptive, Noisy Students	.656	Working Conditions	.771				
Willing, Helpful Personnel	.772		Classroom Rules	.641	Rate & Number of Changes	.725				
Good Will	.794		Management System	.575	Communicating Goals	.602				
Explaining Questions	.778		Low Interest	.682	Recognition in Work Environment	.792				
Inspiring Trust	.822		Value Learning	.700	Responsibilities	.803				
Students' Safety	.797		Do Well	.543	Decision - Making	.809				
Politeness	.747		Alternate Explanations	.630	Initiatives	.800				
Training Contribution in Quality	.780		Assessment Strategies	.849	Relationships with Colleagues	.631				
			Teaching Strategies	.802	Equal Opportunities & Treatment	.803				
			Good Questions	.678	School Climate	.799				
			Training Contribution in Self-efficacy	.314	Relationships with Students			.499		
					Multiculturalism			.650		
					Interaction with parents			.748		
					Relationships with Partners	.500				
					Social Recognition (Prestige)	.641				
					Role of School	.506				
					Career Prospects	.636				
					Continuing Professional Training	.831				
					Skills' Improvement	.817				
					Evaluation System	.634				
					Working Hours				.754	
					Salary				.294	
					Profession / Nature of Work				.732	
					School	.671				
					Career Alternatives	.472				

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

In addition, the Independent Samples t - Test allowed us to associate factors of teachers' job satisfaction with demographics through comparing the means of two independent groups. However, the assessment of the normality of our data was a prerequisite for the following tests. Considering that t-test requires approximately normal data we tested the data's normality firstly using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, later the Levene Test for Equality of variances and finally t-test for Equality of Means. Non-parametric Mann Whitney test was used as an alternative for data failed the assumption of normality. As it can be seen in

table 4, the revealed correlations verify Tefera's (2016), Msuya's (2016), Saiti's, Papadopoulos' (2015) and Muhanjis (2017) theories about demographics and job satisfaction and our third hypothesis.

5.2.2 Cluster Analysis

Cluster analysis grouped our data in such a way that respondents in the same group were more similar to each other than those in other groups. Hierarchical and k-means clustering were used to determine the number and the characteristics of the groups respectively.

Table 4. Correlations between factors of teachers' job satisfaction and demographics

Dependent Variables	Independent Variables			
	Work Relationship	Marital Status	Education Level	Past Experience
TEACHERS' JOB SATISFACTION				
Relationships with Parents and Students		.015		.043
Work environment /Relationships with the Director and Colleagues			.007	
Social Recognition and Professional Development			.000	.046
Infrastructure				.034

As it can be seen in Table 5, the first cluster includes two factors which are related to teachers' job satisfaction. More specifically, it reflects how teachers' satisfaction from the working conditions and the nature of work - who are regulated from the Primary Office Management (the provider) - determines their relationship with the parents and students (the external “customers”), with teachers being the intermediate link. Entrepreneurs of this cluster deal with the amount of external satisfaction or dissatisfaction - balance between external price and cost - and influence the promotion of the educational work (external promotion).

Table 5. Final cluster centers

	Cluster		
	1	2	3
Reliability	-.17737	.82055	-.71194
Tangibility	-.44387	.22246	.10372
Class & Students Relationships Management	.42255	.44758	-.71287
Students Engagement & Educational Strategies	-.67965	.50945	-.01211
Workplace Relationships with the Director and Colleagues	-.28999	.53377	-.33499
Educational Administration and Management	-.17029	-.33240	.49242
Social Recognition & Professional Development	-.59614	.29650	.12343
Relationships with Parents and Students	.38739	.02104	-.26779
Infrastructure	-.68810	.41931	.08010
Working Conditions and Nature of Work	.40809	.08359	-.36704

Consequently, the first cluster could be defined as teachers emphasizing on “external marketing”. The second cluster includes seven factors, which are related to teachers' job satisfaction, teachers' self – efficacy and school quality. More specifically, it reflects the correlations among the environment (Tangibility, Infrastructure), the people (Reliability, Class & Students Relationships Management, Students Engagement & Educational Strategies, Workplace Relationships with the Director and Colleagues) and the processes (Social Recognition & Professional Development).

Consequently, the second group could be defined as teachers emphasizing on “interactive marketing”. Finally, the third cluster includes one factor “The educational Administration and Management”, that involves how satisfied teachers (internal “customers”) are with the rate of school buildings, the number of school units (internal place), the income’s management (internal price), the conditions in the workplace, the rate and number of changes, the career alternatives (internal product and promotion). Consequently, the third group could be defined as teachers emphasizing on “internal marketing”. These three types of relations between the service provider and the internal and external “customers” of the service confirm our fifth hypothesis, Kotler’s and Armstrong’s (2006) theory about marketing triangle and the marketing mix.

6 CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The current study explored the implementation of marketing in primary educational services. More specifically, the interrelations between teachers’ self – efficacy, teachers’ job satisfaction and school quality were investigated in the case of 193 teachers in Chios Island. The survey revealed that “Class and Students’ Relationships Management” and “Students’ Engagement and Educational Strategies” were key factors affecting teachers’ self-efficacy. In addition, teachers’ job satisfaction can also be determined by factors, such as “Workplace Relationships with the Director and Colleagues”, “Educational Management”, “Social Recognition and Professional Development”, “Relationships with Parents and Students”, “Infrastructure” and “Working Conditions and Nature of Work”, with a percentage of 54.64% of teachers in Chios Primary Education being satisfied with their job. Furthermore, “Reliability” and “Tangibility”, highlight what teachers regard as important to the quality of education, while a percentage of 75.25% stated that their expectations about service quality were verified in school reality. Apart from the above factors, socio-demographic variables such as work relationship, marital status, education level and experience affect job satisfaction in public primary schools in Chios Island; similar findings were identified by other researchers at different cultural settings (Primar et al, 2019). Moreover, cluster analysis indicated three types of teachers according to their behavior, as teachers emphasizing on different aspects of marketing: external, interactive or internal marketing.

While this paper is a preliminary study, an indication for further research would be to extend it to a larger sample from other schools, or with parents to compare the total level of their satisfaction with the findings from the current research. This will reinforce the implementation of marketing in an educational environment (Fotiadis, 2018). The above findings have implications for teachers and education managers, as it can be considered as a proposal to harmonize education with the needs of modern times. As education service is fundamental to a country’s development, annual surveys should be planned from the government educational policy makers to highlight not only teacher’s self-efficacy and satisfaction, but also students’ and parents’ satisfaction

and school quality. Considering that public primary education is an NPO, which incorporates interactions between these three parties one can better understand that “organizations are best understood as embedded within communities, political systems, industries, or coordinative fields of organizations” (Feeney, 1997, qtd. in: Eikenberry and Kluver, 2004: 133).

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Adoption of social media as distribution channels in tourism marketing: A qualitative analysis of consumers' experiences

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Abstract

Purpose: The study reported in this paper explores consumers' experiences with technology-assisted social media service encounters by investigating the applicability of Mick and Fournier's paradoxes of technology adoption to the social media as distribution channel in tourism scenario. This industry sector was selected because online technological innovations have significantly changed how tourism organisations like hotels and airlines deliver their services.

Methods: In-depth interviews were conducted to explore consumers' experiences when using social media distribution services and the results were compared to those of Mick and Fournier. A sample of 36 Facebook users was selected as informants who currently use social media for online travel purchases, via a snowballing technique.

Results: The findings are similar to those of Mick and Fournier, suggesting that when consumers adopt online technology like social media, they can simultaneously develop positive and negative attitudes. The findings of this study also suggest that the nature of some of the paradoxes experienced by consumers may depend on the industry (tourism in this study) and the technology (social media in this study) being investigated.

Implications: Findings indicate that when consumers use social media technology-assisted service encounters for hotels' and airlines' services they are most likely to experience control/chaos, freedom/enclavement, competence/incompetence, efficiency/inefficiency, engaging/disengaging, assimilation/isolation paradoxes and least likely to experience the new/obsolete paradox.

Keywords: adoption of technological innovations, social media, distribution channels, consumer attitudes, tourism marketing

JEL Classification: L83, M1, O14, Z33

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1 INTRODUCTION

The ways consumers evaluate their service delivery outcomes significantly influence their satisfaction and/or dissatisfaction with a particular service encounter and their overall views of a firm's service quality (Lehtinen & Lehtinen, 1982; Gronroos, 1998; Yang & Jun, 2002; Chami, & Kaminyoge, 2019). Existing literature suggests that when evaluating the service delivery process, personal contact is the most significant determinant of customer satisfaction and/or dissatisfaction because customers cannot clearly distinguish the service they receive from the employees who provide it (Schneider & Bowen, 1985; Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1988; Fotiadis & Williams, 2018;

Mavragani et al., 2019). This suggests that a change in the series of actions that reduces human contact would result in a change in how consumers evaluate the service encounter (Gronroos, 1984; Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry 1990; Gilbert & Powell-Perry, 2003; Valachis et al., 2008; Christou & Nella, 2010, 2014, 2016).

Technological advances have resulted in significant changes in how some service organisations deliver their services. In particular, services that were traditionally delivered through personal contact between an organisation's employees and its customers can now often be delivered online through social media with minimal direct contact between the two parties (Spyridou, 2017). It appears likely that this change in the



service delivery process has resulted in a change in the way consumers evaluate their service encounters (Zeithaml, 2002). Researchers have begun to explore the impact of online applications like social media on service delivery processes with the general consensus being that more research is necessary for a greater understanding (Dabholkar, 1994; Bitner, Brown & Meuter, 2000; Christou & Kassianidis, 2002; Sigala et al., 2002; Christou, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2011, 2010, 2013; 2015; Murphy, 2019).

The aim of the study reported here is to explore consumers' experiences with social media service encounters in the tourism industry and in particular in the tourism distribution channels' sector. This industry sector was selected because online technological innovations have significantly changed how tourism organisations like hotels and airlines deliver their services, providing consumers with online access through social media to reservations and purchases of a wide variety of tourism products (like airline tickets, hotel accommodation, transfer services, etc).

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Numerous studies have explored how consumers adopt technology (Wilkie, 1994; Barczak, Ellen & Pilling, 1997; Swanson, Kopecky & Tucker, 1997; Wiefels, 1997; Aggarwal, Chaj & Wilemon, 1998; Dover, 1998; Williams & Tao 1998; Otto & Chung, 2000; Christou & Kassianidis, 2002; Huang & Law, 2003; Pirnar et al., 2019). These studies can be classified into four categories based on their overall perspectives. The first category includes studies that address the stages consumers go through from awareness of the new technology's existence to adoption (Aggarwal, Chaj & Wilemon, 1998; Williams & Tao 1998; Otto & Chung, 2000; Misirlis et al., 2018). The second category involves studies that explore the amount of time that elapses between the inception and the adoption of new technology (Wilkie, 1994; Wiefels, 1997; Zafiroopoulos et al., 2015). The third category consists of theories that focus on the impact of consumers' characteristics and stage in life cycle when adopting technology (Swanson, Kopecky & Tucker, 1997; Barczak, Ellen & Pilling, 1997; Vlasic et al., 2019). Finally, there are theories that address the nature of the technology being adopted (Wiefels, 1997; Dover, 1998; Frambach, Barkema & Wedel, 1998; Huang & Law, 2003; Chatzigeorgiou, 2017). All these theories emphasise consumers' behaviours leading to the adoption of new technology; for the purposes of the study reported here, social media as distribution channels in tourism are considered a new technology for consumers.

Mick and Fournier's (1998) theory of technology adoption is the most pertinent to this study as it focuses on consumers' behaviours and attitudes once they have adopted a technology. Mick and Fournier (1998) studied consumers' perceptions of technology and the development of their attitudes once they had adopted a technology. Their data collection was a two-stage process done through in-depth interviews with 29 households. During the first stage they interviewed 16 informants seeking information on their general attitudes towards technology. During the second stage they interviewed 13 informants 24 hours, six to eight weeks and six to eight months after buying and using their

new technologies. The authors found that consumers experience resulted to eight paradoxes of technology: control/chaos, freedom/enslavement, new/obsolete, competence/incompetence, efficiency/inefficiency, fulfils/creates needs, assimilation/isolation and engaging/disengaging. These paradoxes are briefly discussed below.

The control/chaos paradox was found to be the most prevalent among their informants. The finding was that technology evokes feelings of control when it dictates consumers' activities and feelings of chaos when it interferes with their activities resulting in confusion. Feelings of freedom are experienced when technology provides minimal restrictions and independence (Rowley, 2002). By comparison enslavement results when activities are restricted by dependence on technology.

The new/obsolete paradox was found to result from new knowledge and innovations generated by science that constantly supersede previous existing knowledge. This is the case where continuous technological innovations constantly make existing technologies obsolete. Technology also evokes feelings of competence and incompetence. Competence results when consumers understand how a particular technology works and incompetence results when they are ignorant of how to use a particular technology (Yang & Fang, 2004; Chatzigeorgiou & Christou, 2016).

Technology can be considered efficient when tasks can be completed in less time and with less effort. However, inefficiency may result when the same tasks require more time and effort, such as when the technology does not work like it is expected to (Long & Mellon, 2004; Avdimiotis & Christou, 2004;). Mick and Fournier's (1998) informants stated that technology can fulfil some needs, but it can also identify unrealised needs. The fulfils/creates needs paradox appeared to be subtle and was discussed in relation to the ownership and use of computers. For instance, some informants indicated that the computers they own fulfil various needs whilst others felt the need to own computers and/or acquire the knowledge to utilise them.

Technology can also result in human separation and/or human togetherness (Fjermestad & Romano, 2003). It facilitates assimilation when consumers engage in activities such as watching sports and movies on television and communicating through the use of telephones and computers. By comparison, isolation results when the time consumers spend watching television and playing video games erodes the time that they spend socialising. Mick and Fournier (1998) also found that the use of technology could be engaging and/or disengaging. It is engaging when it facilitates the flow of activities and disengaging when it leads to disruption and passivity (Mick and Fournier 1998, p. 126). Mick and Fournier's (1998) study addressed the use of technologies such as computers, answering machines, caller identification kits and video cameras. These are products that consumers typically purchase and own for leisure-related outcomes. This study investigates the generalizability of Mick and Fournier's (1998) eight paradoxes to the tourism industry. The emphasis is on the use of social media as distribution channels by hotels and airlines, i.e. on forms of online technology that are often not owned by the consumer and that are used to facilitate commercial transactions (for

buying travel products and services) rather than leisure pastimes (Legouherel, Fischer-Lokou & Gueguen, 2000; Chatzigeorgiou et al., 2017).

With the introduction of online travel services, as well as of tourism services through social media like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, hotels and airlines are able to anticipate to changes in consumers' shopping behaviour and examine socio-demographic profiles of consumers (Go, Van Rekom & Teunissen, 1999; Bedard 2000; Zafiroopoulos et al., 2015). For instance, the mounting average age of consumers will increase the need for more convenience in tourism and hospitality shopping. E-commerce in travel services through social media provides this convenience by enabling consumers to make hotel reservations and order airline tickets from home, and either having the tickets or vouchers subsequently delivered to the home or receiving an electronic confirmation of the reservation. Furthermore, the number of consumers experiencing time pressure is growing for many reasons; electronic travel shopping service through social media provides consumers with the opportunity to save time by making visits to a traditional travel agent redundant (Marcusen, 2001; Chatzigeorgiou & Simeli, 2017).

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A sample of 36 Facebook users was selected as informants from the population of Thessaloniki in Greece who currently use social media for online travel purchases via a snowballing technique. Researchers recommend the use of snowballing when sampling frames and information on the target populations are unavailable (Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell & Alexander, 1995; Sarantakos, 1998; Revilla Hernández et al., 2016), as was the case in this study. The snowballing process began by asking postgraduate students at a Tourism Management Program to introduce the researchers to consumers who use Facebook as a distribution channel for hotel and airline services. These informants were in turn asked to introduce the researcher to other users of social media travel services.

While snowballing provides access to members of the targeted population it increases the risk of non-representative samples because the characteristics of the resulting sample may be different from those of the target population (Strangor, 1998; Sarantakos, 1998). Thus, although the resulting sample provided valuable insights into consumers' experiences with social media tourism distribution services, it is not representative of the targeted population and its small size means that the results are not easily generalizable. Instead, the objective was to provide initial insights into an area of consumer travel behaviour that has received little attention in the past. The results provide a starting point for future validating research.

Data collection was done through semi-structured in-depth interviews, which are ideal in scenarios such as this where the available secondary data is limited and it is necessary to probe interviewees to gain a thorough understanding of their behaviours and attitudes (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Fontana & Frey, 1994; Minichiello et al., 1995). The interviews were conducted using a funnelling approach so as to establish rapport between the interviewer and the interviewees (Kidder

et al., 1986; Fontana & Frey, 1994; Minichiello et al., 1995). Thus, interviews began with a general discussion of the interviewees' overall attitudes towards social media and online shopping, followed by questions relating specifically to the use of Facebook as a travel distribution channel and informants' experiences when using it.

The in-depth interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed with the resulting data imported into NUDIST (Non-Numerical Unstructured Data Information Searching, Indexing and Theorizing) software. NUDIST was selected as it facilitates analysis by allowing easy identification and classification of themes (Weitzman & Miles, 1995). The data were analysed using line-by-line coding in order to identify and note emerging themes and categories regarding the use of Facebook for tourism distribution services (Strauss, 1990; Huberman & Miles, 1994). Some of the codes were developed deductively on the basis of Mick and Fournier's (1998) paradoxes of technology adoption (Miles & Huberman, 1984; Strauss, 1990) while others were developed inductively based upon the issues raised by interviewees.

4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Control Vs Chaos

Mick and Fournier's (1998) informants indicated that they experience feelings of control when technology seems to direct their affairs and chaos when it seems to disrupt their activities. The interviewees to this study alluded to this paradox. They indicated that using social media as distribution channels for hotel and airline services makes them feel like they are in control because they can conduct many transactions at their convenience. However, chaos can result when they cannot initiate or successfully complete a transaction:

Control - Nikos: *Hotels and airlines let you do what you want to do. You can pay, can make reservations, buy an airline ticket, or try and book hotel accommodation.*

Chaos - Nikos: *The biggest disdain is when you go there (to a hotel's or airline's Facebook page) and it is not working or some of its facilities have been shut down... all of a sudden you have to deal with not being able to complete your transaction and you do not know what to do.*

The interviewees reported feelings of control when there are minimal restrictions and they can conduct any of their travel planning transactions with the use of online technology. Once they are accustomed to conducting their own transactions chaos can result when they expect to use the online technology through Facebook, and it is unavailable. The meaning of control appears to differ between the studies. Mick and Fournier's (1998) informants suggested that technology controls them, directing them and their activities. Their informants gave an example of a computer that could wake them up and answering machines that needed constant checking (Mick & Fournier, 1998). The interviewees to this study indicated that by using online technology through social media they could control their own travel planning activities. Specifically, they can conduct their transactions with the hotel or airline when, where and how they choose. The significance of control is consistent with existing literature which suggests that the more control consumers

feel they have during the service encounter the more positive their attitudes (Bateson, 1985; Dabholkar, 1996; Sigala & Christou, 2000, 2002; Christou et al., 2004).

4.2 Freedom Vs Enslavement

In this study the perception of control was related to that of freedom. The interviewees indicated that online technology through social media gives them freedom to conduct their travel planning transactions whenever and wherever they choose. They can buy airline tickets, book hotel accommodation and perform other transactions at their own convenience. In years gone by consumers could only find travel information and buy travel products and services during office hours when their travel agents' shops were open. Online technology through Facebook evokes feelings of freedom because it has reduced these restrictions by allowing consumers to perform travel planning transactions at their convenience.

Freedom - Fotini: *You can buy an airline ticket by using social media without having to go to the agent or the airline's website, and without having to wait to queues. If you do online reservations, you can monitor the status of your request through the Internet whenever you like.*

However, some interviewees indicated that though they do most of their travel transactions electronically there are limits to what they can achieve. In particular, they discussed restrictions imposed on the number of transactions and the nature of transactions they can conduct.

Enslavement - George: *I mean for simple services it works. But if you have a particular question it is not very good because sometimes, they have limited services on social media.*

Enslavement - Aphroditi: *They say you are allowed 2 airline tickets without commission. That is what I do.*

The perceptions of enslavement appear to differ between the two studies. Mick and Fournier's (1998) informants indicated that technology results in feelings of enslavement when they become dependent on it, indicating that they feel like slaves to technology. Interviewees in the present study alluded to feelings of enslavement as a result of the limitations of online reservations and buying through social media, such as limitations on complex travel itineraries and the limitations that result from the nature of the online reservations.

4.3 New Vs Obsolete

Continuous technological innovations constantly make existing technologies obsolete. In the scenario examined here, this would result from an increase in new online technologies through social media that make existing ones obsolete. Some informants made reference to this paradox, referring to the rate at which hotels' and airlines' electronic services are changing and the implications for customers having to continually learn new online procedures.

Achilleas: *I started using telephone reservations and ticketing, and by the time I got accustomed to them I was getting pushed into online bookings and electronic tickets; now, I fell that I am pushed to getting used to deal with social media for my transactions with hotels and airlines.*

One informant conceived of a situation in the future where a small device (like artificial intelligence spectacles) will be owned by consumers that facilitates all travel purchasing

activities. Many other informants visualised that all near-future transactions with hotels and airlines will be performed over their smart watches (w-commerce).

Niki: *Well, next all these services will be available through your smart watch, that can allow you to do all your travel shopping from any place without even the need to use a smart phone.*

While some interviewees noted the tendency for online hotels' and airlines' technologies to change over time, the new/obsolete paradox was not as salient to the interviewees in this study as for those in Mick and Fournier's study. The difference may result from the nature of the technologies being discussed in both studies. Mick and Fournier's informants discussed products such as computers, music records, and answering machines that are normally purchased for recreational use and become regularly outdated. Interviewees to this study discussed online travel technology through social media, which is used for service delivery processes. Hotels and airlines purchase the software necessary for the service delivery process through social media and it is therefore likely that the technological innovation and their obsolescence would have a greater impact on the hotels and airlines than on consumers.

4.4 Competence Vs Incompetence

The interviewees indicated they feel competent when they feel they have the ability to complete their own online transactions successfully through social media. However, their ignorance of how some electronic air ticket and check-in modes work and their inability to comprehend the full capabilities of some online hotel reservations' modes can make them feel incompetent.

Competence - Eleftheria: *I find online ticketing (through airlines' social media) easy to use. I have also mastered the electronic check-in system, which is good. I even use the seat selection service and I have had no problems with it.*

Incompetence - Apostolos: *So, I visited that e-ticketing service and I thought I do not know how to do this, I know that you can buy and issue an electronic ticket through social media, but I do not know how... I do not always trust myself with services through Facebook because I am not totally familiar with them.*

Mick and Fournier's informants made reference to technologies that are normally accompanied by operational manuals. They indicated that after using the manuals if they understood how and why a technology works like it does, they felt competent. If they still did not understand how the particular technology works, they felt incompetent. Hotel and airline distribution channels through social media for reservations and purchasing modes have no equivalent to operational manuals that can assist consumers with their transactions. Thus, consumers who require assistance with the different online travel service modes have to directly access the hotels and airlines, and cannot make effective use of social media services. This perceived lack of resources and training may influence consumers' feelings of incompetence.

4.5 Efficiency Vs Inefficiency

The use of technology may result in some tasks taking less time and effort. It can also result in inefficiency when tasks require more time and effort:

Efficiency - Panagiotis: *(Ticketing through social media for air travel) is straight forward straight through. You are not waiting for somebody to pick up the phone, and you are not listening to music.*

Inefficiency - Ioanna: *For me I just hate to waste my time. It is just aimless sitting there on the smartphone screen with a website giving you orders like "press this button here, click this link after that, etc".*

This paradox was discussed relative to transactions through social media and transactions conducted in travel agents' stores with human travel consultants; online transactions through Facebook were generally felt by interviewees to be more efficient than dealing with an employee. Electronic travel transactions are considered efficient when consumers can perform their requests and complete their transactions without going through numerous visual cues and "steps" provided by the hotel's or the airline's social media website, and without visiting a travel agent's bricks-and-mortar store. However, these transactions are perceived to sometimes result in inefficiency when consumers have to follow each of the cues/steps provided by both booking/purchasing modes in order to perform their transactions or when the failure of an electronic booking/purchasing mode results in the consumer having to visit a travel agent's outlet.

4.6 Fulfils Vs Creates

Mick and Fournier found this paradox to be subtle and only discussed in relation to the ownership and use of computers. Some of their informants indicated that the computers they own help fulfil various needs, whilst others felt pressure to own computers and/or acquire the knowledge required to utilise them. Similarly, the interviewees in this study indicated that online hotels' and airlines' technology through social media has led to the fulfilment of many of their travel needs, such as the easy booking of hotel accommodation and paperless airline tickets. However, for some interviewees the advent of electronic travel services through Facebook has resulted in the identification of previously unrealised needs. Examples of such needs are the desire to own latest models of smartphones and the need to learn and understand how to conduct electronic travel transactions through social media. Fulfils needs - Antonis: *I find social smartphones are good. They are very good when I want to buy an airline ticket at any time of the day, seven days a week.*

Creates needs - Anestis: *I would like to do it (online travel services through social media). But I haven't got a good smartphone.*

The most salient need amongst the interviewees that related to this paradox seemed to be the need to own and/or understand how to use social media through mobile devices. They implied that if they owned latest models of mobile devices and fully understood how they work and how to use them, they would be more inclined to tourism distribution channels through social media.

4.7 Assimilation Vs Isolation

The interviewees made no direct or implicit references to travel services through social media fostering human togetherness, however they indicated that it can result in isolation. Forman and Sriram (1991) state that for lonely consumers the purpose of shopping is not only to gain goods

and services but also to gain and maintain social contacts. Similarly, some interviewees enjoyed personal interaction with travel consultants, viewing their travel shopping activities as social events. For these interviewees, online travel services through Facebook are creating isolation by destroying their interaction and relationships with travel agents' or hotels' personnel.

Rena: *I want the service at the travel agent's store. I want the local travel agent. I want to go to a travel consultant who knows me and who has helped me before. They have closed the travel agents' stores that bring in the trade to all these shops.*

The quote suggests that the traditional travel shopping methods encouraged human togetherness as a result of the interactions between customers and travel agents' staff and interaction of consumers at shopping centres. The quote implies that electronic travel services through social media facilitate isolation because it leads to the closure of the brick and mortar travel agents consequently reducing the traffic in shopping and business centres.

4.8 Engaging Vs Disengaging

Mick and Fournier found that technology is engaging when it facilitates certain tasks and disengaging when it results in confusion and chaos. Online travel services through Facebook are engaging when they facilitate the flow of activities such as easy access to accommodation reservations, airline tickets issuing and electronic check-ins. However, it is disengaging when the electronic travel service mode does not facilitate the transactions required by the respondent.

Engaging - Kostas: *I think the biggest benefit of it is that you have got access to not just the hotel or airline but to all other companies offering travel products, like tour guides, cruising and car rental. You can access their offers and make up your own holiday package.*

Disengaging - Andreas: *The most annoying thing I have had on social media is something happened to my security certificate on my computer. It meant wasting all that time and starting from scratch again.*

Mick and Fournier found this paradox to be hypothetical, stating that it is a noteworthy paradox even though their informants rarely alluded to it. The paradox was more prevalent in this study with informants suggesting that they are motivated to use online travel services technology through social media because it facilitates their travelling; it allows them to perform all their travel purchases. The difference in perception of this paradox may be a result of the technologies being discussed. The processual (as opposed to recreational) use of hotels' and airlines' technologies may lead consumers to place particular emphasis on their engaging aspects.

5 CONCLUSIONS

This study sought to explore consumers' experiences with technology-assisted service encounters by investigating the applicability of Mick and Fournier's paradoxes of technology adoption to social media as distribution channels in tourism. The findings support those of existing research which suggests that consumers can develop multiple attitudes

towards certain source elements, resulting in existence of contradictory views and attitudes (Kidder et al., 1986; Minichiello et al., 1995; Mick & Fournier, 1998; Schneider & Currim, 2001; Gretzel, et al., 2012; Sigala & Christou, 2002, 2003, 2007, 2014; Nair & George, 2016). In terms of Mick and Fournier's paradoxes, the findings of this study indicate that when consumers use social media technology assisted service encounters for hotels' and airlines' services they are most likely to experience control/chaos, freedom/enslavement, competence/incompetence, efficiency/inefficiency, engaging/disengaging, assimilation/isolation paradoxes and least likely to experience the new/obsolete paradox.

While most of the discussions of the paradoxes were similar between the two studies, there were areas of difference in the control/chaos, freedom/enslavement, new/obsolete and engaging/disengaging paradoxes. It appears likely that a central cause of these differences was the types of technologies investigated. In terms of the new/obsolete paradox, while consumers can own computers and mobile devices like smartphones and tablets, they typically own these items for purposes beyond electronic travel shopping through social media. They are not responsible for the hotels' and airlines' software programs that require constant innovation. As such, the notions of new and obsolete appear to have less relevance to users of electronic travel services through social media.

In regard to the control/chaos paradox, perceptions of control differed markedly between the two studies. Mick and Fournier's informants indicated that technology is powerful, and it controls them and directs their activities. The interviewees of this study suggested that hotels' and airlines' social media technology gives them the power to control their travel shopping activities. In terms of the freedom/enslavement paradox, Mick and Fournier's informants indicated that they sometimes feel like slaves to technology, while the interviewees in this study did not feel the same way. Instead, they felt that their activities are limited by the nature of the tourism distribution channels' technologies. Finally, Mick and Fournier did not find the engaging/disengaging as paradox prevalent as it was in this study. This again may be because of the products used in their analyses.

This study has several limitations. The generalisability of these findings is limited by the small sample of 36 interviewees used. It is not known the extent to which factors such as the nature of the technology selected and the demographic characteristics of those sampled influenced the interpretation. Further research is required to assess the extent to which these findings are representative of Greeks in general and the applicability of these paradoxes to social media technology-assisted service encounters in other industries and in other countries.

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RESEARCH NOTE

Marketing issues of sustainable tourism development in Russian regions

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Abstract

Purpose: This paper aims to provide a better understanding of marketing issues relevant to sustainable tourism development. Marketing issues are of crucial importance for Russian regions with unique landscapes and many small towns with their ancient churches, original local museums, and other attractions. **Methods:** A questionnaire survey of 213 locals was performed, to analyze the prospects of positioning the Mari El Republic as an attractive tourism destination for rural and ethno-tourism, taking in account the unique character of the Mari settlements in terms of history, culture, and ecology, as well as the need to preserve local traditions and culture.

Results: The main obstacle for sustainable tourism development in the Russian regions examined, is the lack of prominence and absence of right market positioning. For the Mari El Republic as one of the most prospective sustainable tourism destinations in Russia, ethno-tourism concept, based on preserving paganism, the traditional religion of the Mari people, can become a solid basis for positioning.

Implications: Research presented here sheds light on the Russian tourism market diversity, as well as on uniqueness of small Russian towns and villages as attractive destinations for cultural, heritage, and ecology tourism. It also underlines the need to understand socio-cultural aspects of tourism destinations to ensure positive impact on local communities that are the most important stakeholders in destination marketing.

Keywords: Tourism, marketing, sustainable tourism, small settlements, culture, destination development, Russia

JEL Classification: M31, Q01, Z32

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1 INTRODUCTION

In the last decades, tourism and hospitality sector has become a key driver for socio-economic progress (UNWTO, 2018). Tourism makes a significant contribution to the development of the global economy (Mowforth, Munt, 2015), becoming a source of additional income for many cities and regions, and in some cases acting as the only catalyst for the development (Chatzigeorgiou et al., 2009, 2017; Amerta et al., 2018).

Tourism can be the basis of the socio-economic revival of rural areas, leveling the problems caused by the decline in agricultural production (Christou et al., 2004; Reeder, Brown 2005; Sharpley, 2007; Winkler et al., 2007; McGregor, Thompson-Fawcett, 2011).

In the last decade, a broad variety of tourism issues in Russia is discussed (Morozova et al., 2014; Silaeva et al., 2014; Ignatiev, 2015; Ovcharov et al., 2015; Aleksandrova, Vladimirov, 2016; Sheresheva, Kopiski, 2016; Chkalova et al., 2019). The results of all studies confirm that tourism is



growing in importance as a strategic sector of the Russian economy. There is now understanding in Russia that this sector can contribute to achieving the national development objectives. At the same time, the prospects of rural and ethno-tourism in Russia, as well as issues of sustainable development of tourism in Russian regions, remain unexplored. There is an obvious need to unveil the ways of effectively deployment of unique cultural heritage of indigenous people and preserved ancient traditions in a number of Russian regions, with positive impact on the local tourism and the prosperity of local communities.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 Sustainable tourism

The term sustainable tourism emerged in the late 1980s (Hall, 2011) and has become firmly established in tourism research (Dermetzopoulos et al., 2009; Budeanu et al., 2016). 'Sustainable tourism' signifies a condition of tourism based on the principles of sustainable development (Waligo et al., 2013), taking "full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts" (UNEP/WTO, 2005, p.11-12). Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. Therefore, destination management helps to achieve the goals of sustainable tourism development as it offers a process for coordinating the management of all the elements that make up the destination: attractions, amenities, access, marketing and pricing (Fazenda et al., 2010).

Nowadays, there is a growing body of literature on sustainable tourism (Waligo et al., 2013; Edgell, 2016; Gohar, Kondolf, G. M., 2016; Weaver, Jin, 2016; Blancas et al., 2018), including papers on sustainable tourism development in emerging markets (Fazenda et al., 2010; Legrand et al., 2012; Ghimire, 2013; Hussain et al., 2015; Maheshwari, Sharma, 2017; Filimonau, 2018; Jain, Thakkar, 2019). Emerging countries possess a lot of unique natural and cultural assets that can become an important source of rural tourism, ecotourism and ethno-tourism development (Su, 2011; Gretzel et al., 2012; Chon et al., 2013; Karnaukhova, 2013; Ajagunna, 2014; de la Maza, 2016; Muresan et al., 2016; Polukhina, 2016).

The concept of sustainable development clearly postulates that the most important goal of tourism development should be improving the quality of life of residents using economic, social, cultural, recreational and other advantages of tourism. Properly designed tourism development strategy can significantly affect the lives of local communities, help to stabilize and develop them if they are in decline (Andereck et al., 2005).

At the same time, "sustainable development and its derivative, sustainable tourism, have both conceptual and practical deficiencies that have frustrated their application" (Tao, Wall, 2009: 90). One of the most important issues is the balance of interests and building stimuli for consistent participation of all stakeholders (Rasoolimanesh, Jaafar, 2017; Lalicic, Önder, 2018). "Stakeholder participation and empowerment are important elements for supporting change in current practices" (Budeanu et al., 2016: 4) and for

enhancing the ability of local destination communities to respond to both planned changes and unpredictable circumstances (Moscardo, Murphy, 2015).

Therefore, an attempt to use tourism as a panacea, without calculating the ratio of benefits and costs, can lead to serious, sometimes irreversible consequences. There is a lot of evidence that sudden fluctuations in the population caused by an uncontrolled influx of tourists transform the way of life and damage the environment and material cultural heritage (Coccossis, 2016). As Budeanu et al. (2016) underline, disagreements in tourism communities about land use or resource distributions can escalate into conflicts. So, one should be aware that local community involvement is crucial for sustainable tourism.

1.2 Culture as a special environment and catalyst for tourism development

There is a broad understanding that culture serves as a special "breeding ground" for the development of tourism. Cultural diversity, along with increased opportunities for movement around the globe, boosted the rapid development of the tourism sector (Timothy, Nyaupane, 2009; Nella & Christou, 2016). This is due to that culture, on the one hand, preserves memory and respect for the past, on the other hand, is extremely sensitive to new ideas and views. Therefore, cultural events become catalysts for the development of new types of tourism and tourist destinations (Nella & Christou, 2014; Fundeanu, 2015).

Culture as a special environment needs the help of a special infrastructure supported by many actors, namely individual creative personalities, enterprises and organizations that are enthusiastic in preserving different kinds of cultural attractions and opening new paths for cultural projects (Kockel, 2019).

As to challenges that are crucial for tourism destinations development in connection with cultural aspects, many authors point out that there is a need to pay great attention to the interests of local ethnic communities that are among the best place ambassadors, on the one hand, and usually tend to resist change any change, on the other hand. As Karnaukhova (2013) underlines, established ethnic communities' communicative style strategically provides support or opposition to the local administration initiatives. Therefore, there is a need to preserve and defend local traditions while developing tourism (Christou, 2007; Li & Hunter, 2015; Muresan et al., 2016; Sheresheva, Polukhina, 2016).

3 RUSSIAN TOURISM MARKET

There are potential competitive advantages that can be realized to make Russia an attractive destination. The availability of different tourist attractions and recreational resources of the country allows developing almost all kinds of tourism. According to the Federal State Statistics Service data, there are 2742 museums, 649 theatres, 98.7 thousand cultural heritage sites historic and 59.4 thousand archaeological heritage sites (Rosstat, 2018), including "hidden gems" of small towns with their ancient churches, original local museums, and unique sights. Moreover, 29 cultural and natural objects from different regions of Russia

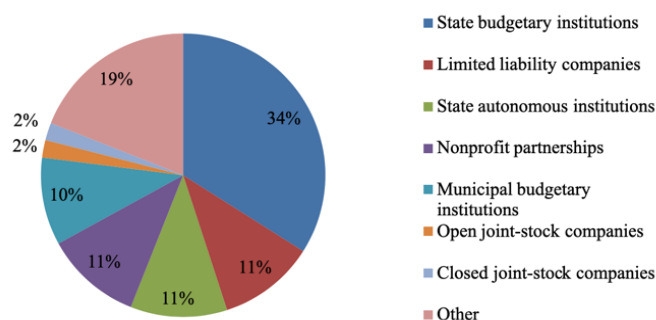
are included in the World Heritage List (UNESCO, 2019). Russia has a huge potential for active tourism (skiing, water tourism, hiking, mountaineering, cycling, sailing, equestrian tourism). There are 35 national parks and 84 forest reserves in Russia situated in different climatic zones, with extremely diverse landscapes, rivers, lakes, mountains, etc. that offer outstanding opportunities for ecotourism, rural and adventure tourism (Sheresheva, 2018).

Strategies for the development of sustainable tourism became now subject of attention of federal and regional authorities. In the WEF Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report (2015), Russia has risen in the ranking to 45th place out of 141 countries. Moreover, tourism is growing in importance as a way to boost the development of small towns and rural territories of Russia by embedding them into tourism routes and clusters (Mingaleva et al., 2017).

Still, potential competitive advantages are difficult to realize due to the poor tourism infrastructure, including transportation problems, shortage of accommodation and entertainment resources, the poor state of many local attractions, and lack of skilled human resources (Sheresheva, Polukhina, 2016). The incoming tourism with cultural purposes is usually limited to visits to Moscow and St. Petersburg or quite traditional routes (the Golden Ring, cruises on the river Volga) which are the most famous cultural destinations in Russia (Sheresheva, Kopiski, 2016). Therefore, there is a need to understand more precisely the conditions for sustainable tourism development in promising Russian regions.

Among the relatively new tourism information sources in Russian regions are regional and municipal tourist information centers (TICs) that specialize in creating a database of tourism. In 2018, 303 TICs created in 70 Russian regions.

Figure 1. Legal forms of tourist information centers in Russia



TICs initially conceived as institutions for the accumulation of various information on tourism, establishing information communications with all interested parties, information support for the regional tourism management system. In the process of their creation, problems arose in determining the organizational and legal status, as well as sources of financing. These issues were negotiated on the regional level and resolved differently, based on organizational and economic feasibility, local tourism development features, and financial conditions on the region. As a result, different kinds of organizational approaches are used to run TICs (Figure 1).

State budgetary institutions (34%) take the largest share of the total TICs number. Limited liability companies, state autonomous institutions, non-profit partnerships (11% each) and municipal budget institutions (10%) are also common legal forms of tourist information centers in Russian regions. In the process of TICs development, their functions and tasks began to expand. It was due to the need for self-financing of these organizations, as well as the opportunity to engage in certain commercial activities, training, coordination, advertising, etc. Therefore, the work of the TIC gradually began to assume a universal character. They began to move away from the original specialized goal of their creation, to take a wider range of tasks. In some cases they duplicate the work of tourist enterprises, directly developing new tourist routes, solve local marketing problems to promote the tourism products of individual enterprises and other organizational, commercial, and educational tasks.

On the example of TICs development, one can see a clear shift to focusing on marketing issues understood as promoting Russian regional tourism products and brands in domestic and foreign markets. This is the mainstream in tourism development policy on all levels of tourism management in Russia. At the same time, the fact that marketing is not only developing a good image for tourists is neglected, though relationships with all stakeholders, including local communities, are also crucial for tourism destinations competitiveness (Beerli, Martín, 2004; Christou, & Kassianidis, 2002; Iordanova, 2015, 2017).

The purpose of the research presented in this paper was to analyze the prospects of positioning the Mari El Republic as an attractive tourism destination for rural and ethno-tourism, taking in account the unique character of the Mari settlements in terms of history, culture, and ecology, as well as the need to preserve local traditions and culture.

4 PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Socio-demographic characteristics are broadly in line with the structure of Mari El rural population. National composition of the respondents was as follows: 56% Mari, 39% Russian, 5% Tatar, Udmurt, Chuvash. Among the respondents 21.7% - people of retirement age, 19% - young people under the age of 25 years.

The level of religiosity is high: 88.9% consider themselves believers. Supporters of the Orthodox religion dominate completely (90.4%); 3.2% are Muslim, 5% have traditional Mari pagan beliefs. A kind of "dual faith" is also widespread: a significant part of the Orthodox Mari observes some pagan rites.

61.2% of all respondents were born in the settlements where they are now living. A quarter of the respondents were born in some other settlements of the Mari El Republic and later moved to their contemporary place of living. Only one in ten respondents came from other Russian regions. 81.0 % of all respondents live in their villages for more than 15 years, in their own homes.

The Mari El Republic has low economic performance, as compared to most Russian regions. Therefore, it is not surprising that many respondents mention that they are "not satisfied" with their living conditions, 44% underline that

“life here is stalled”, 13% believe that “no initiative is welcomed here”. Nevertheless, the shares of optimistic and pessimistic responses on the questions assessing the respondents’ social well-being are almost equal, with an only slight predominance of negative assessments. Every third respondent is “happy to live here,” 36% are “generally satisfied”, 68.4% estimated their attitude towards the region as “positive”. Moreover, 95% of respondents do not intend to relocate. The vast majority of the respondents (86.4%) count the beautiful nature is the most attractive features of the Mari El Republic as a place for living and a place to visit (Table 1).

As to kindness or unkindness of locals, including indigenous people, the obtained results are controversial. About one of ten respondents underlined the kindness of locals as an attractive feature of Mari El Republic. Almost the same percentage of respondents are sure that inhospitable people are one of the most unattractive features of the region (Table 2).

Table 1. Most attractive features of Mari El Republic according to respondents

	N of respondents	%
Beautiful nature	184	86.4
Kind hearted people	19	8.9
A promising region for life	5	2.3
There are many opportunities for entrepreneurial-minded people	1	0.5
Other	4	1.9

Table 2. Most unattractive features of Mari El Republic according to respondents

	N of respondents	%
Our climate is too severe	11	7.3
Inhospitable people	22	14.6
Life is stuck here	67	44.4
Initiatives are not welcome here	20	13.2
Other	31	20.5

We hypothesize that this depends on the situation since indigenous people are highly sensitive to any attempts to arrange visits of tourists to their holy places. At the same time, in cases when tourist routes are apart of these places, they are quite kind to visitors (of course, if there are not too many tourist groups coming to their villages).

Still, additional research is needed to understand the deep motives of different groups of residents and identify the direction of the balance of their interests and the interests of tourists.

As an example, entrepreneurs that develop rural tourism in a number of settlements are welcoming growth of tourist flows that bring to them profits. Typical examples are tourist complexes Silent Dawns in the village Maly Kugunur, Expanse in the village Aleshkino, Yushut River in the village Oshutyal. Conducted interviews with entrepreneurs and managers of these companies have identified their

motivation. Most of them are older than the average and have considerable experience in other areas of business. One of the motives to start their rural business was the desire “to get away from the bustle of the city” but at the same time to maintain an active lifestyle and “to be useful to people and society”, “to support the revival of Russian villages”, “to develop and maintain the national culture of the Mari people”. As a result, there is the mutual positive attitude of the entrepreneurs and the local community towards each other.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

The research has shown that a number of cultural attractions and many ancient archaeological sites situated in the region could make a solid base for rural and ethno-tourism but currently, there are obstacles for sustainable destination development.

There are local Mari communities still preserving ancient cultural and religious traditions (paganism) but they often demonstrate their opposition to the idea of ethnographic tourism, as they feel that this is a threat to national identity and spirit of Mari people. At the same time, there are other nationalities, cultures, and religions situated in the region.

Therefore, an original model of sustainable tourism destination development is needed that could help to gain synergy from all potential attractions of Mari El Republic, with the special attention to cultural integrity, small cities and villages local community involvement, life support systems, current and future social and environmental impacts, and the role of relationships and collaborative business networks.

The main purpose of the further research is to study relevant marketing practices that allow to benefit from local cultural and natural assets and to propose managerial instruments that will help to balance between the interests of tourism destination stakeholders in the Russian market context.

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Aims & Scope

AIMS

The *Journal of Tourism, Heritage & Services Marketing* is an open-access, international, multi-disciplinary, refereed (double blind peer-reviewed) journal aiming to promote and enhance research in all fields of marketing in tourism, heritage and services management. The journal is intended for readers in the scholarly community who deal with different marketing sectors, both at macro and at micro level, as well as professionals in the industry. The *Journal of Tourism, Heritage & Services Marketing* provides a platform for debate and dissemination of research findings, new research areas and techniques, conceptual developments, and articles with practical application to any tourism, heritage, and services marketing segment. Besides research papers, the journal welcomes book reviews, conference reports, case studies, research notes and commentaries. The *Journal of Tourism, Heritage & Services Marketing* aims at:

- Disseminating and promoting research, good practice and innovation in all aspects of marketing in tourism, heritage and services to its prime audience including educators, researchers, post-graduate students, policy makers, and industry practitioners.
- Encouraging international scientific cooperation and understanding, and enhancing multi-disciplinary research across various marketing sectors.

SCOPE AND PEER-REVIEW POLICY

The scope of the journal is international and all papers submitted are subject to an initial screening by a member of the journal's Senior Advisory Board, and subsequently by strict blind peer review by 3 anonymous international reviewers. The journal features conceptual and empirical papers, and editorial policy is to invite the submission of manuscripts from academics, researchers, post-graduate students, policy-makers and industry practitioners. The Editorial Board will be looking particularly for articles about new trends and developments within different sectors of marketing and the application of new ideas and developments that are likely to affect tourism, heritage and services in the future. *Journal of Tourism, Heritage & Services Marketing* also welcomes submission of manuscripts in areas that may not be directly tourism or heritage-related but cover a topic that is of interest to researchers, educators, policy-makers and practitioners in various fields of services marketing.

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- Adequate and relevant literature review.
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Journal of Tourism, Heritage & Services Marketing is published twice per year (in Spring and in Autumn). Each issue includes the following sections: editorial, full papers, research notes, case studies, book reviews, conference reports, industry viewpoints, and forthcoming events.

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The journal is published twice per year (in Winter and in Summer) and is owned and co-managed by two academic units of the School of Economics & Business of the International Hellenic University: the Program of Postgraduate Studies in Tourism Management & Organisation and the Research Laboratory in Tourism "Tourlab". The International Hellenic University is the third largest public (state-owned) university in Greece.

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Journal Sections

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The Editorial addresses issues of contemporary interest and provides a detailed introduction and commentary to the articles in the current issue. The editorial may be written by the Editor-in-Chief, the Associate Editor, or by any other member(s) of the Editorial Board. When appropriate, a “Guest Editorial” may be presented. However, the Journal of Tourism, Heritage & Services Marketing does not accept unsolicited editorials.

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For the Research Papers section, the Journal of Tourism, Heritage & Services Marketing invites full-length manuscripts (not longer than 8,000 words and not shorter than 4,500 words) excluding references, from a variety of marketing disciplines; these papers may be either empirical or conceptual, and will be subject to strict double blind peer review (by at least two anonymous referees). The decision for the final acceptance of the paper will be taken unanimously by the Editor and by the Associate Editor. The manuscripts submitted should provide original and/or innovative ideas or approaches or findings that eventually push the frontiers of knowledge. Purely descriptive accounts are not considered suitable for this section. Each paper should have the following structure: a) abstract, b) introduction (including an overall presentation of the issue to be examined and the aims and objectives of the paper), c) main body (including, where appropriate, the review of literature, the development of hypotheses and/or models, research methodology, presentation of findings, and analysis and discussion), d) conclusions (including also, where appropriate, recommendations, practical implications, limitations, and suggestions for further research), e) bibliography, f) acknowledgements, and g) appendices.

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Case Studies should be no longer than 3,500 words and not shorter than 2,000; these articles should be focusing on the detailed and critical presentation/review of real-life cases from the greater marketing sector, and must include – where appropriate – relevant references and bibliography. Case Studies should aim at disseminating information and/or good practices, combined with critical analysis of real examples. Purely descriptive accounts may be considered suitable for this section, provided that are well-justified and of interest to

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Full research Papers should be not longer than 8,000 words and not shorter than 4,500 words (excluding references). Research Notes should be no longer than 3,000 words and not shorter than 1,000. Case Studies should be no longer than 3,500 words and not shorter than 2,000. Book Reviews should be no longer than 1,500 words and not shorter than 1,000. Conference Reports should be no longer than 2,000 words and not shorter than 1,000. Industry Viewpoints should be no longer than 1,500 words and not shorter than 500. Manuscripts that do not fully conform to the above word limits (according to the type of the article) will be automatically rejected and should not be entered into the reviewing process.

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JTHSM provides the following guidance to help authors write an abstract of maximum value to readers. Authors are encouraged to follow this guidance. An abstract is a concise summary of a larger work, typically written in one paragraph of 100 to 200 words. Its purpose is to help readers quickly discern the purpose and content of the work. Manuscripts submitted to *JTHSM* must include an abstract written in English, of not less than 150 and not more than 200 words. Accuracy, brevity, and clarity are the ABCs of writing a good abstract. Writing style: a) Use a who, what, when, where, why, how, and "so what" approach to addressing the main elements in your abstract; b) Use specific words, phrases, concepts, and keywords from your paper; c) Use precise, clear, descriptive language, and write from an objective rather than evaluative point of view; d) Write concisely, but in complete sentences; e) Use plain language, do not use jargon, and do not use acronyms except for commonly used terms (then define the acronym the first time used); f) Write in the third person; do not use "I" or "we"; g) Use verbs in the active voice. A well-written abstract generally addresses four key elements:

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- For books and monographs: Teare, R. & Ingram, H. (1993). *Strategic Management: A Resource-Based Approach for the Hospitality and Tourism Industries*. London: Cassell.
- For chapters in edited books: Sigala, M. and Christou, E. (2002). Use of Internet for enhancing tourism and hospitality education: lessons from Europe (pp. 112-123). In K.W. Wober, A.J. Frew and M. Hitz (Eds.) *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism*, Wien: Springer-Verlag.
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