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Journal of Tourism, Heritage & Services Marketing
Volume 7, Issue 1, 2021

Table of Contents

Check for updates

Editorial

Evangelos Christou, Editor-in-Chief
International Hellenic University, Greece

JEL Classification: *L83, M1, O1*

Biographical note: Evangelos Christou is Professor of tourism marketing and Dean of the School of Economics & Business at the International Hellenic University, in Greece (echristou@ihu.gr).

1 INTRODUCTION

We are pleased to present the thirteenth publication of JTHSM (volume 7, issue 1), the first issue in its seventh 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 7, issue 1 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 nine quality manuscripts: seven full papers that underwent rigorous double-blind reviewing, a commentary and a book review.

2 PRESENTATION OF THE FIRST ISSUE FOR 2021

The present issue of JTHSM contains seven full paperes written by fifteen authors located in ten different countries and affiliated with fourteen different universities.

The first full paper is written by Thereza Mugobi form Open University of Tanzania and Shogo Mlozi National from College of Tourism, Tanzania. This study aimed to assess the external factors influencing ICT usage at UNESCO World Heritage Sites (WHS), focusing on exploring practices Tanzania. Data for this study were collected from 238 UNESCO World Heritage Site decision-makers in Tanzania. These respondents were stratified into three strata, based on UNESCO's categorization of site type (nature, mixed, and culture). Testing of the hypotheses involved structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis. The findings indicated that perceived competitive pressure and perceived pressure from customers had a positive influence on ICT usage at WHS. This study confirms the T.O.E theory by Tornatzky and Fleischer, which postulate that decision to use a new ICT system within the organization is determined by environmental factors which include features in which the firms conduct business such as competitors and its customers. For the success of any tourism business, particularly UNESCO World Heritage Sites, ICT usage is inevitable for their site's performance. For destination management organisations, the current study is important for policy formulation, particularly in relation to ICT usage by the tourism industry at the destination to create a conducive business environment that may assist tourism growth related to World Heritage Sites.

The impact of COVID-19 on Italian accommodation industry appears to be significant. The aim of the second full paper, written by Giacomo Del Chiappa from University of Sassari in Italy, Ilenia Bregoli from the University of Lincoln in the United Kingdom, and Anestis K. Fotiadis from Zayed University in the United Arab Emirates, is to to understand which actions hospitality businesses think the private and public sectors should adopt in order to cope with the pandemic and its impact. To facilitate this, this research adopted chaos theory to investigate Italian small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the hospitality sector. A mixed method approach, based on a convergent parallel design data validation variant, was adopted. A survey with open and closed questions was developed and sent to a sample of businesses. The results showed that Italian entrepreneurs and managers were over-relying on interventions from the public sector and that there was a lack of business actions being made, thus evidencing a deficit in terms of long-term strategic thinking and the innovation required during such turbulent times. Although these results cannot be generalised to the whole of the hospitality industry, they shed light on important elements that industry associations should take into account.

In the third full paper, Pauline A. Milwood from the Pennsylvania State University in the USA and Anne P. Crick from the University of the West Indies in Jamaica, examine culinary tourism and post-pandemic travel. The COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) global pandemic forced hospitality and tourism service providers to respond by pivoting business models in line with governmental restrictions to curb the spread of the virus. This paper explores the online responsiveness of tourism-affiliated culinary service providers to a major external disruption. This study uses ecosystem resilience and Internet marketing theories to analyze 139 web homepages of culinary tourism service providers promoted by the official tourism website of Jamaica, to measure of Jamaica to measure online responsiveness to the COVID-19 pandemic. Findings show that web page responses vary between the official tourism web page and the restaurants promoted on its site. Responses also vary across restaurant affiliation clusters and across

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location clusters. Further, resilient web page responses are more commonly associated with hotel restaurants and eponymous restaurants. This study provides a novel analysis of online responsiveness to COVID-19 and contributes a summary framework for resilient response by culinary ecosystem providers preparing for post-pandemic travel.
The fourth full paper is written by Shaul Krakover from Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Israel and Andrea Corsale from the University of Cagliari in Italy. This paper aims to introduce and define the concept of sieving tourism destinations as an umbrella term representing faster decision-making processes compared to destination choice models, and to demonstrate its usefulness for both sides of consumption and production of tourism attractions. Fast decision at the consumers' demand side is demonstrated via an exploratory graphic model. Producers' supply side sieving is measured by observing data elimination on two public serving internet platforms compared to a baseline taken from special interest group tour operators representing Jewish heritage attractions in Sicily and Thessaloniki. Quantitative analyses on the supply side provided measurable sieving ratios. They reveal careful partial sieving performed at local level editorship, while much harsher sieving occurs on social media platforms. This is interpreted as a market failure related to niche and special interest groups attractions. The demand side findings call for targeted marketing distinguishing customers not only by income but also by temperament, mood, and personality. The supply side findings call for careful examination of the conditions for inclusion and exclusion from the list of attractions as well as the need to remedy the concealment of minor attractions from social media platforms.
The fifth full paper comes from an author based in Greece; Christina Bonarou, from the Hellenic Open University. This paper aims to contribute to ongoing research on tourist postcards and tourist imagery, exploring how contemporary photographic tourist postcards act as narratives of cultural representations and national identities, and how they constitute a 'poetics of travel' by communicating 'myths' about particular destinations. The methodology has followed the semiotic analysis along with a critical approach, focusing on a corpus of approximately 4,200 picture postcards issued between 2003 and 2019. In addition to adopting a discourse approach, the study can be considered as 'auto-ethnographic'. Findings indicate that visual representations as the mechanism of tourism discourses are essential to the constructed realities of tourism, constituting a 'poetics of travel'. The fact that Greece is presented as a 'museum-like' destination, requires, however, special attention because the exaggerated language of the tourist discourse limits Greece in an eternal "unchanged" present, partly cancelling the potential image of modern progress.
The sixth paper was written by three authors: Lamia Nechoud from École Supérieure de Commerce and Faouzi Ghidouche from École des Hautes Études Commerciales, both from Algeria, and Hugues Seraphin from the University of Winchester in the United Kingdom. This study examines the process by which eWOM susceptibility moderates the strength of indirect links between the perceived credibility of eWOM messages and the intention to visit a destination via the destination image and the perceived usefulness of these messages. The research hypotheses were tested according to SEM and Hayes procedure, which made it possible to study simultaneously the mediating and moderating effects. The results indicate that the mediation links of the destination image on the relationship between perceived credibility and intention to visit a destination, are moderated by the susceptibility of the eWOM (the comments generated by Internet users or the sharing of tourists' experiences on Facebook). This study also indicates that the relationship between the perceived credibility of the eWOM and the intentions to visit a destination is mediated by the usefulness of the eWOM messages and the destination image. Given the powerful influence of the eWOM, it should not be ignored or misused, but managed to improve the effectiveness of marketing strategies in hospitality, tourism and travel.
The seventh paper was written by Gaunette Sinclair-Maragh from the University of Technology in Jamaica and Shaniel Bernard Simpson from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in the USA. The purpose of this study is to explore heritage tourism within the framework of ethnic identity by examining tourism as a tool for promoting ethnic identity and traditions of the Maroons in Jamaica. Qualitative research using in-depth interviews was used to collect relevant data. The findings were analyzed using the deductive thematic analysis approach and discussed within the theoretical framework of ethnic identity. The study concludes that the Maroon's ethnic identity can be promoted through ethnic tourism which is a form of heritage tourism. The findings will be very resourceful to the Maroon communities in Jamaica and across the Caribbean, especially in terms of best practices in preserving their heritage and ethnic identity. It will also inform tourism stakeholders as to their role in providing the necessary resources to enable the preservation of the Maroon's ethnic identity and traditions.
Maximiliano E. Korstanje from the University of Palermo in Argentina, through a commentary discuss the decline of book reviews in tourism discipline. He concludes that book review not only is an important task for the evolution of the discipline but the touchstone of empirical research. For these reasons, students, professional researchers and consecrated scholars should never forsake the custom to review books to expand their constellations and horizons. All said leads me to believe that books and book review are always the touchstone of professional research.
Last, Maite Echarri Chávez from the University of La Habana in Cuba and Maximiliano E. Korstanje from the University of Palermo in Argentina presents a critical review critical review of the book titled "Tourism Development in post soviet Nations: From communism to capitalism" by Susan Slocum and Valeria Klitsounova (eds). They conclude that this is a recommendable book for those economists, sociologists, tourism experts moved to understand tourism beyond the borders of the dominant paradigm forged by westernized models.

Based on the above, we trust that you will enjoy reading this new issue of JTHSM!

Evangelos Christou
International Hellenic University
Editor-in-Chief

The impact of external factors on ICT usage practices at UNESCO World Heritage Sites

Thereza Mugobi
Open University of Tanzania, Tanzania

Shogo Mlozi
National College of Tourism, Tanzania

Abstract:
Purpose: *This study aimed to assess the external factors influencing ICT usage at UNESCO World Heritage Sites (WHS), focusing on exploring practices Tanzania. The study proposed and tested two hypotheses: a) there is a significant relationship between perceived pressure from competitors and ICT usage in WHS, and b) there is a significant relationship between perceived pressure from customers/visitors and ICT usage in WHS.*
Methods: *Data for this study were collected from 238 UNESCO World Heritage Site decision-makers in Tanzania. These respondents were stratified into three strata, based on UNESCO's categorization of site type (nature, mixed, and culture). Systematic random sampling was used to select respondents from each stratum according to their ratio in the total population. Testing of the hypotheses involved structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis. Chi-square/Degree of freedom (CMIN/DF), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), comparative fit index (CFI), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) were used as criteria for estimation of goodness of fit indices.*
Results: *The findings indicated that perceived competitive pressure and perceived pressure from customers had a positive influence on ICT usage at WHS. This study confirms the T.O.E theory by Tornatzky and Fleischer (1990), which postulate that decision to use a new ICT system within the organization is determined by environmental factors which include features in which the firms conduct business such as competitors and its customers.*
Implications: *For the success of any tourism business, particularly UNESCO World Heritage Sites, ICT usage is inevitable for their site's performance. For destination management organisations, the current study is important for policy formulation, particularly in relation to ICT usage by the tourism industry at the destination to create a conducive business environment that may assist tourism growth related to World Heritage Sites.*

Keywords: *UNESCO World Heritage Sites, tourism policy, heritage tourism, ICT usage, Tanzania*

JEL Classification: *N7, L83, Z39*

Biographical note: Thereza Mugobi is a lecturer at the Open University of Tanzania. She holds a PhD in Tourism and has over eight years of teaching and five years of research experience in the areas of tourism, eTourism, eMarketing, sustainable management, and tourism entrepreneurship. tmugobi@gmail.com. Shogo Mlozi is CEO of National College of Tourism, Tanzania, and a seasoned tourism and hospitality professional with experience in research, teaching and consultancy at national and international level. Corresponding author: Thereza Mugobi (tmugobi@gmail.com).

1 INTRODUCTION

This paper focused on the impact of external factors on ICT usage practices at UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Tanzania. It was motivated by the fact that heritage tourism is one of the growing tourism markets, attracting both the private and public sectors. It is becoming a piece of the lucrative global tourism pie (Ioannidis et al., 2013). Ramos-Soler et al. (2019) observe that ICT usage has proved to be a key factor for the sites' sustainability. The development of vast numbers of websites and applications, for instance, enables tourists to easily access reservation systems, online travel agents and tour operators, and interactive product review sites. The evolution of ICT also allows World Heritage Organizations to promote and distribute information about their attractions, widen access, raise awareness, increase ownership, and promote interpersonal encounters (Baggio et al., 2013). Further, it enlarges the possibility for interested people to reach rich and up-to-date info about WHSs (Permatasari et al., 2016). ICT usage helps to promote easy and fast communication between a company and its business partners by tracking all business activities even across borders, lowering the cost of communication, and broadening the market base (Moya and Engotoit, 2017; Chami & Kaminyoge, 2019).

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ICT usages strengthen customer relationships by connecting more customers to the site network. It allows integration of customer database to provide the latest client-related information, which better equips managers and employees for responding to customers' inquiries and makes business processes and knowledge accumulation more efficient (Vargas et al., 2016). ICT usage enables businesses to receive immediate customer feedback; it allows WHSs decision-makers to react fast to changing customer demand and even recognising a new niche in the market (Bystrowska et al., 2017). The internet and other related technologies create 'powerful customers' who have a wealth of accurate, updated, and unbiased information (Moya and Engotoit, 2017). Pai and Hiang (2011) found that ICT enables customers to make informed decisions found tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. It allows them to compare the actual and ideal performance. Therefore, ICT has proved to be a key factor for an organization to reach superior competitive advantages through improved work systems (Vargas et al.,2016; Chatzigeorgiou & Christou, 2020). As a result, there has been an increase in the adoption and application of ICT technology in the travel and tourism industry worldwide (Bystrowska et al., 2017; Fotiadis and Vassiliadis, 2017).

In reference to the present study, Tanzania is home to seven UNESCO World Heritage Sites. However, the country had been relatively slow in ICT usage, which would have helped transform the service delivery system in its tourist attraction sites. Factors cited as barriers to ICT adoption and usage in the Tanzania tourism industry were inadequate institutional arrangements, inadequate communications, poor infrastructure, shortage of ICTs facilities, and limited data management capacity (Monko, et al., 2017). Further, it was said that the sites are located in remote areas where ICT service is still a challenge despite all the efforts and measures taken by the government toward promoting ICT services in remote areas (Ministry of Works, Transport and Communication, 2016). A gap which this study set out to address was the scantiness of research on the effect of the environmental context on ICT adoption in World Heritage Sites in Tanzania. This is because the available studies have mostly focused on the external factors influencing ICT usage at WHSs, and students and teachers' ICT adoption (Olise et al., 2014; Vodopivec et al., 2014; Zhang and Liu, 2016). As a result, the environmental factor considered key for the adoption of ICT by scholars, such as Tornatsky and Fleisher's (1990) in their TOE Model-identification, had been ignored. It is in this backdrop that the present study set out to explore the role of perceived competitive and customer pressures in influencing ICT usage at WHSs in developing economies, particularly Africa. Specifically, the study set out to seek answers to two research questions, as follows:

a) Is there a significant relationship between perceived pressure from competitors and ICT usage in World Heritage Sites in Tanzania?
b) Is there a significant relationship between perceived pressure from customers and ICT usage in World Heritage Sites in Tanzania?

Answers to these questions shed light on how to militate against these factors that deprive Tanzania's heritage sites of the technology's strategic benefits in the travel and tourism sector.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

ICT can be described as Information Communication and Technology (ICT). Sapprasert (2007) defines ICT as technologies used to collect information, store information, edit, and pass on information in various forms. Hasnaoui and Freeman (2010) characterize ICT as collecting, collating, and conveying information via technology. Nonetheless, this study adapted Hasnaoui and Freeman's (2010) definition of ICT as the combination of different informatics technology, especially communication technology, to process and communicate information of a particular organization. Therefore, Informatics Communication Technology usage for this study will represent email and web-based applications.

External factors for ICT adoption and usage include the environmental factors under the Technological, Organizational, and Environmental (TOE) theory. These are features in which firms conduct business and are influenced by the industry itself, its competitors, customers and the firm's ability to access resources supplied by others, and the firm's interactions with the government. Fuchs et al. (2010) indicate that these features determine a firm's decision to use ICT to keep its competitors on check and meet customer pressure. With the intention of identifying environmental factors that influence ICT usage at WHS, this study borrowed two environmental factors elements from a study of Chairoel and Riski (2018); Fuchs et al. (2010); and Ismail and Ali (2013). These are perceived competitive pressure (PCP) and perceived pressure from customers (PPC).

2.1 Perceived Competitive Pressure (PEP)

Perceived competitive pressure is defined as the degree to which the level of competition determines ICT usage. When the level of competition is high, organizations may use ICT not on account of its relative advantage but on account of keeping the competitors who are already using it on check (Azam, 2015; Rishi, 2013). Gratzer and Winiwarter (2003) precisely observe that perceived competitive pressure from ICT usage forces a company to adopt ICT usage to compete, attract, and retain customers. A company can adopt and start using ICT to gain a competitive advantage, such as providing tailored products and services. Kilangi (2012) supports that many SMEs in developing countries use ICT as a means of communication and distribution due to the increase of pressure from competitors and suppliers. Iacovone et al. (2016) also agree that competition induces innovation and ICT usage in OECD countries. Ayadi et al. (2008) posit that competitive pressure significantly influences ICT usage among Botswana's organizations.

Mndzebele (2018) explored factors influencing ICT adoption and usage among SMEs in Swaziland through a quantitative survey of 100 SMEs owners. In his findings, pressure from competitors was the most important environmental factor of his 8 factors determining ICT adoption and usage among Swaziland SMEs. Alam and Noor (2009) confirm that ICT usage is one of the business strategies to ensure competitive advantage within the organization; it offers room to compete on a global scale with improved efficiency in dealing with customers and supplier relationships. When the level of competition is high, organizations may use ICT, not on account of its relative advantage, but on account of matching with competitors who are already using it (Lee et al., 2015). ICT usage alters the rule of competitive pressure, restructures the industry make-ups, and unravels novelty in outperforming rivals. It also offers new competitive strategies and alters new competition (Garau, 2014; Fotiadis & Williams, 2018). ICT usage helps companies to increase the value of their competitiveness by allowing them to improve the process value. If they do not adopt and use ICT, the possibility of striving and surviving the competition is slim (Mndzebele, 2018. p58). In this light, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H1: There is a significant relationship between perceived pressure from competitors and ICT usage in World Heritage Sites in Tanzania

2.2 Perceived Pressure from Customers (PPC)

Perceived pressure from customers (PPC) refers to the pressure given by the external factors, including customers. Customers have a strong influence on organizations' decisions to use ICT. That is, an organization decides to adopt ICT to compare the actual and ideal performance of an application (Mavragani et al., 2019). In other words, business owners and managers may perceive ICT purchase as a waste of resources if there is no pressure from customers (Dieck and Jung, 2018). Hassan and Ogundipe (2017) observed that the firm tends to use e-commerce due to external pressure, including customers' demand.

Mwai (2016) conducted a study on the determinants of ICT adoption by Small and Medium Enterprises in the hospitality industry using a sample of 100 management and technical staff from the Nairobi Region in Kenya. He collected both quantitative and qualitative data using a questionnaire with both open and closed-ended questions. Data were analyzed using statistical functions such as frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation. SPSS (Statistical package for social sciences) model was used in data analysis. The findings indicated that pressure from customers was the most significant Environmental factor in determining ICT usage among Small and Medium Enterprises in the hospitality industry in Kenya.

Likewise, Bahrami et al. (2012) surveyed 400 tourism and hospitality companies in Iran, using modern information technology tools, to uncover a relationship that existed between ICT usage and customer relationship. Findings of the study suggested that ICT usage within an organization positively affected customer relationships among tourism and hospitality firms in Iran.

Moreover, Kim and Kim (2018) report that perceived pressure from customers significantly determines ICT usage and success in Portuguese manufacturing SMEs. According to Alam and Noor (2011), perceived pressure from the customer is one of the significant factors influencing ICT usage among SMEs in Malaysia. Polo Pena et al. (2013) also observe that customers are now the drivers and governors of the tourism value chain through their urge to try new destinations, products, foods, attractions. They add that customers are not ready to give a second chance to destinations providing inferior products or services (Polo Pena et al., ibid). Likewise, Dieck and Jung (2018) confirm that customers have a strong influence on an organization's decision to use ICT. This is to say, business owners and managers are more likely to perceive ICT usage as a waste of resources in a context without customer pressure (Christou, 2010; Dieck and Jung, 2018).

Miraz and Habib (2016) corroborate that businesses usually receive customers' feedback and work on them very quickly to meet their needs and keep them. Hassan and Ogundipe (2017) observe that a firm tends to use e-commerce due to external pressure, including customers' demand. The following hypotheses were thus postulated:

H2: there is a significant relationship between perceived pressure from customers and ICT usage in World Heritage Sites in Tanzania

2.3 Proposed model of the study

This study used a specified structural equation model (SEM), as shown in Figure 1. The model contains both independent variables and the dependent variable. The independent variables are derived from the TOE Theory. SEM's choice is because it provides a useful analytical framework for determining factors influencing ICT usage (Oliveira and Martins, 2011). Unlike other quantitative statistical models, it is suitable for testing relationships among latent constructs indicated by multiple measures (Garau, 2014). Byrne further adds that SEM stands out among other multivariate procedures for providing explicit estimates of measurement errors in the parameters and measuring both unobserved and observed variables. The main assumption of the theory is that the decision to use a new ICT system within the organization is determined by three factors, namely technological, environmental, and organization (Adeola and Evans, 2019; Bahrini and Qaffas, 2018; Kante et al., 2017). Thus, this study focused on environmental factors only due to empirical studies' inadequacy on the relationship between environmental factors influences in ICT usage in WHSs. Thus, the study found it necessary to investigate further these relationships for practitioners and tourism researchers (Lee et al., 2015).

Environmental factors in the TOE theory include features that influence firms' business conduct, namely its competitors, customers, the firm's ability to access resources supplied by others, and the firm's interactions with the government (Malaysia, 2015; Ma et al., 2017; Mugobi and Mlozi, 2020). The study borrowed two environmental factors elements from the study of Chairoel and Riski (2018); Ismail and Ali (2013), which are perceived competitive pressure (PCP) and perceived pressure from customers (PPC).

Perceived competitive pressure (PCP) were measured using 5 indicators; PCP1, PCP2, PCP3, PCP4, and PCP5 (i.e., our competitor applies ICT, our suppliers demand ICT, ICT application increase competitive advantage, we respond quickly to other competitors, and we are faced with very intense competition). A CFA model for Perceived Competitive Pressure (PCP) was run. There were six PCP construct indicator variables: PCP1, PCP2, PCP3, PCP4, and PCP5. (Only One item, PCP6, was dropped during the Exploratory Factors Analysis procedure. This implies that five factors were retained and contained, and they had at least loading factors Eigenvalues greater than 1 explaining a cumulative variance of 74.517 (Mugobi and Mlozi, 2020).

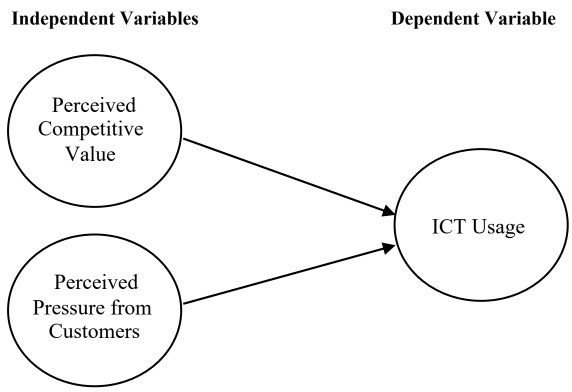
Perceived pressure from customers (PPC) was measured using 5 indicators; PPC1, PPC2, PPC4, PPC7, and PPC8 (i.e., our competitors can easily offer our service and products, our customers demand ICT application service, our customers demand an online interaction, our customers demand to become loyal to our org, our customers demand customized service). A CFA model for perceived pressure from customers (PPC) was run. The PPC construct had the following indicator variables; PPC1, PPC2, PPC3, PPC4, PPC5, PPC6, PPC7, and PPC8 (three indicators variables PPC 3, PPC4, PPC 5 were dropped during the EFA procedure) as the factor loading were below the recommended ratio of Eigenvalues greater than 1 (Mugobi and Mlozi, 2020).

The dependent variable made up of the ICT usage indicators variables were measured using 5 indicator variables; ICTU1, ICTU2, ICTU4, ICTU5, and ICTU6 (i.e., Our site uses ICT applications for displaying company information and products, Our site uses ICT application to communicate with my suppliers, Our site uses ICT application to communicate with my customers, I regularly use ICT application to sell my product online, Our site uses ICT application to market our service and receive payment) (Mugobi and Mlozi, 2020). During the initial CFA run, all the standardized regression weights were above 0.5 and significant at $p \leq 0.000$ except for ICTU3, which was dropped. The five indicators were analyzed throughout the study (Mugobi and Mlozi, 2020). The two hypotheses were generated, as shown in Figure 1:

H1: there is a significant relationship between perceived pressure from competitors and ICT usage in World Heritage Sites in Tanzania

H2: there is a significant relationship between perceived pressure from customers and ICT usage in World Heritage Sites in Tanzania

Figure 1: Conceptual Model



3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Sample design and data collection

This study was conducted in seven UNESCO World Heritage Sites (WHSs) in Tanzania from August 2017 to February 2018. This is because literature reveals limited investment in ICT (Torero & Braun, 2006) and official data concerning ICT adoption and usage in WHSs. Consequently, this study would provide a better understanding of how external factors influence ICT usage at UNESCO WHSs to bring about ICT investment in Tanzania's WHSs for effective protection, conservation, and presentation of cultural and natural heritage. Stratified random sampling was employed whereby the sites were grouped into three categories, namely nature, mixed, and culture. This realized the sample consisted of Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA) in Arusha Region (mixed site); Ruins of Kilwa Kisiwani and Ruins of Songo Mnara in Kilwa Kisiwani (cultural site); Serengeti National Park in Arusha and Mara Region (nature); Selous Game Reserve (SGR) in Iringa and Morogoro Region (nature); Kilimanjaro National Park in Kilimanjaro (nature); Stone Town of Zanzibar (culture) and the Kondoa Rock-Art Site in Kondoa District (culture). With regard to the research strategy, the study applied the survey method. At the sites, data were collected from directors, senior managers, general park warden, managers, heads of unit, heads of department, and zone warden officers because of their prominent role in deciding about the adoption and use of ICT at their sites. Systematic random sampling was then applied to select respondents from each stratum based on their ratio in the population; computed as Xc/XW for cultural sites, Xn/XW for goods natural sites, and Xm/XW for mixed sites (Mugobi and Mlozi, 2020).

Where Xc is the number of cultural sites
Xn is the number of natural sites
Xm is the number of mixed sites
XW is the total number of WHSs

Hence, the ratio of decision-makers from cultural sites in the population was 149/407=0.366, the ratio of decision-makers from natural sites in the population was 191/407=0.469, and the ratio of decision-makers from the mixed sites was 67/407=0.165. The ratios were then used to compute the number of respondents included in the study from each stratum.

3.2 Sample size

By taking into consideration each stratum, cultural, natural, and mixed, and considering the population ratios for each, as computed in the above paragraph, the sample sizes for each stratum were computed as follows:

I. cultural sites: 0.366x 200 ≈ 73 cultural sites decision-makers
II. natural sites: 0.469 x 200 ≈ 94 natural sites decision-makers
III. mixed sites: 0.165 x 200 ≈ 33 mixed sites decision-makers

The above computation gave a sample size of 200, as recommended by Byne (2010). The number of questionnaires distributed to cultural sites was 0.566 x Nc = 73, then Nq = 73/0.566 ≈ 129. The number of questionnaires (Nn) distributed to natural sites was computed as 0.566 x Nn=94, then Nn = 94/0.566 ≈166. Likewise, the number of questionnaires (Nm) distributed to mixed sites was computed as 0.566 x Nn = 33, then Ng = 33/0.566 ≈ 58. Hence, the total number of questionnaires distributed was 353 (Mugobi and Mlozi, 2020).

3.3 Measurement scales

Measurements and scales in this study were adapted from previous studies. All items measured were adopted from Chairoel and Riski (2018), Ismail and Ali (2013), and Lippert and Govindarajulu (2006). The items consisted of perceived competitive pressure (7 items) and perceived pressure from customer's variables (8 items). The ICT usage characteristics were adopted from Kilangi (2012). There were also six items to measure ICT usage; all the items were measured using a five Likert scale, whereby 1=strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree.

The drop-and-collect technique was applied: i.e., leaving a questionnaire with a respondent and going back to pick it up after it has been filled in. 238 usable responses were returned and subjected to analysis. Given the nature and location of the Tanzania UNESCO world heritage sites; and the low response usually associated with drop and collect techniques, this response rate was considered reasonably adequate (Mugobi and Mlozi, 2020). Similar studies by Bernard (2006) suggested that the paper-based survey delivered through the drop-and-collect technique, on average, achieves a response rate of up to 60%. Nulty (2008) also states that paper-based surveys achieve an average response rate of 56.5%. For the sake of avoiding over-ambition, the researcher anticipated a response rate of 56.5%, as suggested by Nulty (2008). To test the instruments' internal consistency, a reliability test was conducted, where the Cronbach Alpha values ranged from .874 to .933 (Table 1). For this construct, perceived competitive pressure and perceived pressure from the customer Cronbach's Alpha coefficient were well above the recommended minimum threshold of 0.7.

Table 1: Reliability Scores

Variable	Items	Alpha Value
Perceived competitive pressure	5	.874
Perceived pressure from customers	5	.933
ICT usage	5	.899

Exploratory Factor Analysis was used to validate the study's variables before performing the analysis and measurement of the relationship between the variables. Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin's measure of sampling adequacy (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were used to assess the suitability of the variables.

Table 2: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.918
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	14877.163
	DF	1770
	SIG.	.000

To warrant the application of EFA, the KMO statistic value would range from 0.6 or above (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007), and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity had to provide a significant chi-square output. Indeed, the KMO value became 0.918, and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity became significant at $p < 0.000$. That is, the sample size appeared adequate and data appropriate for factor analysis, which does not include the identity matrix. These results are summarized in Table 2.

To decide on factors to retain, pattern matrix and Scree plot were performed, whereby all factors greater than 1 would be retained. Eventually, each of the factors had Eigenvalues greater than 1, and a cumulative variance of 74.517%. The Scree plot also produced factors above the point of inflation. Thus, EFA output results were reliable. At this stage, only variables that had acceptable loadings were taken into account. Details of factors and their underlying factor loadings are presented in the pattern matrix in Table 3.

Table 3: Environmental Factors Analysis

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2
PCP3: ICT application increases competitive advantage		.867
PCP4: We respond quickly to other competitors		.756
PCP5: We are faced with very intense competition		.773
PCP6: Our competitors can easily offer our services and products		.763
PCP7: Our competitor applies ICT		.776
PPC2: Our customers demand compatible and accessible ICT application	-.670	
PPC4: Our customers demand online interaction	-.681	
PPC5: Our customers demand online information about our products and services	-.795	
PPC6: Our customers demand online booking	-.927	
PPC7: Our customers demand to become loyal to our org	-.841	
PPC8: Our customers demand customized services	-.773	

ICT usage was measured using six (6) items, all of which were retained for subsequent analysis. The six items were loaded on a single factor, and the factor abstracted represented a total variance of 72.455 per cent. The summary is given in Table 4.

Table 4: Environmental Factors Analysis

Item	Factor 1
ICTU1: Our site uses ICT applications for displaying company information and products	-.454
ICTU2: Our site uses ICT applications to communicate with our suppliers	-.488
ICTU3: Our site uses ICT applications to communicate with employees	-.413
ICTU4: Our site uses ICT applications to communicate with my customers	-.497
ICTU5: I regularly use ICT applications to sell my products online	-.521
ICTU6: Our site uses ICT applications to sell our services and receive payment	-.499

4 FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Responder's profile

Table 5 describes the respondents' profile. Starting with the gender of the respondents, male respondents who are employed in WHSs represented 68.3%, outnumbering females by 30.3%. This shows that males are still dominating the tourism employment group. Okello and Yerian (2009) reported that male respondents working in tourism-related sectors in Tanzania constituted 54%, whereas females constituted 46%. This is attributed to the vulnerability of women in formal employment in the tourism sector due to complex working conditions (i.e., working benefits, numbers of hours women work, and legal entitlements for mother) and job position. Okello and Yerian (2009) reported that men take great risks than women, and therefore, men are well represented in managerial positions compared to women.

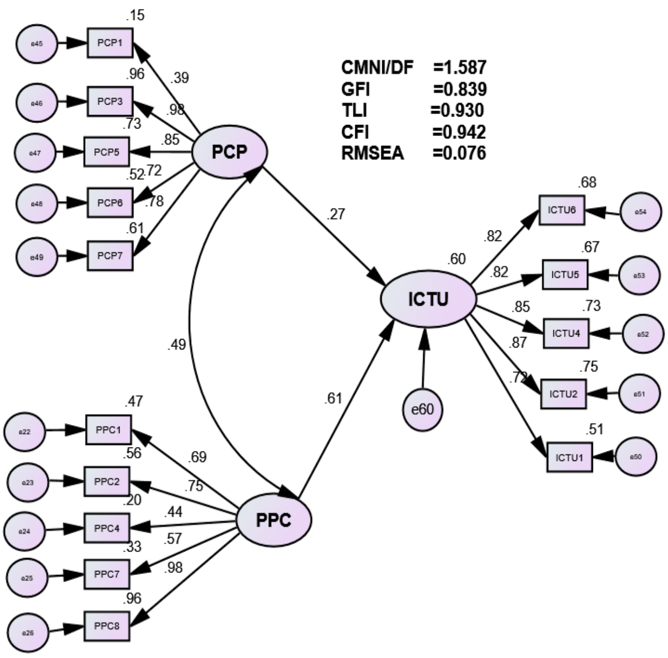
Secondly, in terms of education level, this study found that 47.7% of the respondents had attained a bachelor's degree, while 3.8% had a master's degree. Thirdly, the respondents' profile also revealed that 50% of the employees had been in WHSs for between one to 10 years. Further, about one-third of the WHSs respondents had been in WHSs for between 11 and 15 years. Lastly, more than half of the sites had 40-60 employees, and about one third had between 60-80 employees, and the remaining 7% had between 100 to 5 employees.

Table 5: Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics	Distribution of answers
Gender	Male: 68%; Female: 30%
Education	Primary school: 4%; High school: 8.2%; Certificate/Diploma: 13.2%; Bachelor's degree: 47.7%; Advance Diploma: 24.7%; Master's degree: 3.7%
Job position	Chief Park: 10.3%; Park Warden: 18.9%; Head of Department:18.1%; Head of Unit: 21.4%; Others: 28.4%
Job Experience	Less than a year: 12.3%; Between 1-5 Years: 8.2%; Between 6-10 years: 40.3%; Between 11-15 years: 32.1%; Between 16-20 years: 4.1%; More than 20 years: 0.8%
Number of Employees	40-60 employees: 57.6%; 60-80 employees: 31.3%; 80-100 employees: 5.8%; More than 100 employees: 2.5%

4.2 Structural model results

Figure 2: The Structural Model for the overall sample



In testing the structural model for the overall sample, the analysis started by evaluating goodness-of-fit indices. The analysis showed that the model met the recommended guidelines for goodness of fit (CMIN/DF =1.587, RMSEA= 0.079, GFI= 0.839, CFI= 0.942, TLI= 0.930). From Figure 2, it can be concluded that there is a perfect model fit, which confirms the suitability of testing the hypothesis of the study. The results of the analysis using IBM AMOS 24& 26 software was used in the data analysis

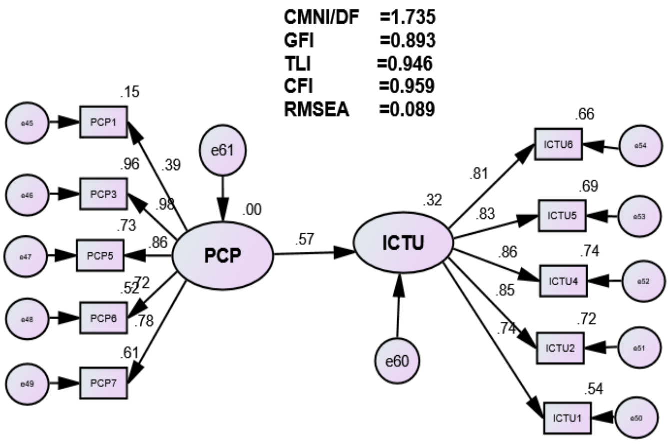
Table 6: Summarized Fitness indices for the overall sample

Name of Category	Name of Index	Model fitness indices results
Absolute Fit	RMSEA	0.076
Incremental Fit	GFI	0.839
	CFI	0.942
	TLI	0.930
Parsimonious Fit	CMIN/DF	1.587

4.3 Model path coefficients and hypothesis testing

Results of the Structural Model for the overall sample are reported based on goodness-of-fit, referred to in Figures 3 to 5 and on the direction, the strength of the standardized paths coefficient (β), the critical ratio (CR), and significance level (p-value). The descriptions of the tested hypotheses are given hereunder.

Figure 3: Model Path Coefficients between perceived competitive pressure and ICT usage



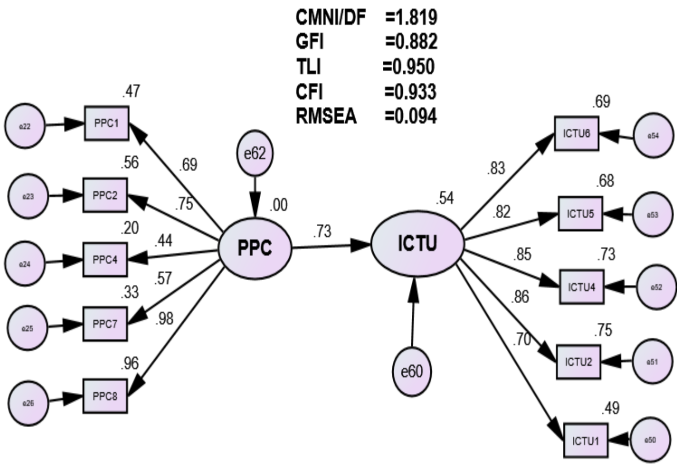
Starting with H1 (ICT Usage <---Perceived competitive pressure), we proposed a positive relationship between perceived competitive pressure and ICT usage in World Heritage Sites; and that the pressure leads to the adoption of ICT usage in Tanzania World Heritage Sites. There is a support for the hypothesis ($\gamma = 0.565$; C.R $=3.165$; $p = 0.002$). That is, the relationship for the overall sample is positive and significant, as shown in Figure 3. To attract and retain customers, WHSs use ICT in providing tailored products and services to meet the needs of their customers. The finding also corroborates with those of Kilangi (2012), Iacovone et al. (2016), and Ayadi et al. (2008), who equally found out that perceived competitive pressure had a positive relationship with ICT usage. Furthermore, Ghobakhloo et al. (2011) argue that competitors force businesses to adopt and use ICT to promote their services to customers and stay competitive and dynamic.

Table 7: Summarized fitness indices for H1

Name of Category	Name of Index	Model Fitness Indices Results
Absolute Fit	RMSEA	0.089
Incremental Fit	GFI	0.893
	CFI	0.959
	TLI	0.946
Parsimonious Fit	CMIN/DF	1.735

H2 (ICT Usage <---Perceived pressure from customers) postulated a positive relationship between perceived pressure from customers and ICT usage in World Heritage Sites. As we expected, there is support for the hypothesized relationship (H2) between perceived pressure from customers and ICT usage in World Heritage Sites (γ = 0.735; CR =5.341; p = 0.000). Thus, H2 is supported, as illustrated in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Model Path Coefficients between perceived pressure from competitors and ICT usage



NOTE: PPC= perceived pressure from customers, ICTU= ICT usage

Table 8: Summarized fitness indices for H2

Name of Category	Name of Index	Model Fitness Indices Results
Absolute Fit	RMSEA	0.089
Incremental Fit	GFI	0.893
	CFI	0.959
	TLI	0.946
Parsimonious Fit	CMIN/DF	1.735

According to Ghobakhloo et al. (2011) and Kim and Kim (2018), perceived pressure from customers is considered one of the most critical factors for ICT usage. Other researchers (Alam and Noor, 20011; Taylor, 2017; Chian, 2010; Otiso et al., 2012) also found that external pressure, including pressure from customers, had a positive relationship with ICT usage. This implies that World Heritage Sites decision-makers need pressure from customers to adopt ICT to meet their customers' tangible and intangible needs and maintain such customers' loyalty. Without pressure from customers, decision-makers tend to consider the adoption of ICT a waste of resources (Alam and Noor, 2011).

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 Relationship between Perceived Competitive Pressure (PCP) and ICT Usage In WHSS

It was hypothesized in H1 of the study that there is a positive relationship between perceived competitive pressure (PCP) and ICT usage in WHSs. Perceived competitive pressure (PCP) is one of the environmental determining factors of ICT usage (Bakkabulindi, 2012; Kilangi, 2012) as indicated in our framework (Figure 1). Findings from the current study supported this relationship (γ = 0.180; C.R = 2.899; p = 0.004). The findings suggest that when WHSs decision-makers perceived a high level of competitive pressure, they started using ICT. One possible reason is that Tanzania's tourism industry is more involved with the visitor from all over the globe. The level of competition between East and South African countries is almost the same. As a result, there is more pressure from competitors for WHSs to start utilizing ICT in their daily operations. The growing importance of ICT usage in the tourism industry caused several threats and opportunities which transform the value chain of the industry. The findings of this study are supported by Gratzer and Winiwarter (2003). They argue that perceived competitive pressure from ICT usage forces a company to find new ways to expand its market to compete, attract, and retain customers. A company adopts and start using ICT to gain a competitive advantage. Kilangi (2012) also says that many SMEs in developing countries adopt and use ICT for communication and distribution due to increased pressure from competitors and suppliers. Likewise, Buhalis and Deimezi (2004) found out that pressure from competitors increases ICT usage in Greece. In addition, Iacovone et al. (2016) argue that the increase in competition induced innovation and ICT usage in OECD countries. Meanwhile, Ayadiet al. (2008) argue that competitive pressure positively significantly influences ICT usage among Botswana organizations.

However, the findings of this study contradict those obtained by Mihalic and Buhalis (2013), where Tourism managers in Slovenian perceived competitive pressure to be the least determining factor of ICT usage. Cakmak and Tas (2012) equally found no tangible evidence that constructive firms' decisions to use ICT were influenced by the increasing level of competition in the industry. They were of the view that ICT is adopted at the operational level for the sake of technical and economic benefits. Similarly, Alam and Noors (2009) found that external pressure, such as from customers, insignificantly influenced Malaysia's ICT adoption. He attributed the findings to Malaysian SMEs noninvolvement in global business that would subject it to pressure from customers or suppliers to adopt ICT in their business operation.

Furthermore, Mukamanzi and Ndikubwimana (2018) recently established that competitors' pressure is insignificant in SMEs' ICT adoption in Rwanda. In our view, these contrary findings are because of the differences in the fields, locations, socio-economies, technologies, political conditions, and tourism attractions of these studies compared to WHSs in Tanzania. We concluded that WHSs decision-makers in Tanzania have to adopt ICT for their daily operations to keep up with both internal and external competition, managing change, and stay ahead of their competitors, as also recommended by Ghobakhloo et al. (2012).

5.2 Relationship between Perceived Pressure from Customers (PPC) and ICT Usage in WHSS

It was hypothesized in H2 that there is a positive relationship between perceived pressure from customers (PPC) and ICT usage in WHSs. Perceived pressure from customers (PPC) is another environmental determining factor of ICT usage (Bakkabulindi, 2012; Kilangi, 2012). Findings from the current study supported this (γ = 0.286; C.R = 34.932; p = 0.000). The findings suggest that when WHSs decision-makers perceive customers' pressure, they are more likely to adopt ICT to satisfy their customer's tangible and intangible needs, maintain customers, and build loyalty. The findings are consistent with Ghobakhloo et al. (2011) and Kim and Kim (2018), who found that perceived pressure from customers significantly determines ICT usage and success in Portuguese manufacturing SMEs.

Similarly, Alam and Noor (2009) found that perceived pressure from the customer is one of the major factors influencing ICT usage among SMEs in Malaysia. These results are consistent with those of Taylor (2017), who indicated that small businesses adopt and use ICT to heed their customers' demand. Chian (2010) and Otiso et al. (2012) also found that external pressure, such as pressure from customers, determines ICT usage by SMEs in Europe.

Nonetheless, Alam and Noor (2009), reported that customers' pressure did not significantly influence ICT usage by SMEs in Malaysia. The main reason for this is that Malaysian SMEs were not involved in global business, which did not put pressure on them to use ICT in their business operation. Setiowati et al. (2015) equally supported that SMEs' pressure from customers in Indonesia did not determine ICT usage but skills and innovativeness of managers. Our argument is that these findings are different because the studies were done outside Tanzania, where the geography, socio-economic conditions, and tourist attraction are quite different from those of Tanzania. Given the increase in global competition, conforming to customer demand and expectation, ICT usage is inevitable if these sites wish to survive in the changing market demand (Leung et al., 2015).

5.3 Practical and contextual implications

This study's findings revealed perceived competitive pressure (PCP) and perceived pressure from customers (PPC) significantly influence ICT usage at WHSs. This implies that Tanzanian WHSs are obliged to adopt ICT to promote sustainably, distribute information, and compete on a level playing field (Moya and Engotoit, 2017; Rishi, 2013; Sigala and Christou, 2006). ICT usage will enlighten many people about the heritage sites in the country and increase the popularity of the sites and generate stable income to cater to the maintenance of the sites (Monko et al., 2017, p 53).

6 CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study shed an exciting light on ICT usage in World Heritage Sites in Tanzania. The study finds that perceived competitive pressure and perceived pressure from customers are the environmental factors with significant positive relationships with ICT usage in World Heritage Sites. The findings imply that the government, all its related agencies, and private organizations should recognize ICT usage as a critical factor for rapid socio-economic growth and becoming a middle-income country. Similarly, the sites need to set out critical measures for ensuring effective and efficient use of ICT in their service to gain international visibility of their attractions, increased access to global supply chains, expedite access to information to prospective tourists, and meet the principles of greater openness and transparency (Kim and Kim, 2017; Pirnar at al., 2019).

Decision-makers and stakeholders in the tourism industry ought to adopt ICT and gain its full advantage in World Heritage Sites. They should understand that the adoption and use of ICTs innovation are the mandatory requirements for success in the tourism business today. This is because ICT usage in the tourism industry enables the management to reach tourists and prospective tourists directly. Moreover, ICT allows online promotion and marketing, distribution of tourism products, managing and coordination of all stakeholders involved in the creation and delivery of tourism products (Adukaite et al., 2016; Sotiriadis and Shen, 2017).

Future research may investigate ICT usage in heritage sites that are not under UNESCO, and through different methods for comparability of results. They can counteract the limitations of the present study, such as the use of small sample size by setting enough time and enough research funds to enable them to carry out comprehensive research whose results can be generalized to all UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the world. The present study thus serves as the baseline for similar future research. It informs them of the methodologies, theoretical framework, and necessary precautions for reducing biases in research of this kind.

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The impact of COVID-19 on Italian accommodation: A supply-perspective

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Abstract:
Purpose: *The current COVID-19 pandemic has created an extremely dynamic and uncertain environment in which businesses find it very difficult to operate, particularly those in the hospitality industry. It is therefore very important to understand which actions hospitality businesses think the private and public sectors should adopt in order to cope with the pandemic and its impact. To facilitate this, this research adopted chaos theory to investigate Italian small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the hospitality sector.*
Methods: *A mixed method approach, based on a convergent parallel design data validation variant, was adopted. A survey with open and closed questions was developed and sent to a sample of businesses. 1,040 completed questionnaires were collected and analysed through descriptive statistics; in addition to these usable surveys, 361 open-ended answers were analysed thematically.*
Results: *The results showed that Italian entrepreneurs and managers were over-relying on interventions from the public sector and that there was a lack of business actions being made, thus evidencing a deficit in terms of long-term strategic thinking and the innovation required during such turbulent times.*
Implications: *Although these results cannot be generalised to the whole of the hospitality industry, they shed light on important elements that industry associations should take into account.*
Keywords: *chaos theory, COVID-19, accomodation, mixed method, convergent parallel design, Italy*

JEL Classification: *H12, I15, L83*

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak has resulted in a global crisis in which the hospitality industry has suffered like never before in comparison to other epidemic outbreaks (e.g., SARS, H1N1, Ebola) and the financial crisis of 2008. Indeed, the current pandemic has forced many tourism destinations to witness a decline in tourism due to lockdown measures and travel bans that resulted in booking cancellations, unemployment and, overall, lower travel confidence. The United Nations World Tourism Oorganisation (2020) has estimated that international arrivals will decline by 20-30% in 2020, resulting in US $300-450 billion in tourism receipt losses. In this context, the hospitality industry has been particularly affected, with several accommodation facilities ceasing their operations and/or significantly downsizing them due to the fact that this sector is seen as one of the most serious elements when it comes to transforming a local outbreak into a global pandemic (Hung et al., 2018). Several reports have revealed that a huge amount of hotel and accommodation employees have been either furloughed or laid off and that revenue per available room is significantly lower in comparison to normal times. The situation is even more severe for small and

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medium entreprises (SMEs), which are the real backbone of the tourism economy in several European countries, such as Italy, Greece, and Spain.

In this context, academic research seeking to analyse the hospitality sector has been growing since the beginning of the pandemic (Spyridou, 2017; Gössling et al., 2020) but, so far, no academic study has been published regarding Italy, one of the countries most affected by the pandemic and one with a hospitality sector accounting for the biggest hotel portfolio in Europe: 33,200 hotels and 1.1 million rooms (HTL, 2018). More precisely, according to ISTAT (The Italian national statistical office, 2020a), in 2019, Italy had 1,092,758 rooms and 32,730 hotel facilities, attracting a total of 97,798,618 arrivals and 280,937,897 overnight stays (ISTAT, 2020b). In addition to this, the Italian hospitality sector is mainly made up of SMEs, which are commonly found in many countries. The research presented in this study can thus be considered beneficial to hospitality SMEs located in countries other than Italy. In particular, this study aims to answer to the following question: what actions do accommodation providers think should be taken by public and private sector organisations in order to overcome the current crisis? In answering this question, this research contributes to recent literature assessing the recovery actions of the hospitality businesses (e.g. Breier et al., 2021; Samy, 2016; Dube et al., 2020; Shao et al., 2020) and, in this way, helps us to understand how innovative Italian hospitality entrepreneurs and managers are in trying to overcome the impact of the pandemic.

This article is structured as follows: firstly, a review of existing literature on chaos theory, as well as on COVID-19 and the hopsitality sector, is presented. Following this, the methodology is explained and, next, both quantitative and qualitative findings are analysed. The article concludes with a discussion, in which the results of the two strands of research are merged, and then conclusions, managerial implications, limitations of the research, and future research directions.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

A crisis is an occasion that might create an insecure or risky environment, significantly influencing a community or an individual (Fotiadis & Huan, 2014; Webster et al., 2020). When this happens, the impact on the tourism and hospitality sectors can be devastating. For instance, when a terrorist attack happens at a destination, tourists' demands are affected as individuals may choose alternative destinations perceived as more secure and less risky (Reichel et al., 2007; Erdem et al., 2020). However, the crises that have been traditionally studied in tourism literature are limited both in time and space, in contrast to public health crises, which can impact people in one or more geographic regions and can rapidly spread across several countries (Séraphin et al., 2019). Hence, these types of crises can bring about negative long-term effects to the industry, which may be particularly difficult for policy makers, public sector managers, and tourism and hospitality businesses' managers to manage (Novelli et al., 2018). As a result of its global spread and its time persistence, the current COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted consumption patterns of tourists who, for instance, choose less crowded destinations (Wen et al., 2020), simultaneously impacting decision-making entrepreneurs exploring the use of technologies in service provision, such as the use of Artificial Intelligence and robotic service agents to limit face-to-face interactions (Seyitoğlu & Ivanov, 2020).

However, as Zhang, Geng, Huang, and Ren (2020) state, the exceptional nature of the current crisis makes it extremely difficult to apply lessons learnt from previous crises; hence, considering the high unpredictability of the crisis, studying the impact of COVID-19 through the lenses of chaos theory is particularly useful, as this method is appropriate when analysing complex and non-linear systems, such as tourism (Boukas & Ziakas, 2014; Ritchie, 2004). Recent works have highlighted the usefulness of chaos theory compared to traditional models of crisis management based on the linearity of crises and on sets of steps seeking to managing them (Speakman & Sharpley, 2012; Chatzigeorgiou & Christou, 2020). Among the main tenets of this theory, it is recognised that, in a complex system, even a small event can cause a big consequence (Jaques, 2007), thus developing the so called 'butterfly effect' (Seeger, 2002). Furthermore, complex systems experience 'bifurcation', i.e. a radical change when a crisis happens. As a result of this, a system will find itself on a different path to the one that it was previously on before the crises happened. As such, a complex system, following bifurcation, may find itself on a path that could lead to its destruction or, alternatively, on one that could allow it to effectively develop again in future (Paraskevas, 2006). Following a bifurcation, a complex system will re-organise itself, thus reaching 'self-organisation', i.e. a new form or structure (Seeger, 2002) that can be facilitated by 'strange attractors'. This, for instance, may be represented by managers who, through effective communication and information sharing (Pearson & Clair, 1998; Fotiadis & Williams, 2018), marketing initiatives, and requests for public sector intervention, can support the system in reaching a new order and new stability (Speakman & Sharpley, 2012).

In light of these elements, the study of the impact of COVID-19 is well suited for analysis through the lens of chaos theory due to its unexpected and unpredictable nature and as a result of the fact that a similar crisis (i.e. AH1N1 influenza crisis) was previously analysed through this same theory (Speakman & Sharpley, 2012).

2.1 Impact of COVID-19 and interventions

Research on the impact of COVID-19 on the hospitality sector has been increasing significantly in recent months. However, a great deal of this has been centered around the consumers' perspective, with particular reference to the impact of perceived risk on travel behavoiur (Bae & Chang, 2020; Neuburger & Egger, 2020; Sánchez-Canizares et al., 2020). In contrast, the perspective of businesses, with particular reference to the hospitality sector, has been less studied. Among the studies published, some focus on the analysis of the impact that COVID-19 had on the hospitality industry, while others focus on the interventions that entrepreneurs and governments have put in place to contrast the effects of the pandemic.

With regards to the impact that the pandemic had on the hospitality industry, Gössling, Scott, and Hall (2020) compared the impacts of previous epidemics/pandemics and those brought about by COVID-19 in the first quarter of 2020. They showed that the pandemic changed society and national economies and they concluded that hospitality businesses in low-income economies would suffer the most. Other studies, although carried out in different geographical settings, also highlighted the huge economic impact on the industry (Yang et al., 2020), with estimations showing bigger economic effects on countries with a higher contribution of tourism to the GDP (Welfens, 2020). Moreover, similar effects have been identified across different continents, such as Europe (Williams & Kayaoglu, 2020) and Asia (Foo et al., 2020; Hao et al., 2020). Although the impact of COVID-19 has been investigated, not only in academic research, more work is necessary with regards to the interventions that both governments and businessses can and should put in place to counteract the effects of the pandemic. Indeed, if the hospitality sector wishes to overcome the current crisis, it is essential that a range of interventions from the aforementioned stakeholders are put in place, ranging from health and safety to policy support to the sector (Breier et al., 2021; Shao et al., 2020).

With regards to actions put in place by governments, in their study, Yang, Zhang, and Chen (2020) proposed the use of tourism consumption subsidies, such as tourism vouchers for residents. The Malaysian government launched a set of incentives to tourism businesses, such as discounts on electricity bills, deductions for training expenses, financial relief for affected businesses through banks, and wage-subsidies to help employers to keep their employees (Foo et al., 2020), thus highlighting the need for a bundle of interventions to support the survival of businesses and, at the same time, promote innovation in the sector (Loi et al., 2020). From a business perspective, attention to the improvement of health and safety through the employment of risk-reduction strategies (Kaushal & Srivastava, 2021; Shin & Kang, 2020) has been deemed important; although, in this case, these actions can significantly affect the cost of a room and, as a result, the final price paid by travellers can increase accordingly. In any case, even if sanitations are carried out in accommodation establishments, this does not guarantee that visitors will have a positive response to it. Indeed, recent research has highlighted that consumers do not always trust the sanitation measures put in place by accommodation providers (Naumov et al., 2020; Van Truong et al., 2020). Aside from this, there seems to be consensus on the need for the hospitality sector to rethink their operations, with more attention paid to the provision of new and valuable accommodation experiences (Wen et al., 2020), sustainability (Dolnicar & Zare, 2020; Filimonau et al., 2020; Niewiadomski, 2020), employee care, and plans to compete in new ways in a more challenging environment (Dube et al., 2020; Huang et al., 2020). Recent research on the impact of the pandemic on the hospitality sector has shown that businesses' responses are quite varied. For instance, three approaches have been identified: active businesses that try to find alternative ways to obtain revenue and, in this way, survive; inactive businesses that focus on compliance to health and safety requirements in preparation for the restart of the business; and inoperative businesses which discontinue operations (Duarte Alonso et al., 2020). Similar to these findings, also in the peer-to-peer accommodation sector, recent research has shown different approaches adopted by hosts, ranging from those that cease activity, to those that continue their activity and innovate their operations (Farmaki et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2020).

3 METHODOLOGY

Due to the dynamic environment created by the pandemic, the researchers believed that the topic under investigation would have been better studied using a mixed method approach, which is well-suited when a phenomenon is better analysed through the collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data. In order to do this, a pragmatist worldview was adopted, according to which researchers sought to solve real problems. For this reason, the consequences of the research were considered to be very important (Creswell & Plano, 2011; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003).

The research was carried out through a convergent parallel mixed method based on a data validation variant, through which researchers collected data using an online survey, including both closed- and open-ended questions. The results from the open-ended questions were used to enhance the results of the close-ended questions (Creswell & Plano, 2011).

The survey was developed based on a consultation with accomodation providers (hotel and non-hotel related accomodation) and their representative associations, thus allowing the researchers to follow a theory-in-use approach (Zaltman et al., 1982). Following this consultation, a set of items were developed (see Tables 2 and 3) and included in the survey. In addition to this, an open-ended question was included in order to collect respondents' opinions and, in this way, deepen the researchers' knowledge on the investigated topic.

The survey included four sections. The first section included general questions collecting information about the job position covered by the respondent and the specific type of accomodation in which he/she was working. The second section contained a list of statements that were developed through consultation with industry actors. These items referred to two areas: 1) response actions to booking cancellations; 2) actions from public sector institutions seeking to support businesses in coping with the crisis. Answers to these statements were collected through a 5-point Likert scale (1 = not important at all; 5 = extremly important). The third section of the survey included the following open-ended question: 'Could you please write in the box below what you think public organisations and private-sector businesses should do in order to overcome the COVID-19 outbreak and facilitate the recovery of the tourism sector once that this emergency comes to an end?', giving respondents the chance to describe any further action that they thought could be adopted by accomodation marketers and/or regional and national institutions to cope with the pandemic. Finally, the last section asked general information about the respondents' business profile: the type of accommodation facility in which they worked for (hotel, bed and breakfast, agritourism, etc.) and their role in the organization (owner, manager, receptionist/booking manager, etc).

For the purposes of the data collection, an e-mail invitation containing the link to the online survey was sent out to a database of 10,000 accommodation businesses located across different Italian Regions. This database was made up of e-mail addresses obtained from different Italian industry associations in the hospitality sector, containing both hotel and non-hotel establishments. Taking into consideration the fact that, in some cases (250), the contact details of accomodation facilities were not valid (due to several reasons, i.e., bankruptcy of the business, updating process not carried out, data entry error, etc.), the overall number of eligible participants was 9,750.
At the end of the data collection, a total of 1,086 surveys were obtained, of which 1,040 were complete and usable for the purposes of statistical analysis. The study thus registered a 10.67% response rate, which is consistent with prior studies acknowledging that response rates of around 10% (or less) are usually the norm for SMEs (Jay & Schaper, 2003; Mo et al., 2015). A series of descriptive analysis (percentage, means, and standard deviation) was run on the quantitative part of the survey. For the open-ended question, 361 answers were collected from the 1,040 usable surveys. Researchers initially read all 361 answers to the open-ended question to familiarise themselves with the data. The data were then analysed through thematic analysis (with the support of NVivo 12) to identify main themes describing business and institutional interventions to cope with the pandemic. The initial codes were reviewed by the research team. An independent person revised the coding and decided whether he/she agreed with the codes. If there was any disagreement, discussions took place until an agreement was reached and, following this, final coding was carried out.

4 RESULTS

4.1 COVID-19 in Italy: A chaos theory perspective

The events that unfolded in Italy from the end of January can be analysed using a chaos theory perspective (see Table 1 for a summary of events). The key starting point was 21st February 2020, in which the first case of COVID-19 in an Italian citizen was identified. This event can be considered the 'butterfly event' as, at this time, Italy was deemed to be a safe country, free from COVID-19. However, the number of cases and deaths rose dramatically in a few days and, on 11th March 2020, the nationwide lockdown was declared. From an event that seemed quite limited, the country found itself facing huge consequences in a short timeframe. It can be said that, at this point, the country and the Italian tourism industry had reached the 'bifurcation'. Indeed, for the first time in the post WWII history of Italian tourism, the borders were closed, a growing number of airlines interrupted flights to Italy, and several foreign governments forbade trips to Italy. Others imposed quarantine to travellers who returned from Italy. From that time onwards, many businesses in the tourism sector found themselves trying to survive this unprecedented crisis, with industry associations (hoteliers, travel agents, etc.) requesting the intervention of the Italian government in order to support the businesses of their respective sectors. In other words, it was soon possible to note that there were attempts to achieve 'self-organisation'. However, due to the non-linear crisis that the industry was facing and the exeptional situation in which the whole sector found itself, it took time before ad-hoc interventions for the tourism and hospitality industries were developed.

Table 1: Timeline of COVID-19 events in Italy. Source: Self Structured

Date	Event(s)
30/01/20	First two cases of COVID-19 in Italy: two Chinese tourists from the Hubei province tested positive for COVID-19 while in Italy on holiday.
31/01/20	The World Health Organization declared the 'public health emergency of international concern'. Following this, the Italian government declared 6 months' worth of health emergency and blocked all flights to and from China.
21/02/20	First case of COVID-19 was identified in an Italian citizen in Codogno (Lombardy region).
23/02/20	Lockdown was declared in the towns of Codogno, Castiglione d'Adda, Casalpusterlengo, Fombio, Maleo, Somaglia, Beronico, Terranova dei Passerini, Castelgerundo, San Fiorano (all located in the Lombardy region), and Vo' (in the Veneto region).
From the end of February 2020	Several countries took action by imposing a quaratine for people arriving from Italy or forbidding their entrance into the country.
03/03/20	3,089 people tested positive for COVID-19; 107 people died.
04/03/20	All schools and universities in Italy closed.
08/03/20	The whole Lombardy region and 14 provinces (Modena, Parma, Piacenza, Reggio Emilia, Rimini, Pesaro e Urbino, Alessandria, Asti, Novara, Verbano-Cusio-Ossola, Vercelli, Padova, Treviso, and Venezia) were under lockdown.
11/03/20	All of Italy is placed into lockdown. People are allowed to leave their house only for groceries and medicines, work, and health reasons. The World Health Organisation declared the pandemic.
21/03/20	All economic activities that are not essential were closed.
04/05/20	Phase 2 started. Some activities were reopened, such as restaurants (only on a take-away basis) and beaches. Outdoor exercise was allowed, irrespective of the distance from home
03/06/20	Movements across regions started.
From 15/06/20	Italy reopened its borders. More businesses reopened, such as theatres and cinemas (but with a limited number of attendees).

4.2 Quantitative findings

On the whole, the majority of respondents reported that they were working in hotels (69.1%), followed by Bed and Breakfasts (13.9%), holiday appartments (5.6%), agri-tourism (1.6%), and other residual types of accommodation facilties (9.8%). When the hotel category is considered, 36.8% of responses were obtained from three star hotels, 21.6% from four star hotels, 4.7% from two star hotels, 2% from one star hotels, and 0.9% from five star hotels. Most individuals reported being the owners of the accommodation facility (63.6%), then managers (24.7%), receptionist/booking managers (3.8%), head of the marketing department (3.2%), or covering another residual organizational role in the business (4.7%).
From the analysis of the answers related to the actions needed to cope with guests' booking cancellations (Table 2), we saw that the postponement of bookings with the offer of a discount on future rates (M=3.88, S.D.=1.384) and the conversion of reservations partially or totally paid for with a voucher usable by the end of 2020 (M=3.83, S.D=1.481) were the two options that were the most preferred by respondents. The lowest level of importance was assigned to the action of shortening the timeframe within which clients could cancel their bookings for free (M=3.11, S.D=1.457) and increasing discounts on early bookings, allowing free cancellations (M=2.65, S.D=1.404). On the whole, these

findings suggest/confirm that accomodation marketers tend to largely favor any response actions that can help them to obtain/retain the cash flow needed to cope with the extremely severe financial crisis this pandemic is generating, thus implicitly relying on their customers' willingness to contribute to their economic survival.

Table 2: Response actions in sales: the accomodation providers' views

	Likert scale values (%)			M	S.D
	1-2	3	4-5		
To suggest to postpone the booking to another date and to apply a discount to future rates.	16.8	16.5	66.7	3.88	1.384
To convert payments already received into a voucher that could be used by the end of the year.	20	15	65	3.83	1.481
To reimburse payments already received without applying any cancellation fees to clients that request a cancellation for reasons outside of their control.	26.3	17.8	55.9	3.55	1.569
To fully reimburse bookings cancelled for reasons out of the clients' control.	28.7	16.8	54.5	3.47	1.591
To convert payments already received into a voucher that could be used at any time.	29	20.9	50.1	3.37	1.540
To shorten the time within which clients could cancel their booking for free.	33.3	23.9	42.8	3.11	1.457
To increase the discount given to clients who make early bookings and subsequently allow free cancellation.	46.3	25.1	28.6	2.65	1.404

M= mean; S.D= standard deviation.

With regards to the actions that public sector organisations should put into place to support the hospitality industry, Table 3 shows, in decresing order of importance, the most relevant actions that accommodation marketers think should be adopted by regional/national institutions. The results show that the most important actions are related to the need to receive financial help in the form of suspending and/or increasing their time to repay loans and mortages (M=4.65, S.D=.900) and suspending payment of financing (M=4.61, S.D=4.46), with a significant portion of respondents considering these two actions as important or extremely important. Specifically, the numer of interviewees scoring 4 or 5 for the two aforementioned actions were reported to be respectively 89.7% and 88.4% of the sample.

Table 3: Response actions to be undertaken by the institutions: the accomodation providers' views

	Likert scale values (%)			M	S.D
	1-2	3	4-5		
To suspend and/or increase the time allowed for repaying loans and mortgages.	4.6	5.7	89.7	4.65	.900
To suspend payments of financing.	5.3	6.3	88.4	4.61	.947
Financing for communication campaigns seeking to communicate that your accommodation establishment and your destination are both safe and free from COVID-19.	6.3	10	83.7	4.46	1.024
Financing for adopting Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as face masks, disposable gloves, etc.	14.8	13.6	71.6	4.05	1.331
Financing for the Ozone sanitation of rooms and shared spaces.	14.6	17.2	68.2	4.01	1.347

M= mean; S.D= standard deviation

With slightly lower levels of importance, respondents scored the need to obtain financial help to plan and implement accomodation and destination-based promotion activities to reassure national and international tourism of the safety of the tourism offer (M=4.46, S.D=1.024), to finance their expences to offer guests Personal Protective Equipment (M=4.05, S.D=1.331), and to adopt Ozone-based technologies to sanitize hotel rooms and public spaces (M=4.01, s.D=1.347).

Overall, in comparing the two tables, we can see that respondents tend to strongly favour actions requiring the intervention of public sector organisations.

4.3 Qualitative findings

In analysing the answers to the open-ended questions, it was possible to shed light on early 'self-organisation' and the possible 'strange attractors' that could allow the system to overcome the crisis. As far as 'self-organisation' is concerned, the results highlighted a broad range of interventions (Table 4) which have been distinguished as either interventions from public sector organisations or interventions from businesses.

Table 4: Summary of interventions (preliminary to self-organisation)

Origin of interventions	Type of interventions		Times cited*
Interventions from public sector institutions	Financial	Mortgages	38
		Non-refundable contribution	34
		Facilitated public financing	23
		Compensation	5
		Contribution to sanitization	2
		Minimum income guaranteed	1
	Fiscal	Tax reduction/cancellation	91
		Tourist tax reduction/cancellation	14
		Tax credit	7
		Tax cancellation on profits	1
	Health	Health rules for businesses and guests	47
	Demand	Support for tourist demand	46
	Welfare	Support for employees losing jobs	44
	Transport	Prices	33
		Increase in transportation	12
		Safety	2
	Destination management	Networking among destination stakeholders	14
	Destination marketing	Communication	75
		Digital tools (e.g. apps)	3
Interventions from businesses		Expenses (e.g., utilities, rent)	33
		Marketing	10
		Sanitization and cleanliness	9
		Daily activity	7
		Pricing	7
		Refunds	7
		Cancellations	4
		Employee training	3
		Booking	2
Vague suggestions			52
No ideas			30
New types of tourism			3

* The number of times an intervention is mentioned may not coincide with the number of people who mentioned it. Indeed, several respondents included more than one intervention at each time in their answers.

As far as interventions from public sector organisations are concerned, financial and fiscal interventions were most frequently mentioned by respondents. For both, several respondents stressed the need to have these interventions in order to allow businesses to have the liquidity necessary for short-term survival. For instance, two respondents stated:

> *'In this uncertain context, the only way to overcome the crisis is to request a suspension on mortgages and, subsequently, to extend the amortisation schedule because payments will not be paid in future since businesses are already using liquidity in order to survive' (Respondent 82)*
>
> *'Providing financing at very low interest rate for introducing liquidity in the market!' (Respondent 188)*

Moreover, with regards to financial interventions, some of the respondents also mentioned that this financing would be useful for businesses to allow them to make the investments necessary to renewing their accommodation establishment or purchase sanitation equipment. For instance, one respondent stated:

> *'They should give in part non-refundable financing and in part facilitated public financing to be repaid interest-free so that businesses can refurbish their establishments by purchasing tools and products that allow to sanitise these establishments and for promoting the sanitation to consumers by, for instance, the use of a certification/label reassuring consumers.' (Respondent 320)*

Another public-sector intervention discussed pertained to welfare, with particular reference to the cost of labour in the Italian market. As a result, several respondents mentioned the need to lower the cost of labour so that businesses could hire new employees once the tourist season started. Another action that was mentioned quite often was the launch of unemployment benefits to those employees who lost their jobs during the lockdown. In general, it is possible to note that the aforementioned interventions that can be put in place when a general crisis happens are quite broad.

More specific to the currect pandemic were health-related actions (47 times). In particular, the need for a clear set of rules that businesses in the accommodation sector should comply with was mentioned. In this case, the need for the Italian hoteliers association and the Italian institutions to work together in creating these guidelines was emphasised. The following quote exemplifies this:

> *'It is necessary that Federalberghi [the Italian hotelier association], together with the public sector organisations, set national guidelines for clients in hotels, with particular reference to the shared rooms such as the breakfast room, restaurant, TV room, etc. […]. These guidelines should be easy to put in place and easy to be accepted by owners/managers and clients. These guidelines should also be communicated through the media to future visitors. This is in the hope that everybody feels safe and thus willing to travel again.' (Respondent 104)*

Another intervention from the public sector referred to destination marketing, with particular reference to communication campaigns aimed at promoting the safety of the destination, as well as at the attraction of domestic travellers rather than international travellers due to the closure of borders at the time of data collection. On the contrary, destination management actions were mentioned less frequently, although respondents who mentioned them referred to the need to develop networking between stakeholders. Finally, transportation interventions were also mentioned, but this by respondents from Sardinia, who suffer from transport issues to their island, suggesting that recovery strategies from a crisis can be specific in the case of island-based tourism destinations.

In terms of actions that businesses should put in place to counteract the effects of the pandemic, there were actions seeking to reduce a variety of expenses, such as utilities, establishment rent, etc. Aside from this, there were also some interventions pertaining to cleaning and sanitising rooms and shared spaces, as well as promotion activities centred around communicating these protocols to guests. Moreover, increased flexibility from an operational point of view was recognised as important, such as the introduction of systems allowing faster check-in and check-out, changes to the breakfast service by abolishing buffet breakfasts, and only allowing breakfast to be served at the table. Along with these changes, the need to be more flexible with regards to booking cancellations (i.e. allowing free cancellations) and refunds when bookings are cancelled was recognised.

5 DISCUSSION

As requested by mixed method studies (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011), the results of the two strands of research were merged and compared in a summary table during the interpretation stage (Table 5).

Table 5: Comparison of quantitative and qualitative results

The actions that accommodation providers think should be taken by public and private sector organisations in order to overcome the current crisis	
Qualitative strand	**Quantitative strand**
Most cited business actions (number of times a theme was mentioned): • Expenses (e.g., utilities, rent): 33 • Marketing: 10 • Sanitization and cleanliness: 9 • Daily activity: 7 • Pricing : 7 • Refunds: 7	*Most chosen business actions (% of respondents who found these important/extremely important):* • Booking postponement and discounts on future rates: 66.7% • Voucher to be used by the end of the year: 65% • Reimbursement of payments and no cancellation fees to clients cancelling for reasons out of their control: 55.9% • Full reimbursement for cancellations out of clients' control: 54.5% • Voucher to be used at any time: 50.1%

Most cited public-sector organisation actions (number of times a theme was mentioned):
• Financial:
  o Mortgages: 38
  o Non-refundable contribution: 34
  o Facilitated public financing: 23
• Fiscal:
  o Tax reduction/cancellation: 91
  o Tourist tax reduction/cancellation: 14
• Health interventions: 47
• Support to tourist demand: 46
• Welfare: 44
• Destination management (networking): 14
• Destination marketing (communication): 75
	Most chosen public-sector organisation actions (% of respondents who found these important/extremely important):
	• Suspension of loans/mortgages or increase in time for repayment: 89.7%
	• Suspension of financing: 88.4%
	• Financing for communication campaigns on safety: 83.7%
	• Financing for adopting Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): 71.6%
	• Financing for Ozone sanitation: 68.2%

With regards to similarities, the results demonstrated the need for cancellation and refund flexibility, as recognised by respondents. However, with a different frequency between the two strands, respondents seemed to acknowledge the importance of flexibility, which is one of the components deemed necessary when overcoming a crisis (Boukas & Ziakas, 2014; Paraskevas, 2006; Speakman & Sharpley, 2012; Ma et al., 2017). Another similarity that was identified in the two strands of research referred to actions seeking to suspend or extend the payment of financing and mortgages, brought about by the liquidity issues that owners and managers were experiencing, which complies with the results of previous research (Williams & Kayaoglu, 2020). In addition to this, the need to receive financing for purchasing PPE and for the sanitation of establishments was also present in both strands of research. However, contrary to the quantitative results, the qualitative findings did not highlight the need for financing for communication campaigns made by accommodation establishments to reassure guests of their safety. Perhaps this is an intervention that respondents did not feel to be essential to them, maybe due to the fact that they were carrying out this type of communication anyway, either directly (via the official communication channels of the business), or indirectly (via informal communication exchanges between owners/managers and the clients contacting them, reassuring them with regards to their health, perhaps related to friendship connections that may have already existed between them).

Furthermore, when comparing the two strands of research, it was interesting to note that the qualitative strand of research identified a set of interventions that would not have been considered if the research was undertaken only quantitatively. This could be explained by the fact that, since the start of the data collection, respondents may have acquired more knowledge and consciousness with regards to certain interventions, based on the extent to which they were familiarising themselves with the very dynamic and chaotic situation caused by the pandemic and/or based on what regional and national institutions were considering doing in order to cope with it. In this vein, for instance, fiscal interventions were mentioned, along with communication regarding the safety guidelines that need to be introduced in establishments and should be obeyed by both employees and customers.

Moreover, from some of the qualitative responses, the need to have a destination-wide marketing activity was shown to be necessary in ensuring that the tourist season could restart. Indeed, several respondents mentioned the fact that visitors needed to be reassured about the safety of the destination so that they would start travelling again. However, contrary to previous research highlighting how the existence of network links between destination stakeholders and information sharing between them (Paraskevas, 2006; Sigala & Christou, 2006; Pearson & Clair, 1998) are among the prerequisites for successfully creating a new self-organisation and, in this way, successfully overcoming a crisis, the former has been mentioned very few times in this research, while the latter has never been stated. This suggests that respondents assumed a short-term orientation and were not considering the potential benefits arising from collaboration.

Finally, quite surprisingly the qualitative strand of research showed, in general, how infrequently respondents identified business actions that could be put into place to counteract the impact of the pandemic. Although support from public sector organisations is essential for overcoming crises, attention must be paid to future business development and innovation so that businesses can survive and subsequently thrive in this dynamic environment (Farmaki et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2020). Instead, from the results of this research, it seems that the vast majority of respondents delegated their survival to public sector organisations and did not fully understood the need to develop innovative solutions themselves for implementation alongside more insitutional actions.

Overall, we can deem from the aforementioned interventions that the ‘self-organisation’ of the tourism industry is at a very embryonic stage, with a focus on short-term perspectives. This is also supported by the fact that, in only few cases, respondents demonstrated an understanding of the need to change their industry and move towards a new model of tourism that differs from the traditional model of mass tourism. This leads us to believe that the vast majority of respondents were not in a position to make radical changes and place their business in a path that could lead to success and to effective crisis management in case a similar crisis might take place in the future.

In addition to this, from the suggested interventions, we can identify some of the stakeholders that could act as ‘strange attractors’. Representatives of industry associations, DMO managers, and public sector representatives are the main stakeholders that can facilitate the transition of the industry towards a more sustainable future if a similar crisis happens again.

6 CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this study was to broaden our knoweldge regarding the types of interventions that accommodation providers think should be taken by public and private sectors to cope with, and recover from, the current crisis caused by the pandemic. This would enable us to understand how innovative Italian hospitality entrepreneurs and managers are. Considering the lack of similar research conducted, due to the nature and scope of this unprecendented crisis, a convergent parallel design (data validation variant) grounded on chaos theory was carried out.

Our findings demonstrated that the Italian entrepreneurs and managers operating in the hospitality sector were focusing primarily on interventions from public sector organisations, with a lack of attention paid to actions implemented on a business-level, thus suggesting a deficit in the innovativeness and long-term orientation necessary to operate in the current dynamic environment in which businesses find themselves.

From a theoretical point of view, in focusing our research on Italy - a country that, so far, has not been investigated in academic research on COVID-19 in the hospitality sector - our findings contribute to scientific debates on the actions that businesses from different countries are adopting to counteract the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, to the best of the authors’ knowledge, this is the one of the first studies to examine this topic adopting the lens of chaos theory, which is useful in analysing the extremely dynamic environment in which we find ourselves. Tourism is a complex system and is very vulnerable to the ‘butterfly effect’ (i.e. a small event, a single ‘infection’, causing a big consequence) and rapid change (i.e. ‘bifurcation’) when a crisis happens. This rapid change can take the tourism and hospiality sector either down a path that could lead to its destruction or one that might allow the sector to re-organise itself, thus reaching ‘self-organisation’ (through intervention from the public sector and the businesses themselves) and, in this way, start a new path of development facilitated by ‘strange attractors’ (e.g. industry associations, national and regional institutions, etc.). Furthermore, our results also show that, in this very chaotic and dynamic situation, in which it is also hard to understand when (and to what extent) the crisis will really be over, businesses find it really hard to envision the future of hospitality. Indeed, our findings seem to suggest that hospitality marketers are mostly driven by an individualistic view of their business and by a short-term strategic horizon, which prevents them from: 1) thoroughly understanding the role that networking among stakeholders may have in coping with the current crisis; and 2) envisioning the future of the industry and, more broadly, that of the tourism development that may lead to the establishment of new forms of tourism (such as niche tourism and sustainable tourism).

From a managerial point of view, this paper offers hospitality industry associations important insights that could be used to develop future training, aimed specifically at entrepreneurs and managers of SMEs. For instance, shifting strategic orientation from short-term to long-term objectives, strategies, and plans, as well as fostering innovative business thinking could be established in future training. This could increase the extent to which businesses are resilient in times of crisis. In addition to this, industry asssociations should plan training and events to promote a collaborative culture that could express itself in co-marketing activities (e.g. joint promotional activities) and, more broadly, in joint initiatives in which businesses collaborate with each other in an attempt to further develop their local sector.

6.1 Limitations and future research

Similar to other studies, this research has some limitations. Firstly, it is highly site-specific (i.e Italy), based on a convenience sample derived from a web-based survey with a snowball sampling technique. As such, it is not fully representative of the overall population under investigation (i.e. accomodations facilities in Italy). For this reason, the findings are less generalizable. Another limitation is related to the cross-sectional timeframe that could have somehow affected the data collection. In this regard, it is worth noting that chaos theory stresses the need for longitudinal studies that allow for the assessment of the effectiveness of actions put in place when overcoming a crisis (Jaques, 2007).

In this vein, future research should focus on longitudinal studies that would allow for the detailed analysis of a crisis and the study of the extent to which actions against it are effective. Finally, this research was carried out in April and, at that time, the Italian National Government was still planning the array of interventions to be used to sustain the tourism and hospitality sector. Because of this, the study was not able to collect the accomodations marketers' views towards the effectiveness of the actual set of institutional interventions. These aspects would merit attention in future studies that seek to pool together - possibly relying on a longitudinal approach - a wide array of information in order to evaluate the extent to which business and institutions effectively listen to each other, thus increasing their ability to co-evolve and co-exist on the new path of tourism development that the pandemic seems to be delineating.

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Culinary tourism and post-pandemic travel: Ecosystem responses to an external shock

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Abstract:
Purpose: *The COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) global pandemic forced hospitality and tourism service providers to respond by pivoting business models in line with governmental restrictions to curb the spread of the virus. This paper explores the online responsiveness of tourism-affiliated culinary service providers to a major external disruption.*
Methods: *This study uses ecosystem resilience and Internet marketing theories to analyze 139 web homepages of culinary tourism service providers promoted by the official tourism website of Jamaica, to measure of Jamaica to measure online responsiveness to the COVID-19 pandemic.*
Results: *Findings show that web page responses vary between the official tourism web page and the restaurants promoted on its site. Responses also vary across restaurant affiliation clusters and across location clusters. Further, resilient web page responses are more commonly associated with hotel restaurants and eponymous restaurants.*
Implications: *Culinary service providers promoted by the official tourism marketing arm of a destination should consistently practice resilient online marketing response to external shocks. This study provides a novel analysis of online responsiveness to COVID-19 and contributes a summary framework for resilient response by culinary ecosystem providers preparing for post-pandemic travel.*

Keywords: *COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2), culinary tourism, ecosystems, Jamaica, resilient, external shock*

JEL Classification: *H12, L66, R41*

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1 INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) pandemic inflicted a massive external shock on the human population. While, at the time of this writing, there is new hope as vaccines have been developed, the impact of COVID-19 continues to be experienced socially and economically (Fotiadis et al, 2021). Mitigation strategies to prevent the spread of the virus have dealt lethal blows to almost every sector and industry but the impact of these strategies has been particularly hard within the travel, tourism, and hospitality industries (Polyzos et al, 2020).. Culinary service providers such as restaurants, dining and drinking establishments have experienced extensive losses arising from new regulatory guidelines for operations and service; limits on capacity and recurring curfews related to curbing the spread of the virus.

In preparation for the anticipated return to pre-pandemic normal, culinary service providers, particularly those which cater to international visitors in tourism-dependent locales like Jamaica, will need to extend and exemplify service levels which account for safety protocols and practices among employees and guests. These eating and drinking establishments will also need to effectively communicate safety protocols pre-trip, during visit, and post-trip given that visitor groups with the elderly and young children will have a heightened sense of safety awareness and expectations for trust once they visit a food service establishment.
The 'official' tourism destination website is an important Internet marketing medium through which governments promote their destinations, usually under the leadership of a national or regional tourism office, destination marketing organization (DMO) or convention and visitors bureau (CVB). These sites contain information on destination

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activities ('things to do'), dining, entertainment, cultural and heritage sites, and promotional hyperlinks to tourism service providers; all used by visitors to plan their trips to a destination. In recent times these pages have become important conduits for information related to border entry/exit, travel authorizations, restrictions and regulations related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The quality and quantity of information on these pages help shape visitors' perceptions of destination safety protocols and motivate travel decision-making and intentions.

This paper analyzes the official tourism web page of Jamaica, the Jamaica Tourist Board's (JTB) https://www.visitjamaica.com, and hyperlinked pages to culinary tourism providers promoted by this page to understand the response to the external shock of the COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) global pandemic. It is estimated that tourism contributed 35% to Jamaica's GDP and this was expected to fall by 9% as a result of COVID-19 (UNCTAD, 2020). This decline was a blow to the tourism industry which had achieved record growth in the previous year and was expected to continue that growth (Bartlett, 2021; Linton, 2020). Jamaica is therefore representative of the challenges faced by SIDS and the need to respond to these challenges effectively.

Relying on ecosystem resilience and Internet marketing theories, the study has three important objectives: 1) evaluate online responsiveness of Jamaica's culinary tourism ecosystem, defined as the collection of JTB promoted establishments engaged in providing gastronomical tourism services to domestic and international visitors, to COVID-19; 2) use resilience-based response characteristics to provide a framework for policy and planning recommendations as Jamaica prepares for the post-pandemic traveller; and 3) provide Caribbean-based tourism scholarship and insight, sometimes overlooked by global monitors, as a key pillar of Jamaica's social, cultural, economic and environmental development.

The research presented here is significant given its potential to provide practical insight into the operational and marketing response of a select group of tourism actors to a major external shock such as a global pandemic. By carefully analyzing pandemic-motivated content of web homepages, the study is able to measure the extent to which culinary service providers align their online responses with the government-run tourism sites which promote them. The study also considers the extent of similarities and differences among clusters of culinary service providers. Such alignment is critical given that tourists experience a destination as a seamless, interdependent whole, rather than as compartmentalized 'units' of dining, lodging, and recreation. Previous studies have utilized discourse analysis to understand tourism destination risk perception and online media. These include Shroeder (2014) and Shroeder and colleagues (e.g., Shroeder et al., 2013; Cahyanto et al., 2016) who studied traveler risk perception related to the 2014 Ebola crisis and attendees' perceptions of crime vis-à-vis the 2012 London Olympic Games. Other studies (e.g., Avraham, 2020; Jeon et al., 2018) assess DMO webpage experiences and repair and responsiveness to the threat of global terrorism. This paper responds to the need to address responsiveness to the COVID-19 pandemic which served to bring global economic and social activity to a virtual halt in March 2020.

2 BACKGROUND LITERATURE

2.1 Culinary tourism and destination marketing

Culinary tourism refers to the "intentional, exploratory participation in the foodways of an 'other'—participation including the consumption, preparation, and presentation of a food item, cuisine, meal system, or eating style considered to belong to a culinary system not one's own" (Long, 2004: 21). In their umbrella of culinary tourism niches, Miller and Washington (2020) include dining, culinary destinations, culinary tours / sampling tours, culinary arts programs, restaurants at tourist attractions, food and wine festivals, winery tours, rum tours, whiskey and bourbon trails. Along with community-based food trucks, independent 'culinary walks', and other food-based events, these examples demonstrate how food and beverage elements are positioned as hedonic features of a destination experience (Kim & Eves, 2012; Kivela & Crotts, 2006; Seo et al., 2013). Further, culinary tourism has the unique impact of blending the social, cultural, and environmental heritage elements of a destination within a single experience (Agyeman et al., 2017; Spyridou, 2017). This may involve facilities such as restaurants, events such as food festivals and activities including food trails and tours as categories of food tourism. Culinary tourism services therefore play an important role in introducing tourists to local flavours and different cultural traditions of the destination.

Destination branding is intricately intertwined in the promotion of food as experience of a destination's local culture and image (Seo et al., 2013; Sthapit et al., 2020). Lai, Khoo-Lattimore & Wang (2017) argue that the image of a destination is the overall impression that one has of a destination and it is increasingly applied to food and cuisine as an indication of the success of the destination's branding. In testing the effects of culinary brand equity dimensions on foreign tourists' perception and travel intentions to Taiwan, Horng et al., (2012) found strong, positive support for the relationship between perceived quality and travel intention and between brand image and travel intention. Kim and Eves (2012) embarked on scale development and validation of five motivational dimensions of local food consumption. While both studies evidence gastronomy as important to destination branding, they are limited to consumer-side viewpoints and ignore tourism-producer analysis.

Other studies have focused on the role of destination governments and specifically quasi-governmental destination management organizations (DMOs) in pursuing policy and strategic marketing planning to promote the cultural identity of a tourism destination through cuisine, gastronomy, and culinary heritage features. (See for example, Ab Karim & Geng-QingChi, 2010; Hashimoto & Telfer, 2006; Horng & Tsai, 2010). Recognizing food as a significant 'pull factor' which influences tourist choice, Nelson (2016) analyzed online narratives of the 'official visitor site' of Houston, Texas—the Greater Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau (GHCVB) and found that 'restaurant promotion' pages are used to create an attraction for visitors looking for a local food experience and to generate new interest in the city as a destination. Focusing on government role in promoting culinary tourism, Horng and Tsai (2010) studied government tourism websites of six East Asian countries: Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand. The study focused on website dimensions of food culture, local cuisines, and culinary tourism marketing strategies. Using qualitative investigations into the culinary content posted on the government websites, they found both differences and similarities among the approach of these sites in supporting and promoting culinary tourism. With the exception of Kim & Eves (2012), which considered visitors health benefits of local foods, these studies largely ignore the health and safety aspects of food. Given the expected post-pandemic travel boom (Clarke et al., 2020), destination branding studies of online messaging for safety in culinary tourism are critical.

2.2 Tourism ecosystems

Ecological and systems theories have allowed us to conceptualize the tourism destination as an ever-evolving space comprising concrete (physical) and abstract (virtual) dimensions of interactions among host actors and guest actors (Milwood & Maxwell, 2020) involved in the production and consumption of tourism services. Host and guest interactionist principles form the basis of the tourism ecosystem space. These interactions occur between hosts and guests in face-to-face and technology-mediated environments, and align with symbolic interactionist principles (Blumer, 1969) which posit that individuals formulate views of the world based on interactions with significant others, whether in person or via social media platforms. Further, in wine-producing regions of New Zealand and Australia, cultural ecosystems emphasize the role of cultural and heritage as value-added to 'winescapes', food events and festivals (Robinson & Sigala, 2019). These authors highlight the critical interrelatedness and interdependence of actors within the destination ecosystem, as well as their vulnerability to externalities (disruptions, shocks), beyond the destination's physical and virtual boundaries and argue for collaboration and co-creation strategic behaviours among actors.

Williams et al. (2020) call for tourism scholars to utilize symbolic interactionist frameworks to study interactions between guests and hosts to explain how travelers assign meaning to place and counter dis(information) related to COVID-19 pandemic. Ultimately, the construction of such meaning determines travel decision-making and behaviors within a destination.

In the post-2020 global travel era, it is likely that destinations which have positioned culinary attractions as a key feature of the experience will need to communicate effectively in order to reassure prospective guests before, during, and after trip experiences. Safety of food supply and food systems, as well as the safety of those engaging in delivery and consumption of food services are increasingly important. Within regions like the Caribbean, where 'farm to fork' has been popularized, the safety measures and communication of these measures to the public is critical. (Matiza, 2020; Rizou et al., 2020).

2.3 External shocks and response

External shocks or disruptions may be positive or negative. Positive external shocks include technology opportunities for destination ecosystems, while negative external shocks include natural or man-made disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Similar to natural (e.g., tsunami, hurricane) and man-made (e.g., oil spill, terrorism) disturbances experienced by a biological ecosystem, the tourism destination ecosystem experienced a major external disruption resulting from the COVID-19 global pandemic triggered by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. There are two possible conditions which may describe an ecosystem's response to an external shock: resistant or resilient (Downing et al., 2012; Roundy et al., 2017). The resistant response to a disturbance describes the extent to which an external shock leaves unchanged the ecosystem i.e., minimal impact. The resilient response to a disturbance describes the extent to which in response to an external shock, an ecosystem can return to its original, pre-shock state.

Resilience principles have been widely applied to ecosystems contexts across multiple disciplines. Sustainable ecotourism development studies (e.g., Choi et al, 2017; Choi et al., 2021) advance resilience principle-based systems thinking approach to social ecological ecosystem contexts (e.g., wildlife habitat; wetlands) in response to external stresses and resource depletion over time. Another recent ecosystem theory study (Snow et al., 2021) analyzes agri-foods systems in New Zealand and Australia; and argues that the resilience of these systems is related to underlying social and cultural/economic/environmental sub-systems which supported the system as it responded to the external shock of COVID-19. These authors argue behavioural science theories of the resilience concept, identifying three characteristics of resilient people: 1) capacity to accept reality; 2) strong belief in capacity to succeed and improve; and 3) high degree of ingenuity and innovativeness (Coutu, 2002). These underlying notions of resilience form the theoretical and analytical lens through which this study viewed.

3.4 Rationale

Tourism is highly labour intensive, accounting for 17% of direct employment in the Caribbean region (ECLAC) and therefore it is not surprising that COVID-19 has had a comparatively larger impact on the global hospitality, travel and tourism industries than other service industries (UNWTO Policy Brief). While automation has filled some gaps in service providers' ability to meet guests' needs, personalized and proximate nature of culinary services remain important service quality elements (Ottenbacher & Gnoth, 2005; Arrifin & Maghzi, 2012; Gadelrab & Ekiz, 2019; Kandampully & Solnet, 2019). The pandemic's impact is especially felt in tourism-dependent regions such as the Caribbean and other small island states (Crick, 2018; Nicely et al., 2015) whose economic mass relies almost exclusively on the industry's ability to earn foreign currency revenues and stimulate output. Jamaica's tourism economy for example, represents 9.5% of its gross domestic product and over 50% of its foreign exchange earnings. Further, with in excess of 350, 000 jobs, the industry is a key economic pillar (The Sunday Gleaner, 6th December, 2020).

Responding with resilience to the external shock of COVID-19 will therefore be critical to returning the industry to a better-than-pre-shock state given the adverse conditions operators of food establishments have endured with government-mandated curfews, capacity limits and other COVID-19 regulatory impositions (Bucknor, 2020; Serju, 2020). Moreover, Jamaica has specifically targeted culinary tourism as a part of its tourism development (https://tef.gov.jm/gastronomy-network) and has viewed food as a vital part of its community tourism policy and as part of its 2030 Vision for the sector. Gastronomy Tourism is expected to increase the linkages between tourism and the wider economy by appealing to 'passion points' of tourists (Gordon, 2006; Mensah & Mensah, 2018).

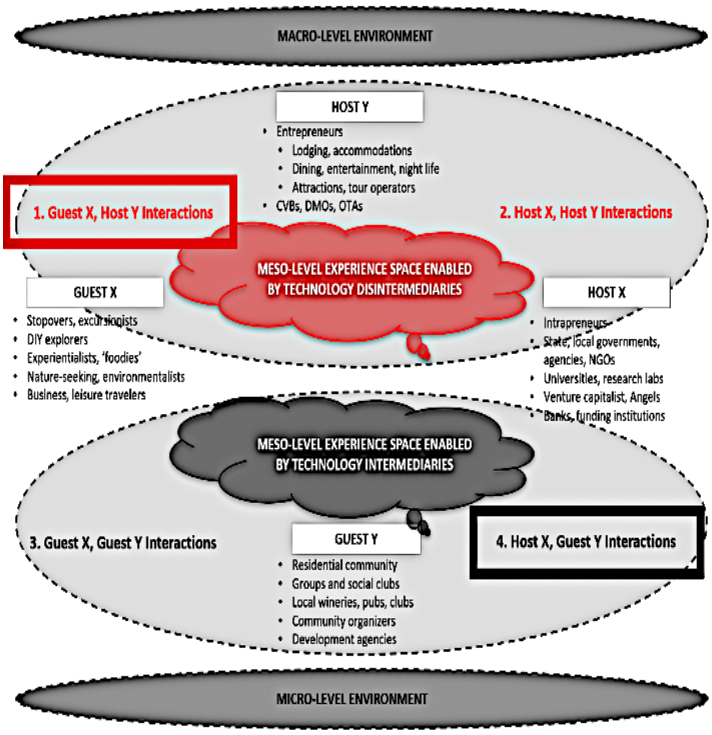
Food is such an integral part of the tourist experience in Jamaica that it is the number one word that defined Jamaica across social media platforms by visitors (Loop News, 2018). The latest available data from the JTB indicates that stopover visitors spend an average of 5.7% of their expenditure on food outside of the accommodation – an amount that the government would like to increase in order to boost the multiplier impact of tourism spend (Jamaica Tourist Board, 2018). The labour intensive nature of food and beverage hospitality also means that increases in expenditure outside of the accommodation would boost employment right throughout the value chain. Travellers can be expected to actively seek information that will reduce their risk and a lack of information about the health and safety of food was determined to be an issue by MacLaurin (2004). Henderson (2009) also found that the perceptions that good food is available as well as the absence of anxiety about food hygiene are important to visitors.

In March 2020 the Government of Jamaica issued social distancing and domestic lockdown measures in response to the WHO-announced global pandemic. In the same month the island destination closed off to arrival of international visitors and residents. Further restrictions were announced in respect of curfew, hours of operation and mandatory work from home orders for non-essential orders and stay at home orders for citizens over 65. These measures effectively closed all hotels and led to the closure of many food and beverage establishments in resort areas. In July, Jamaica reopened its borders to begin accepting international visitors with strict restrictions on movement on the island for non-nationals who are strongly urged to stay on the 'resilient corridor' which includes entities that have been certified as compliant with COVID-19 protocols.

Jamaica has put in place strict requirements for social distancing, hand sanitization and mask wearing in all public spaces. The Ministry of Tourism has gone further and developed a handbook to guide the operations of all tourism operations. The handbook relies on eight 'resilience' protocols and spells out in great detail the requirements for each area of operations including food and beverage. All aspects of the guest's food and beverage experience starting with entry and including seating, requirements for limiting contact, observing social distance and sanitization are covered. Hotels and restaurants in the resilient corridor must be certified as compliant before they are allowed to operate, and the Ministry of Health monitors adherence. While non-nationals are encouraged to stay in the resilient corridors comprised of hotels, food and beverage and entertainment establishments, strict enforcement is impractical. Further, business travellers and visiting nationals have no restrictions once they have completed their quarantine period. It would therefore be important that all food and beverage establishments whether they are affiliated with hotels or not, adhere to protocols and also signal this adherence publicly in order to reassure the consuming public. Indeed, one of the eight health and safety protocols is clear, frequent and consistent communication across Jamaican communities, workers and tourists (Ministry of Tourism Jamaica, 2020).

Understanding how the ecosystem of providers has responded thus far is important to charting meaningful and resilient social and policy prescriptions for the post-pandemic travel period. Using Milwood and Maxwell's (2020) view of the boundary objects ecosystem, this paper explores technology-mediated communications between guests and hosts (upper left (#1) and lower right (#4) quadrants in Figure 1) via the hosts online web page. We premise the work on three primary objectives: 1) explain the online responsiveness of Jamaica's culinary tourism ecosystem to the external shock of COVID-19; 2) determine important distinctions in responsiveness within and among ecosystem actors and clusters; and 3) use these distinctions to propose a response framework of relevant and actionable signaling mechanisms as the destination positions to receive the post-pandemic traveler in the near and distant futures.

Figure 1: Boundary objects ecosystem, Milwood and Maxwell (2020)



3 METHODOLOGY

Web page data comprising image, text, video elements were collected from the primary tourism web page and secondary culinary providers pages. First, the destination's primary web page was visited to determine food and beverage services offered as part and parcel of formal tourism promotion. In the case of Jamaica, https://visitjamaica.com,was used as a proxy for the destination's primary web page. This site is operated by the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB), the official information page of Jamaica's online tourism traffic and is their primary "call to action for advertisements and promotions" (Jamaica Tourist Board, 2018). These pages, and subsequent pages, were captured using NCapture, NVivo's web tool used to

screen, capture image, text, video data from web pages and other social media sites and import into NVivo software for analysis. Using the tool as an extension to the researcher's web browser, web page data of the initial landing page and scrolling pages at https://visitjamaica.com were obtained. This allowed the capture of the primary web page experience encountered by a user of the https://visitjamaica.com page.
Second, the page was searched for text, image or video data depicting any or all of the following: "cuisine", "culinary", "dining", "eat" or "food". This data search was done via cross-checking any explicit or implicit link from the primary web page featuring "things to do"; "plan your trip"; "activities", or 'click' tabs with similar invitations. This 'click-through' process created the search trail: https://visitjamaica.com/things-to-do/activities/dining/. This process landed the search on secondary web pages which yielded search options for 139 food service providers filtered across seven regions or alternatively, 159 dining food service providers across three service categories (Table 1). The study proceeded with the seven-region filter option, given the focus on ecosystem theory and the practical nature of the research objective.
Third, the web pages of each of the (n=139) culinary service providers across the seven regions were visited. In most instances, a website link directly from the destination main JTB web page was used to visit the food service operator's web page. Where direct links were not available within the destination main JTB page, a web search was conducted for the operator's web page. NCapture was again used to cull initial and scrolling pages from each web page. Of the 139 pages found, 8 web pages indicated permanent or temporary closures. These pages were excluded from further analysis. Of the remaining 131 pages, a web page or online presence could not be found for 6 providers. These pages were excluded from further analysis. Data coding and analysis was therefore conducted on (n=125) pages.

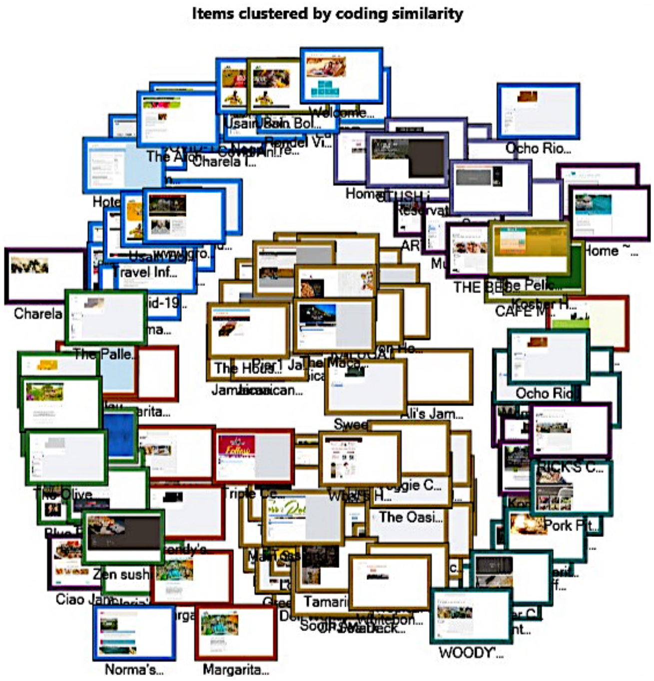
Table 1: Sample dining categories

Filter by Region (Total=139)	
Kingston (green)	80
Montego Bay (blue)	17
Negril (yellow)	16
Ocho Rios (red)	16
Port Antonio (purple)	5
South Coast (orange)	4
Other (pink)	1
Filter by Category (Total=159)	
Casual dining	118
Midscale	22
Fine dining	19

3.1 Data coding and visualization

To facilitate content coding and analysis, we followed previous studies (e.g., Cope, 2010; Nelson, 2016) which utilized an iterative process of coding text, image, video data elements for organization and theory. All web pages were imported into NVivo and coded based on the following three coding structures: 1) location; 2) response; and 3) form. Location was coded by color. Each web page representing a food and beverage service provider was assigned one of seven colors representing one of the seven regions in which the unit was located: Kingston=green, Montego Bay=blue, Negril=yellow, Ocho Rios=red, Port Antonio=purple, South Coast=orange and Other=pink. Figure 2 provides an NVivo generated image of web pages color-coded by location.

Figure 2: Web page data by coding similarity (n=125)



Response (i.e., whether there was COVID-19 information present on the web page) was coded as a binary yes or no. Each web page was coded resilient=yes or resistant=no according to whether COVID-19 response was evidenced on the page. It is important to note a reminder here that the unit of interest to the study is the web page. Evidence was coded 'resilient=yes' if the page contained any image, text, or video elements reflecting COVID-19 response. Examples include hosts/guest actors in masks; COVID-19 pop-up notifications; or social media posts concerning operating and capacity guidelines, temperature checks, mask requirements or curb-side pick-up.
Form (i.e., whether the web page landed via i. independent homepage (e.g., https://stushinthebush.com) or ii. affiliate (e.g., TripAdvisor, OpenTable, corporate chain) or social media page (Facebook, Instagram) coded each web page as 1=independent or 2=affiliate. This allowed for further visualization of the data—singularly and collectively—by allowing the researchers to detect the emergence of pattens, characteristics, or differentials within and among pages which represent larger, corporate entities (e.g., Marriott), smaller or independently owned units.

4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Culinary tourism ecosystem response to the COVID-19 external shock.

Analysis of Jamaica's culinary ecosystem, represented by the web pages of 125 culinary tourism partners featured on Jamaica's primary tourism landing page, https://www.visitjamaica.com, provides insight into the response of these actors to the external shock of the COVID-19 global pandemic. Ecosystem and Internet marketing theories argue that macro-level destination website marketing information influence the exposure of micro-level culinary establishments within a tourism locale. The response of the culinary ecosystem, the collection of culinary service providers linked to Jamaica's main destination main web page, to the external shock of COVID-19 (SARS-Cov-2) pandemic is important to shaping the perceptions of post-pandemic travellers to the island. Moreover, appropriate alignment of information communicating safety, security and health measures between the main destination page and subsequent dining establishment pages is key to attracting new and returning visitors, especially those interested in Jamaica's world-renowned cuisine. The following paragraphs discuss key findings in the responses of Jamaica Tourist Board's main landing page and secondary web pages of linked culinary tourism service providers to the global COVID-19 pandemic.

i. Inconsistencies in COVID-19 messaging between Jamaica's main tourism destination landing page and the web pages of culinary partners

There is inconsistency between the main destination landing page and subsequent pages featuring culinary tourism services within the destination. The main JTB landing page utilizes a resilient response with instant, pop-up messaging to prescriptively market and 'interrupt' the search, alerting the user of the web page to the travel authorization and other COVID-19 information pertinent to the visit. This instantaneous messaging stands in contrast to the secondary web pages for culinary and dining providers linked to the JTB's main web page with a marked absence of COVID-19 information on some pages. Further, where COVID-19 information is presented on featured partner pages, it is presented in a more nuanced, subtle form, e.g., highlighted ticker tape across the top of the landing page.

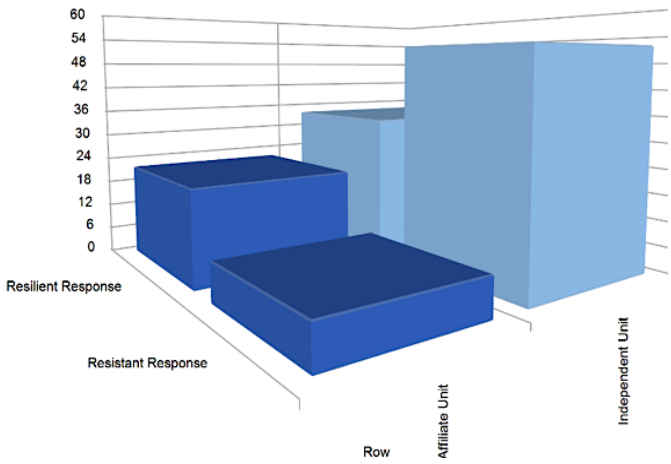
While there is resilient response in the form of COVID-19 travel notifications on the main page, this is not consistently signaled across sub-pages which promote culinary tourism services on the main tourism web page. For example, on https://www.visitjamaica.com/feel-the-vibe/cuisine/jamaican-food/, video promotions of classic cultural food elements (e.g., Edgar 'Puddin Man' Wallace; Round Hill's Chef Maginly on farm-to-fork) show pre-pandemic environments and no content communicating COVID-19 safety protocols.

ii. Web page responses vary between affiliate and independently run clusters

Figure 3 provides a chart of matrix coding results showing online response by establishment location. Matrix coding helps to discover and better understand similarities and differences (Martins, 2016; Feng and Behar-Horenstein, 2019) in online messaging responses among different groups of web pages.

Web pages representing establishments affiliated with hotel brands (e.g., The Courtleigh, Marriot, Terra Nova) or affiliated with global eponyms (e.g., Bob Marley's One Love Café, Usain Bolt's Tracks & Records) show resilient response (i.e., COVID-19 information in the form of text, images or video was present on the web page) to the pandemic. This is evidenced by dedicated links to COVID-19 information pages, instant pop-up messaging, scrolling homepages of operating guidelines and other updates. On the other hand, independent units show resistant response (i.e., COVID-19 information in the form of text, images or video was not present on the web page).

Figure 3: Matrix coding results (Response x Affiliation)



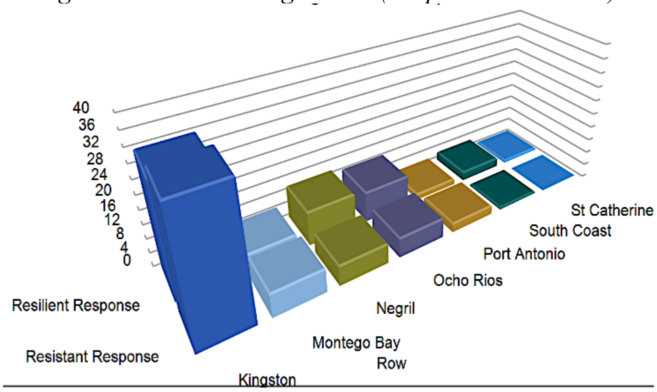
iii. Web page responses vary within and among location clusters

Figure 4 provides a chart of matrix coding results showing online response by establishment location. Of all web pages coded across all seven region clusters, 49% represented establishments with resilient responses (i.e., COVID-19 information in the form of text, images or video was present on the web page) while 51% represented establishments with resistant responses (i.e., COVID-19 information in the form of text, images or video was not present on the web page). Among these location clusters, Negril, Ocho Rios and South Coast web pages reflected more COVID-19 information compared with location clusters in Kingston, Montego Bay and Port Antonio and St. Catherine. Within each location cluster, there was also variation. Each is discussed below.

Within the Kingston location cluster of the ecosystem, web pages were split 46% and 54% for resilient and resistant responses respectively. Resilient response representations on web pages for Kingston-based establishments include links to external sites for COVID-19 updates; requirement notifications for mask-wearing, temperature checks, seating capacity and social distancing; and service-specific notes for curbside pick-up, takeout only and limited menus. Within the Montego Bay location cluster, web pages reflect 42% resilient and 58% resistant responses. Resilient response representations on web pages for Montego Bay-based establishments include additional steps being taken for sanitization and cleanliness new hours of operations, printable menus, and 'reservation-only' operation.

Within the Negril and Ocho Rios-based location clusters, web pages reflect 63% and 37% for resilient and resistant responses respectively. Several web pages linked to Negril-based and Ocho Rios-based establishments linked to TripAdvisor search results which consistently provided general COVID-19 travel information. These establishments sometimes linked to detailed COVID-19 information pages e.g., Milestone Restaurant provided "additional health and safety measures" beyond TripAdvisor's generic travel notice.

Figure 4: Matrix coding results (Response x Location)



Other responses include images of mask-wearing guests and staff, and detailed references to measures being taken by the operation 'in spite of' COVID-19 restrictions. These measures include service modifications for take-out, curbside and delivery options. The remaining web pages for clusters in less-traditional tourism locations—Port Antonio, South Coast, and St. Catherine, reflect approximately 60% and 40% resilient and resistant responses respectively. These web pages reflect resilient responses of broader, hotel affiliate COVID-19 information and broad staff requirements.

iv. Towards a framework for culinary tourism ecosystem resilience

Table 2 presents a summary response framework of responses by culinary tourism ecosystem actors to the sudden, external shock of the COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) global pandemic.

Table 2: A Response framework for culinary tourism ecosystem resilience

Operational Mechanism (Food/Beverage resource)	Operational Mechanism (Human resource)	
• "Our team members have received COVID-19 safety and sanitation protocols training from the Ministry of Health and Wellness" • "Touch-free greeting and welcoming protocol adopted for all team members when interacting with guests." • "Spaced out seating for social distancing in restaurants and bars." • "Reusable cups and mugs are no longer accepted." • "We have removed certain high-touch items from guest tables and bar counters such as menus, shared condiments." • "All items will be immediately sanitized before, during and after use" • "See our new limited menu!"	• "Click here for COVID-19 Safety Protocols and Updates" • "We encourage the use of reservations" • "Due to COVID-191 restrictions, [gates] will close 1 hour before any specified curfew time allotted." • "Masks are mandatory and strict social distancing protocols apply." • "Thank you for understanding the situation which is constantly changing." • "Your safety is our priority." • "WE'RE BACK! Open from 12noon to 9pm daily. Full COVID protocols enforced!"	**Marketing Mechanism (Food & Beverage resource)**
• "When dining with us, max 4 people per table." • "Dining room and bar closed until further notice." • "We are following COVID-19 protocol and are open by reservation only." • "We are eager to reopen and welcome you [and] are currently preparing and training our team with regards to comprehensive COVID-19 compliance." • "Perfect for social distancing" • "Check our 'book a visit' page for availability."	• "Call in | Pull-up | Collect." • "Our highest priority is the health, safety and security of our guests, employees, and team members." • "…we sympathize with persons who have been affected by this unfortunate event and we appreciate the government, healthcare workers, local communities and who have gone above and beyond to contain the spread of the coronavirus." • "[We] encouraged external clients to communicate with us via email and phone instead of in person." • "Temperature checks will be carried out on check-in and randomly by our team."	**Marketing Mechanism (Human resource)**

Using content from analyzed data, the response framework offers a classification of food and human resource mechanisms for host actors within a culinary tourism ecosystem to respond to environmental disruptions with resilience.

Resilience allows a culinary establishment to respond as needed, to an external disruption, while allowing flexibility for a return or pivot to pre-disruption state once conditions in the external environment resume pre-disruption normalcy (Roundy et al., 2018). The framework classifies responses as "operational and/or marketing" and "human and/or food based". Operational responses communicate changes in food-based and human-based elements of daily operation (e.g., limited- or take-out-only menus; bar service closures) while marketing responses communicate changes in food-based and human-based elements of (e.g., temperature checks, reservation-only protocols).

There are resilient responses which convey empathy and reinforce the human-to-human delicacy of marketing culinary service experiences in times of uncertainty. For example, Hotel Mockingbird Hill's Mille Fleurs states, "We want to assure you that in times of uncertainty surrounding travel, your safety and wellbeing remains our highest priority. We understand that you may be questioning your travel plans given the rapidly changing information on the Coronavirus, along with the uncertain travel restrictions." and "Thank you for understanding the situation which is constantly changing." These marketing-based mechanisms reflect the social connectedness which some establishments reflect in their online responses, and of note, occurred most often on hotel restaurant web pages.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The objective of the exploratory paper is to understand the responsiveness of the ecosystem, comprising culinary tourism service providers within Jamaica, to the external shock of COVID-19. In measuring this responsiveness, the study provides a response framework for culinary tourism actors within a destination ecosystem to mount immediate and resilient responses to an external shock, such the COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) global pandemic.

This paper used ecological biology theories to define Jamaica's culinary tourism ecosystem as the collection of actors and interactions in order to show how destinations can experience and respond to disruptions such as natural and man-made external shocks. This paper embarked on an original research endeavor to use web page data to explore the initial response of the culinary tourism ecosystem in Jamaica to the external shock of the COVID-19 global pandemic. The survey found that at the broadest macro-level of the destination, there is instant response to the pandemic as evidenced on the destination main web page. Subsequent investigations of linked secondary web pages to one hundred and thirty-nine culinary providers show that response, as measured by the web page, is inconsistent. Hotel restaurants (e.g., Alexander's at Courtleigh, Centro at Courtyard Marriot, The Terrace at Terra Nova) and globally recognized celebrity names (e.g., Usain Bolt Tracks and Records, Bob Marley One Love Cafe) carried COVID-19 updated web page information. Notwithstanding, the majority of local restaurant brands did not carry COVID-19 updated web page information. Further, dining providers in international traveller-heavy tourism locales (e.g., Negril, Montego Bay, Ocho Rios) carried more consistent COVID-19 information than their counterparts in international traveller-light tourism locales (e.g., South Coast, St. Catherine).

There is also a lack of consistency in the way in which the information is communicated. Some establishments such as the small and eco-friendly Mockingbird Hill adopt a reassuring tone while others adopt a more formal and business-like tone. Differences in style are to be expected because of differences in culture and individual management preferences but the differences in content communicated may make it difficult for readers to make comparisons about the protocols adopted and ultimately to make decisions about whether or not it is safe to visit the establishments.

The Jamaican government has been very proactive in establishing protocols related to tourism establishments. While the 139-page document on COVID-19 protocols is quite detailed about the actual face to face experiences in restaurants there is no mention about how to communicate these protocols to customers ahead of time. Travellers are increasingly dependent on the internet to provide them with information about the destination and this information mediates the way that travelers perceive and interact with destinations and travel products (Xiang, Wang, O'Leary & Fesenmaier, 2015). As Jamaica attempts to restart its tourism industry, it is important that the industry not only adheres to safety protocols but conveys this to the public. The JTB site contains a link to the COVID-19 handbook presumably meant to reassure visitors of the protocols in place but it is unlikely that most visitors will search through the large document which is written primarily for suppliers rather than consumers. It may therefore be useful to provide this information on the drop down menu for cuisine so that tourists who are particularly interested in that experience can immediately be reassured of a national response to the COVID-19 virus.

While the food establishments are autonomous, they form part of a larger tourist experience and the failure of any part of the chain threatens the whole. As such the management of food tourism becomes a wholistic and not an isolated perspective (Ellis, Park, Kim & Yeoman, 2018). Destination ecosystems, in order to maintain a resilient and responsive stance to COVID-19 pandemic, should therefore establish linkages with larger establishments as well as those in international tourism-heavy locations to create cohesive responses for both international and domestic travellers. Indeed, gastronomy should be viewed as a value chain, but it is a value chain that is fragmented and heterogeneous. This therefore calls for working in a collaborative way to create awareness and to provide training for all parts of the chain (World Tourism Organization & Basque Culinary Center, 2019). This will help to manage this shock by reassuring the public that all parts of the tourism sector are resilient and safe. For example, the popular cruise port of Falmouth, Trelawny should be included in the formal ecosystem by inclusion on the formal GoJ tourism destination site, and other geographic mapping identifiers. Collectively, these steps will ensure that both large and small culinary tourism providers in Jamaica are able to benefit from online branding (Chatzigeorgiou & Christou, 2020) and remain resilient and relevant in the destination-wide effort to minimize spread of the virus while maintaining consistent brand imaging.

Finally, government websites such as the JTB should consider implementing a COVID-19 certification opportunity for restaurants and dining establishments promoted on their main tourism websites. Similar to Partner Certification offered by the ATL (Sandals) Group to Caribbean-based tour operators under Sandals' Island Routes portfolio (Milwood, 2020), QTS Sign of Quality offered to local restaurants by Hong Kong Tourism Board, or Makansutra's top 15 street food markets promoted by Singapore Tourism Board; the JTB should begin a strategic partner campaign to support and promote culinary tourism service providers who have implemented and communicated resilient responses via their web page to the post-pandemic traveller.

This study has focused on Jamaica, but the findings are likely to be important for other SIDS particularly in the Caribbean which has been called the world's most tourism dependent region (Bolaky, 2011), and are likely to suffer more COVID-19 generated shock than most economies (IDB, 2020). As destinations try to diversity tourism beyond the three Ss of sand, sea and sun culinary tourism has become a key strategy. Barbados for example has styled itself as the culinary capital of the Caribbean (visitbarbados.org), Trinidad describes itself as a food lovers paradise (visittrinidad.tt) and Aruba promotes its cuisine which is inspired by over 90 unique nationalities (https://www.aruba.com/us/things-to-do/dining). As they reopen more fully these destinations will find it important to reassure visitors that it is safe to not only come to the destination, but to dine the various restaurants.

While culinary tourism has been studied extensively, this study is to our knowledge the only one to highlight the role of national websites in not only promoting the destination's cuisine but in reassuring visitors that it is safe to consume it. Horng & Tsai (2010) for example focused on the extent to which national websites could attract visitors to the culinary offerings, Mattwick & Mattwick (2018) compared food marketing strategies in Central America and Ashish and Shelley (2015) focused on the content of the sites. A glaring gap is the extent to which there is consistency and responsiveness to current concerns and issues. The study further highlights the role of national websites in working with all stakeholders to ensure consistent content that is in keeping with the objectives of the destination.

Limitations and Future Research

There are a few limitations with the present work. Given resource and natural timing constraints, the paper considers the case of a single Caribbean state. While the snapshot of the twelve-month pivot is critical and timely given the ongoing global pandemic, future work should consider comparative case analysis of other small island states. Future work should extend the study from food establishments to other culinary providers. The paper considers primarily supply-side actors within the destination ecosystem. A future study could seek to build on this work and include customer online response (Rodriguez-Diaz et al., 2018) as well as health and safety measures of the customer-manager gap between perceptions of culinary tourism providers and expectations of the post-pandemic food tourist. This would further Caribbean-based research and practice by including now-critical metrics of health, safety, and resilience of response in understanding traveller perceptions of quality, trust and destination visit intentions.

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Sieving tourism destinations: Decision-making processes and destination choice implications

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Abstract:
Purpose: *To introduce and define the concept of sieving tourism destinations as an umbrella term representing faster decision-making processes compared to destination choice models, and to demonstrate its usefulness for both sides of consumption and production of tourism attractions.*
Methods: *Fast decision at the consumers' demand side is demonstrated via an exploratory graphic model. Producers' supply side sieving is measured by observing data elimination on two public serving internet platforms compared to a baseline taken from special interest group tour operators representing Jewish heritage attractions in Sicily and Thessaloniki.*
Results: *On the demand side, nowadays market conditions enable destination choice decision making in a few simple steps often interpreted as spontaneous, intuitive, or irrational. Quantitative analyses on the supply side provided measurable sieving ratios. They reveal careful partial sieving performed at local level editorship, while much harsher sieving occurs on social media platforms. This is interpreted as a market failure related to niche and special interest groups attractions.*
Implications: *The demand side findings call for targeted marketing distinguishing customers not only by income but also by temperament, mood, and personality. The supply side findings call for careful examination of the conditions for inclusion and exclusion from the list of attractions as well as the need to remedy the concealment of minor attractions from social media platforms.*

Keywords: *destination choice, sieving ratio, Sicily, Thessaloniki, Jewish heritage tourism*

JEL Classification: *C44, L83, Z39*

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1 INTRODUCTION

Sieving is a useful concept in engineering and natural sciences (e.g., Sainju 2006). It is also widely used in archaeology to indicate the process of separating objects of historical significance from dust (e.g., Mays et al. 2012). Sieving has lately penetrated information science with data sieving or data mining (e.g., Pyo et al. 2002; Lu et al. 2012). Although the search for data, relevant to visitors for destination choice (DC), lodging, sightseeing, and itinerary construction involves a process of data sieving, it is surprising that this concept is essentially absent from the tourism literature.

Sieving is not defined here in its physical meaning but as an everyday mental cognitive process, carried out consciously or unconsciously. Here it is related to separating and selecting 'wanted' images or attractive places from among many others which are regarded momentarily as less relevant or less interesting. Since the late 1980s the demand side sieving was treated in the framework of Destination Choice (DC) models (e.g., Woodside & Lysonski, 1989; Um & Crompton, 1990). Concurrently, Mansfeld (1992) pioneered the stages of a behavioral model for travel decision making.

The early DC literature leans heavily on consumer purchase behavior studies (e.g., Nicosia, 1966; Belk 1975). Nowadays it became clear that decision-making related to the purchasing of services, and specifically for tourism services, differs greatly from the purchase of tangible goods (e.g.

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Gilbert, 1991; Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005). While DC models for the purchase of services fit the demand side, the suggested sieving process related to sorting and selecting relevant sightseeing attractions has the advantage of encompassing both demand and supply.

Accordingly, the objectives of this study are, first, to discuss the usefulness and suitability of the sieving concept to the current state of the tourism industry; second, to suggest a preliminary demand-side sieving model, and third to exhibit the supply side sieving process related to visitors searching for unique attractions.

The first section of this paper reviews tourism literature on DC and argues for supplementing it with the sieving concept. The review also presents literature reasoning reductions in the supply of attractions on official websites. The second section presents recent changes occurring in the tourism industry and analyzes their impact on travel decision making, while the third section outlines the sieving procedure using a hypothetical schematic model for sieving travel destinations from the demand side point of view. These are followed by a methodological section designed to work out real-world examples of sieving occurring on the supply side using case studies of attractions offered to a special interest group (SIG) of Jewish heritage (JH) travelers in Sicily and Thessaloniki. Following the presentation of the findings, the article concludes by discussing the contribution of the paper and its drawbacks within a broader perspective.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Travel destination choice literature

Several subfields in tourism dealt with the sieving of information without using this term. The main areas are related to destinations and lodging choices and itinerary construction. Sirakaya & Woodside (2005) provide a state-of-the-art review of travel decision making models. They classified these models into behavioral and choice-set approaches. In their concluding section, they indicate that "the literature on behavioral decision making suggests that decision-making styles are individualistic. Therefore, developing a model that fits all decision-makers and every decision situation may not be realistic" (p. 828). Nonetheless, in search for an appropriate verb, they seem to struggle in describing mental-behavioral sieving by using such phrases as 'funnel-like' and 'narrow down' – e.g., "The [destination] selection process is a funnel-like one, in that travelers narrow down choices among alternatives" (p. 823 and again on p. 825).

Studies on travel DC published at the end of the 1980s and 1990s, concentrated on modeling mindsets involved in selecting a single country as a potential destination (Woodside & Lysonski, 1989). Um & Crompton (1990) suggested a DC model based on the fact that "potential travelers generally have limited knowledge about the attributes of a destination which they have not previously visited" (p. 433). Consequently, they suggest a two-stage choice model that rests on the selection of a destination from an evoked set leaning on a wider awareness set. Although they argue against the presumption "that a decision-maker has an extensive information processing capacity" (p. 446), their two-stage model still appears a bit complex for the decision-making process of nowadays ordinary travelers.

Crompton (1992) modified this destination choice model to include four sets of considerations for cases "when a non-routine, high-involvement type of decision process" is involved (p. 420). He acknowledges, that his well-structured four-set considerations flowchart is less suitable for the 'low-involvement' type of travelers. Sirakaya & Woodside (2005) support this distinction stating in "Proposition 5 [that] Level of involvement influences the decision rules used to arrive at the ultimate choice decision" (p. 826). Bargeman & van der Poel (2006) found in an empirical study "that the vacation decision-making processes are much less extensive and far more routinized than described in the rational choice models."

Choice-set models are useful mainly for the selection of a single country, city, or resort area as a vacation destination. They are less useful, however, for selecting multi-destination vacation trips, and even less so for drafting plans for a multi-locational itinerary of attractions and activities geographically dispersed in a wide area. Choi et al. (2012) reviewed studies criticizing DC models along this vein. They indicate that "skepticism has been expressed by several researchers on their [the DC models] monolithic and deterministic view of the decision-making process (Dellaert, et al., 1998; Decrop 1999; Jeng & Fesenmaier 2002; Hyde 2004; Woodside & MacDonald 1994)" (p. 27). Choi et al. (2012) argues that DC models "cannot encompass multifaceted decisions and purchases, involving a great number of decisions made during the overall course of vacation planning" (p. 27). Chung & Petrick (2016) suggest a partial solution by using two distinct evaluation modes for single or multiple destinations.

Clearly, the main argument is that decisions related to traveling are not singular decision-making acts. On the contrary, as indicated by Hyde (2004) and Decrop & Snelders (2005), "there may exist a plurality of vacation decision-making processes" involved in the preparation and execution of a vacation trip (p. 28). Choi et al. (2012) demonstrate "that travel decision making [indeed] follows a multidimensional, ongoing sequence and is a hierarchical process" (p. 26). Smallman & Moore (2010) review DC literature and call for adapting "a complex process approach [that] accommodates both rationality and irrationality" (p. 417).

McCabe et al. (2016) join the above-cited critique and call for a radical reappraisal of tourist decision-making models. They challenge the assumption that all tourists follow a uniform pattern of decision making, and call for recognizing "the existence of fast, intuitive, affect-driven, and simplified decision-making processes". The radical reappraisal is required also because "tourism plays a profoundly different role globally now in both the psychological as well as the social and cultural environment than it did previously" (p. 4). Consequently, they propose their revised dual-system model. The core of their model is based on Crompton's (1992) distinction between low and high levels of involvement.

On the background of the reviewed criticism, including the call for reappraisal of the DC models, alongside with recent changes in the tourism industries (to be reviewed next), this paper calls for adopting another conceptual framework embodied under the umbrella of the suggested sieving process.

The notion of supply-side sieving or concealment of attractions received very little attention in the tourism literature. Sieving of tourism attractions on the supply side occurs when any media - printed or electronic - does not present some of the available resources located in a geographic area. The dissonant heritage paradigm (Tunbridge and Ashworth, 1996) may be regarded as a theory providing mental reasoning for societal disregard or concealment of heritage tourism resources associated with minorities or 'others'. In extreme cases, it may lead to the destruction of others' heritage resources (e.g., Isakhan & Shahab, 2020).

Two other practical lines of reasoning found in the literature may be used to explain sieving made in the supply of attractions. One of these is the fear of promoting trivial attraction sites which may generate feelings of disappointment and hence deterrence of future visitations (Andereck et al., 2006; Michalkó et al. 2015).

The second practical reason demanding exclusion of part of the attractions emerged in the realm of e-commerce. Such exclusion is required to avoid the pitfall known as the 'e-commerce consumer confusion problem' (Mitchell et al., 2004). Provision of too much information may lead to consumers' overloading and detachment. This "may take place when individuals are overwhelmed by an excessive amount of information, which can limit one's ability to process the information precisely" (Lu et al., 2016: 78). Content editors of guidebooks, brochures, and internet sites use their discretionary wisdom to include sites of interest and relevance to as many visitors as possible while insignificant sites of interest to only SIGs would most often be deleted.

The next section presents recent changes taking place in the tourism industry which have profoundly affected the way tourism attractions are chosen.

2.2 Recent changes affecting destination choice habits

Paradoxically, vacation decision making processes have become more complicated on the one hand and less so on the other. This is due to major changes taking place in the tourism industry and other related sectors during the last 30 years. These changes are summarized in Table 1. One of the major factors for the increased complexity is the multiplication of destinations. Middleton (1989) was an early voice forecasting oversupply of attractions for the 1990s powered by "a general assumption of continued rapid growth in the leisure market and a belief in the motivating power of heritage" (p. 229).

During the pre-Covid19 years, despite increased security concerns, it is not only that more countries adopted policies of welcoming tourists, but also more and more cities and towns polished their tourism assets and offered them for visitors (Benur & Bramwell, 2015). Deciding what to see and do became so perplexing that lately interactive computer programs and apps are made available to assist in preparing rational itineraries and traveling plans (De Choudhury et al., 2010; Roy et al., 2011; Broeder & Gkogka, 2020). For instance, an automated DC procedure has been suggested by Huang & Bian (2009) wherein a two-stage matching process is involved: estimating travelers' preferences and subsequently evaluating available tourist attractions.

It is argued here that the increased quantity and improved qualities of the inventory of attractive places, together with several other factors that are to be outlined hereafter, requires a paradigmatic change regarding the DC process. This is not to say that behavioral and DC theoretical frameworks are flawed. People are still searching through 'initial consideration sets' and 'late consideration sets' (Crompton, 1992), applying awareness and evoked sets (Um & Crompton, 1990), using constructs embedded in their mind, or at least in the back of their minds. However, due to a list of major changes - namely the development of many types of tourism (such as urban, rural, nature, heritage, niche, etc.), the multiplication of destinations, dramatically improved access to travel information, decreasing costs of travel and hence increasing travel frequencies - less and fewer decisions of traveling fall into the "non-routine, high-involvement type of decision process" (Crompton, 1992: p. 420).

Moreover, potential travelers cannot be characterized anymore as having "limited knowledge about the attributes of [yet unvisited] destinations" (Um & Crompton, 1990: p. 433). It is rational to assume that improved access to information and reduction of travel costs make traveling more routine. This reduces the risk and stress which used to accompany the traveling DC process (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005; McCabe et al., 2016).

Side by side with the proliferation of attractions and the multidimensional nature of travel decision-making processes, other factors that emerged during the last 20 or 30 years made travel decision-making easier than ever. It is argued here that these factors, listed in Table 1, facilitated changes in the vacation search procedures.

Perhaps most influential among these factors is the significantly reduced travel cost (e.g., Donzelli, 2010; Rey et al., 2011). In the past, the cost of an average international touring trip was comparable to the cost of a new car, while today it comes closer to the cost of a regular durable product. Moreover, a durable good is usually purchased for a time span of at least 2-3 years while the frequency of purchasing touring trips is much higher (Eugenio-Martin, 2003; Van Loon & Rouwendal, 2013). It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that the reduced costs did affect mental cognitive processes by which destinations are chosen.

Table 1: Changes affecting travel decision-making procedures, the 1990s vs. 2010s

Features	Destination Choice (the 1990s)	Sieving (the 2010s)	Sources
Tourist arrivals	0.524 Billion (1995)	1.341 Billion (2016)	https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/st.int.arvl Viewed, February 2020.
Decision's character	Singularity	Plurality	Hyde, 2004; Decrop and Snelders, 2005.
Where to go?	Mainly large cities or major attractions	Plentiful locations in more countries	Middleton, 1989 (Oversupply).
What to see and do?	Mainly major attractions	Numerous types of attractions	Benur & Bramwell, 2015 (Diversification).
Travel cost	Relatively Expensive	Significantly reduced	Donzelli, 2010; Rey et al., 2011.
Frequency of travel	Seldom	Frequent	Eugenio-Martin, 2003. Van Loon & Rouwendal, 2013.
Info sources	Guidebooks, travel agents, newspapers, etc.	Mainly Internet	Ho and Lee, 2007; Law et al., 2010; Jacobsen and Munar, 2012.
Scope	Demand	Demand & supply	Supply-side demonstrated in this study.

In the more affluent countries, international trips became rather routinely consumed products purchased annually twice, trice, or even at higher frequency (Van Loon & Rouwendal, 2013). This tendency makes the decision of traveling greatly different from the traditionally compared purchase of durable products. This difference appears to exist even if both carry the same price tag. In both cases, customers are looking for satisfaction. Yet, durable products are bought with the intention not to be concerned with their replacement, at least, in the short run. Travel decisions are just the opposite; once travelers return home, they are ready to start thinking, if not planning, their next trip. Furthermore, touring trips - unlike durable products - are sometimes realized as an impulsive spontaneous reaction to a need for travel (Laesser & Dolnicar, 2012; Rezaei et al., 2016).

The mental stress associated with decisions making on touring trips is further reduced by the spread of the World Wide Web (e.g., Ho & Lee, 2007; Law et al., 2010; Giannopoulos et al., 2020). The accumulation of information on the internet and its convenient use via search engines appear to greatly eliminate the fear of visiting Terra Incognita places. Conversely to Um & Crompton's (1990) assumption, cited above, these tools provide potential travelers with a great deal of knowledge about the attributes of yet unvisited destinations. Once doubts about the attributes of places are removed, the cost of travel is not too high, and touring trip is a frequently purchased commodity, the speed and methods by which decisions are reached is most often faster and simpler. Consequently, the sieving concept is suggested as a general framework within which to discuss what is seen as intuitive or impulsive travel decision-making processes.

The simpler DC procedure may have reached its apex with the coming of the instant era characterized by the massive use of instantaneous messaging platforms (e.g., Lei et al., 2020). In this respect, the impersonal booking of flights, hotel rooms, etc. on the internet, side by side with its instant approval, made travel DC not only easier than ever but also a mundane procedure especially so with the availability of cancelation options.

The aforementioned arguments are not claiming that everybody is applying the simpler sieving procedure. It is probably widespread among the younger and more affluent segments of society. Infrequent travelers, or people planning a major long-distance and long-duration trip, or a trip jointly organized for extended family members, may still be using DC constructs. However, the shorter and sometimes spontaneous pleasure trips appear to be more common. In these cases, decisions seem to be more intuitive and appear to be reached with less contemplation. Even travelers looking for "off the beaten track" destinations, activities and experiences, in fact, essentially tend to look for the available information coming from comparable sources through similar processes of selection and sieving (Novelli, 2005).

Decision-making related to lodging has also been drastically simplified due to the use of versatile search engines like Airbnb, Booking.com, and others. As a matter of fact, these search engines apply various levels of sieving procedures ranking lodging opportunities by criteria such as cost, quality (stars), distance from focal points, and so on. The final decision made by travelers involves a secondary level of sieving from among the few most appropriate lodging candidates.

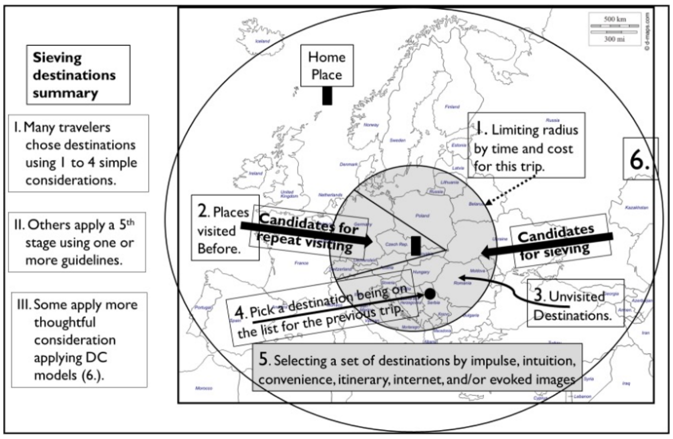
Given the criticism of DC rational modeling, combined with the ease of acquiring information on non-visited destinations (Rezaei et al., 2016), and the reduced cost, make the destination selection choice a more routine procedure for which the less committed sieving process seems to provide a more appropriate conceptual framework than the aforementioned DC models. Another shortcoming of the DC model lies in its treatment of the demand side only. Unlike the DC models, the sieving concept provides a wider canopy capable of taking care of both sides of the production and consumption of tourism attractions, as demonstrated in the next sections.

2.3 Outlining the demand-side sieving process

There is no intention to provide here a full-scale conceptualization of the sieving process involved in neither the selection of travel destination concerning the demand side nor the exposition of attractions on the supply side. The following is no more than a preliminary descriptive outline suggested to be further developed in the future. A hypothesized demand-side sieving process is schematically presented in Figure 1.

The sieving procedure seems to start with the most forbidding constraints – time and money budgets allocated for the next trip (Van Loon & Rouwendal, 2013; Nicolau & Ma´s, 2006). Regularly, for any given level of traveling convenience, a balance between these two factors sets the radius or distance of destinations to be selected from. This radius is represented in Figure 1 by the inner small circle (see box 1). Places already visited inside this radius, represented graphically by the angular section, may be used for return visits (box 2), if desired (e.g., Alegre & Cladera, 2006).

Figure 1: Schematic representation of sieving attractions, the demand-side point of view (Baseline map source: Courtesy of d-maps.com, UK)



The remaining area contains yet unvisited destinations (box 3). However, according to Stewart & Vogt's (1999) case-based vacation planning theory, based on Hammond's viewing planning as a memory task (1989), future vacation trip planning rests largely on retrieval of previous knowledge and memories. Moreover, for many travelers, selecting a set of destinations may be a straightforward task. Often, they may pick a set being on their list of potential destinations as a second-best for the previous trip (box 4), or even as a first priority trip that could not be realized at that time.

It should be noted that during these three or four steps (box I) there was no need for a complex set of considerations for choosing destinations. Even in the absence of a previous list of unvisited but desired destinations, or if such list is ignored, the sieving procedure will go on selecting a set of destinations by one or few decision support techniques such as spontaneous feeling (Laesser & Dolnicar, 2012), intuition, impulse, convenience, favorite itinerary, internet assistance, and evoked images (boxes 5 and II). Utilizing one or more of these techniques may end-up in the selection of a set of desired destinations to be visited in the upcoming trip (Xiang & Fesenmaier, 2020). The use of these techniques still appears to leave potential travelers in the low-involvement zone (Crompton, 1992; McCabe et al., 2016) as much as cognitive and mental efforts are concerned.

The final decision along with the sieving procedure probably depends mainly on personal habits and preferences. It can be reached by consultations either with friends, partners for the current trip, travel agents, and/or by searching the web (Lei et al., 2020). It may depend on the fit of the set of activities available in these destinations to personal preferences. It may also depend on the feasibility of adjusting the desired itinerary to the allocated dates, and even to such subtleties as flight schedules (Wen et al., 2020). A flight schedule that better fits the personally convenient timetable may result in preferring a second-best destination.

Beyond any doubt, for some travelers and certain types of trips, a well-thought-out DC process (Um & Crompton, 1990) may be called upon. These types of trips are represented by the large circle in Figure 1 (boxes 6 and III), portraying an effort to go beyond the initial limiting factors of cost and time. However, these methods do not appear to be the prime decision-making tools for nowadays ordinary travelers (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005; McCabe et al., 2016). These methods are probably called upon by some people for the more demanding trips.

Given the new conditions emerging in the tourism and flight industries outlined in Table 1, the presented sieving procedure helps to select the momentarily most appropriate trip without too much deliberation. This procedure is applied without fearing the loss of a rare opportunity since the temporarily rejected destinations can be visited shortly thereafter in one of the following trips.

Studies related to the quantification of the supply side sieving procedure are unavailable. The methodology presented in the next section is designed to provide an estimate of the decrease in the supply of attractions occurring during the sieving process. For comparative reasons, two supply-side case studies of sieving are exhibited following the presentation of the methodology.

3 METHODOLOGY FOR MEASURING SUPPLY-SIDE SIEVING

The aforementioned literature review (Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996; Mitchell et al., 2004; Andereck et al., 2006; Michalkó et al., 2015) suggests that one cannot expect platforms representing destinations to exhibit a full list of all tourist attractions; the least significant ones are most often ignored. This section proposes an exploratory methodology for estimating just how much of the tourism assets are excluded along the chain of attraction supply when moving from the particular to the general platforms, and therefore do not reach the attention of the ordinary customers (Wu, et al. 2018).

The suggested methodology (below) leans on resources of attractions available on the internet (e.g., Law, 2006; Choi, et al., 2007; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). A chain of three types of websites are going to be used to assess the magnitude of the elimination of attractions on the supply side. Type one has to be well-targeted, all-inclusive websites in order to set up a baseline for comparison with the other more selective websites. Well-targeted webpages designed for members of SIGs or associations sharing a specific heritage, hobby, or profession appear to fulfill this condition; they simply tend to include even trivial attractions as long as they are relevant to the groups' interest. This is in congruence with the "authorized heritage discourse" model proposed by Smith (2006). According to this model, certain groups and stakeholders tend to highlight some specific elements, aspects, and representations of heritage for several reasons, including a perceived stronger appeal for their clients.

When one moves, however, from these types of pages to the second type of general internet platforms, such as municipal sites, it becomes clear that some of SIGs' information disappears for various reasons, including fear of dissatisfaction (Andereck et al., 2006; Michalkó et al. 2015), and the e-commerce consumer confusion problem (Mitchell et al., 2004; Lu et al., 2016). These reasons cause municipal site editors to adopt a selective approach resulting in the elimination of what they perceive as minor attractions. The number of eliminated attractions, compared with the potential baseline, is the figure needed to establish the sieving rate.

Hence, the methodology for measuring the sieving of attractions on the supply side suggests starting with a list of attractions taken from type one webpages covering all sites relevant to a certain group and using it as a baseline. Then, the attractions coverage on type two platforms at the same location is compared to this baseline. The number of eliminated attractions divided by their overall quantity appearing at the baseline provides a measure of the sieving intensity or the sieving ratio. Differences in the magnitude of this ratio among different places and websites allow performing comparative analysis of the degree of sieving. It will allow also searching for the reasons generating these differences and forming policies to overcome the misrepresentation of the local attractions.

The following demonstration of sieving on the supply side utilizes lists of Jewish heritage (JH) attractions as a baseline (Ashworth, 1966; Corsale & Krakover, 2019; Krakover, 2019). This is a typical niche segment gradually turning into an increasingly standardized mainstream tourism product and thus attracting more and more attention and investments from public institutions and private operators (Gruber, 2002). This SIG and its related tourism assets are listed in detail on internet sites of tour guides and tour operators specializing in Jewish heritage tourism (JHT). Two different geographic places were surveyed by the authors for drafting the baseline lists; one is the island of Sicily where the Jewish relics offered by tour operators are distributed among ten towns and cities. These places represent municipalities exhibiting one or more Jewish related relics of any kind considered as worthwhile visiting elements by at least one JHT tour operator. The other

geographic place is the city of Thessaloniki, Greece, where practically almost all JHT resources are concentrated in the central districts. The data for Sicily were collected in 2017 while for Thessaloniki in 2019. It is expected that more of the JHT assets will be excluded in Sicily than in the case of Thessaloniki due to their different pattern of dispersion.
The whole island of Sicily was selected as a study area, since places scattered all over the island used to host large Jewish communities from the Roman through the Aragonese domination (Renda, 1993). In 1492, due to the Alhambra Decree, the Jews were expelled from the island. Consequently, JH in Sicily was largely concealed, neglected, destroyed, or forgotten. Currently, more than five centuries later, the relics of JH are going through a gradual rediscovery and are increasingly seen as significant tourist assets (Corsale & Krakover, 2019).
JHT resources in Thessaloniki are composed of physical remnants and remembrance sites attesting to the flourishing Jewish community residing in the city for centuries under the Ottoman Empire and the Greeks since 1912. The physical remnants are those assets that survived the great fire of 1917 and then the Nazi occupation during WWII. The remembrance sites are those commemorating the city's 45,000 Jews that were deported by the Nazi regime to death camps in occupied Poland in 1943. Of the survivors, only a few returned to live in the city (Sidiropoulou, 2018).
The lists of JHT assets in both places is composed of all those appearing on the internet sites of four specialized tour operators. The compiled lists of sites, as well as links to the utilized tour operator webpages, are portrayed in Tables 2 and 3. These lists provide baselines for comparing how much of the JHT assets are excluded when moving to other more general websites.
For the examination of the first level of sieving, websites of each one of the ten municipalities in Sicily having JH attractions were checked to find out which attractions appearing in the tour operator pages are published in the municipal internet sites and how many of them have disappeared. In Greece, the Thessaloniki Tourism Organization (T.T.O.) website was used. On the one hand, the municipal interest is to exhibit as many sites as possible on their webpages to serve a maximum range of potential visitors. Due to the reasons indicated above, type two websites content editors apply a certain level of censorship removing attractions they consider to be less attractive.
Social media internet sites, hosting user-generated content (UGC), play a rather neutral role in the selection processes, as they neither represent SIGs nor the municipalities involved (Miguéns, et al., 2008; Christou, 2010; Sigala et al., 2012); thus, they appear to be appropriate candidates for third type websites required for the calculation of a second-level sieving ratio. In fact, social media sites are driven by demand. The inclusion of attractions and their scaling depends on the posted opinions of actual visitors (Munar, 2011). However, once the content is posted, it presents the local supply in a scaled manner. Practically, it functions as a means for potential visitors to make decisions concerning where to visit and what to see and do at any destination (Dwityas & Briandana, 2017).
Among the social media websites, TripAdvisor has a remarkably large and geographically widespread consumers' ranking of 'what to do and see' section (Lee et al., 2011). Therefore, it is selected as the third type of website for measuring the second level of supply-side sieving of attractions at the aforementioned destinations. At this level, sieving is expected to be harsher than at the previous level since TripAdvisor is a global platform serving international visitors (Miguéns et al., 2008). As such, major attractions are overemphasized while trivial attractions related to niche tourism or SIGs are obscured (Wu et al., 2018).
The omission or reduction of information when moving from one type of website to the other provides a notion of the sieving process occurring at the domain of the supply. Based on the above-cited literature, it is hypothesized that severe sieving of touring sites takes place when one moves from the overall original baseline to the municipal websites and even more so on the social media platforms. The following section presents the practice of calculating sieving rates by applying this methodology alongside the findings and results obtained for Sicily and Thessaloniki.
As mentioned above, the pertinent websites ascribable to the three categories (SIG tour operators, institutional municipal pages, and TripAdvisor sections), for the two case studies, were thus specifically targeted, identified, browsed and compared by the authors in order to extrapolate the relevant information and data.

4 FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The sieving results are presented alongside the data in Tables 2 and 3. Table 2 portrays results of the three types of internet surveys related to all municipalities in Sicily for whom JHT relics are recorded in tour operator internet sites. In this Table, the total number of Jewish touring elements detailed in tour operator itineraries for all municipalities sums up to thirty-two (3rd column). This figure is used as a baseline and it is higher by twelve over the JHT sites mentioned on municipal websites which sum up to twenty only (4th column). The ratio of 12 to 32 provides an overall sieving ratio of 0.375.

Table 2: Jewish heritage sites appearing on tour operator webpages, Municipal webpages and TripAdvisor, Sicily, 2017

Location in Sicily	Cities and towns	No. of JH attractions on tour operators' websites*	No. of JH sites appearing on municipal websites	No. of JH Sites on TripAdvisor
West	Palermo	8	4	0
	Erice	2	2	0
	Marsala	1	0	0
	Trapani	2	2	0
East	Syracuse	7	5	1
	Catania	2	2	0
	Taormina	3	0	0
	Messina	4	1	1
Center & South	Agira	2	4	1
	Agrigento	1	0	0
Total	**10 places**	**32**	**20**	**3**
Sieving ratio		**Baseline**	**12/32=0.375**	**29/32=0.906**

* Surveyed Jewish heritage tour operator websites (last visited 28.07.2017)
http://www.sicilytravel.net/Jewish_Siciliy_tour.htm
http://www.isolabella.it/sicily-luxury-tours/cultural-tours/jewish-itineraries-in-sicily-2
http://www.jewishheritagetourseurope.com/9-day-sicily-tour/
http://www.jewishtravelagency.com/product/jewish-sicily

This means that local internet site editors omitted from their lists about one-third of the Jewish tourism sites appearing on the lists of the specialized tour operators. This rate of omission seems to be reasonable given the pitfalls associated with publishing places of marginal attractiveness to the general public.

The second level of sieving, as observed on TripAdvisor, reveals a much higher rate of omission. Only three JH sites were found on TripAdvisor webpages related to three of the ten municipalities of Sicily while 29 are obscured. With the original baselines, these results generate a sieving ratio of 29/32=0.906. This means that places recommended as worthwhile patronizing by general inbound tourists are less than 10 percent (3/32) of those listed in the Jewish tour operators' itineraries. In other words, fans of JHT are going to have difficulties in finding the rich JHT resources of Sicily, unless looking them up bits and pieces in several specialized tour operator websites promoting their own packages.

The second stage of sieving is calculated by the JH sites omitted on TripAdvisor pages relative to the number of JH sites published by the municipalities. This provides a sieving ratio of 0.850 (17 to 20) which is not much better than the sieving ratio found using the tour operators' baseline.

Table 3 exhibits JHT sites in Thessaloniki. Seventeen sites were found on the four surveyed tour operator websites. The official Thessaloniki Tourism Organization (T.T.O acting as MDO) has published 12 of them. However, the T.T.O website added three JH sites that could not be found on the surveyed tour operator websites. These additional sites are listed in the footnote below Table 3. Following several examinations, it was decided to add these sites to both sides of the equation, to the tour operator list as well as the municipal list.

As a result, there is 20 JH site as a baseline, 15 of them were published on the municipal site and 5 omitted. The resulting sieving ratio is 0.250, somewhat lower than in Sicily. On TripAdvisor, only six JH sites were included while 14 excluded, which generate a sieving ratio of 0.700, pretty high but lower than in Sicily. The sieving rate of TripAdvisor relative to the municipal website is lower, 9/15=0.600, but still represents a high level of exclusion. TripAdvisor's ranking of the six JHT sites of Thessaloniki ranges from 22 to 110 out of 124 listed attractions. The actual ranking may pose another challenge to be considered for the calculation of the sieving ratio.

The data presented for Sicily and Thessaloniki demonstrate not only the existence of significant sieving on the supply side but also the usefulness of the sieving ratio for comparative analysis. While all websites involved are taking care of their best interests, there appears to be a serious market failure concerning the presentation of the less significant sites such as niche tourism and SIGs' tourism. Most of these sites are overlooked on social media sites as if they do not exist. A preliminary examination of the situation on Lonely Planet and Fodor sites revealed similar, if not a lesser representation of these kinds of tourism.

The quantitative measure of sieving depends on the selected baseline and the chosen comparative websites. One may use as a starting point other SIGs or other sources listing all attractions. The principle remains the same: once attractions exposed on official or social media websites are compared to the wider or more specialized baselines, one should expect a fairly high degree of sieving of the supply. Less significant attractions or those of interest to specific groups of visitors will most likely be omitted.

Table 3: Jewish heritage sites appearing on tour operator webpages, Municipal webpages and TripAdvisor, Thessaloniki, 2019

	Internet Survey – Tour Operator list	**T.T.O.***	**TripAdvisor Rank/Total**
1	Jewish Museum	√	22/124
2	Monastirion Synagogue	√	73/124
3	Yad LeZikaron Synsgogue	√	
4	Matanot LaEvionin Jewish School		
5	Holocaust Monument	√	
6	Old Railway Station Memorial		
7	Old Jewish Cemetery Memorial		
8	Memorial at the New Cemetery		
9	Baron Hirsch Hospital	√	
10	Casa Bianca (Villa Fernandez)	√	99/124
11	Malakopis Gallery	√	
12	Saul Modiano Gallery (Stoa Saul)	√	49/124
13	Modiano Market	√	35/124
14	Villa Mordoch	√	
15	Jewish Hamam		110/124
16	Yakko Modiano mansion	√	
17	Villa Allatini	√	
Total	**17 Attractions + 3***	**12 + 3*=15**	**6**
Sieving ratio	**Baseline=20**	**5/20=0.250**	**14/20=0.700**

Surveyed Jewish heritage tour operator websites (Last visited: 15.08.2019):
https://www.milkandhoneytours.com/jewish-tours/thessaloniki/
https://saloniki.jewishguide.travel/
http://jewishandthecity.gr/villas/ + http://jewishandthecity.gr/walking-tours/
https://www.greece-is.com/10-stops-jewish-thessaloniki/
* T.T.O. - Thessaloniki Tourism Organization – exhibited the following 3 Jewish heritage sites not found on tour operator websites: Salem Mansion, Ouziel Complex, and Allatini Mills. Sieving ratios were calculated after adding these sites to the T.T.O as well as the tour operators' columns.

5 DISCUSSION

Following the growing discomfort (e.g., Smallman & Moore, 2010; Choi et al. 2012; McCabe et al., 2016) concerning the psychologically laden DC models developed several decades ago (Um & Crompton, 1990; Crompton, 1992) - and the need to find a term suitable to embrace such terminologies as funnel-like, narrow-down (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005), spontaneous (Laesser & Dolnicar, 2012), irrational (Smallman & Moore, 2010), "fast, intuitive, affect-driven, and simplified" (McCabe et al., 2016) decision-making processes - this paper suggests to adopt the use of the sieving concept as an umbrella term representing fast decision-making processes related to selecting attractive destinations. This is in line with Sirakaya & Woodside's (2005) observation that "there can be tourism purchases where very little functional decision-making is involved" (p. 829).

Sieving has been defined above as an everyday mental cognitive process, carried out consciously or unconsciously. This process may include, among other things, tasks carried out daily by children and adults in making habitual decisions regarding clothing, diet, friends, and more. Arguably, such accustomed personal sieving and filtering habits are applied also to selecting a set of attractive destinations, everybody according to his or her personal temperament, mood, personality, and financial abilities. This may account for the use of different vocabulary to describe the fast purchase of touring goods. Some are accustomed to fast spontaneous sieving reactions, while others use intuition or what appears as irrational behavior.

The faster sieving practices compared to traditional DC models appear to better fit current changes in tourism and tourism-related industries, namely, the proliferation of attractions (Benur & Bramwell, 2015), low-cost flights and lodging, and widely spread pre-trip information sources (Ho and Lee, 2007; Law et al., 2010; Rey et al., 2011; Jacobsen & Munar, 2012; Chatzigeorgiou & Christou, 2020). It is also in congruence with "the current psychological, social, and cultural environment" noticed by McCabe et al., (2016: 4). In the last decade or so, the growing volume of instant messaging (Lei et al., 2020; Suhud & Allan, 2020) has added its impact to speedy reactions. These factors, coupled with rising incomes, make the purchase of tourism trips more frequent and mundane.

It has been shown in the paper that sieving practices encompass the choice of destinations made by both customers and suppliers. Customers on the demand side consider affordable destinations and sieve them step by step through a set of simple considerations. Nowadays, stress and risk of making wrong decisions are reduced due to information available on the internet, prevailing low-cost deals, the proliferation of attractions in many countries and cities, and the high frequency of traveling that enables visiting the missed destination in the next trip. As a result of such factors, McCabe et al. (2016: 8) argue that "many holiday decisions could be characterized as being essentially risk-free". These considerations have been demonstrated hypothetically using a cartographic illustration (Figure 1). At this stage, the arguments used are exploratory and should be tested in future research.

The option to use the sieving concept in the supply side area is an innovative point brought up and demonstrated in this paper. The prevalence of sieving made by suppliers has been hypothesized based on the literature (Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996; Mitchell et al., 2004; Andereck et al., 2006; Michalkó et al. 2015) and was approved above by empirical testing. While careful partial sieving done by local authorities or MDOs is understandable due to pitfalls such as disappointment and information overloading, the harsh sieving found on social media UJC is interpreted as market failure. This finding is in line with Wu et al. (2018) claiming that social media websites obscure much of the niche tourism resources.

Attractions not listed on social media sites are not only hard to find but also devoid of previous visitors' recommendations and scaling. It has been shown that the number of attractions appearing on social media sites is significantly smaller than those published by the local municipal media. Moreover, most places appearing on the agenda of SIG tour guides tend to disappear whatsoever.

The sieving ratio has been introduced as a measure for the volume of sieving. Comparative application of these measurements opens a venue for a better understanding of the sieving that goes on during the supply of attractions.

5.1 Managerial implications

The sieving process has some obvious managerial implications. On the supply side, the usefulness of the sieving ratio is instrumental for comparative analyses estimating the attractiveness of places and types of attractions offered for the tourists. Moreover, the sieving procedure outlined in this paper classifies local attractions to those who are selected and included, and those who are excluded. The latter suffers from clear losses of exposure, visitors, and income. Stakeholders of excluded attractions should analyze the reasons for being left-out and what policies or strategies should be undertaken for improving their representation. The promotion of adequate and appealing narratives, including intangible heritage, could possibly upgrade the significance of minor tangible attractions and spread interests and benefits coming from the visitors. The included attractions should also be analyzed to understand what thresholds must be crossed to be included and what the conditions are in order to remain in this group for as long time as possible.

The managerial implications of the demand side sieving are strongly related to marketing. First, the marketing of short pleasure trips should be separated from the marketing of longer duration family trips since these are related to two different decision-making processes (Crompton, 1992; McCabe et al., 2016). Second, more emphasis should be placed on taking care of the different personalities of travelers such as spontaneous and impulse decision-making customers (Laesser & Dolnicar, 2012; Rezaei et al., 2016). Third, different marketing schemes should be prepared for repeat visitors vis-à-vis those who prefer breaking new grounds; And fourth, public agencies such as DMOs, should take care of overcoming the market failure identified with respect to the omission of many minor attractions from main UGC platforms. Alternatively, private sector entrepreneurs may find the way to establish a profitable platform giving space to such attractions (Wu et al., 2018).

5.2 Limitations and suggestions for further research

Despite its innovative sections, this paper can be considered incomplete at least in two aspects. First, the paper does not lay down clear theoretical foundations for the faster travel decision-making process connected to sieving. It appears that more empirical testing is required to enable linking the sieving of attractions with sound theoretical constructs. This is in agreement with Sirakaya & Woodside's (2005) concluding remark: "simplified and field-specific models should be created and empirically tested to fill the gap in this [DC] area" (p. 829). Furthermore, in this study's context it is not entirely obvious that a single theoretical construct will be able to encompass sieving on the demand and supply sides in the same conceptual framework and for all types of travelers (Sirakaya et al., 1996).

It should also be noted that the supply side sieving procedure is scale-dependent. The wider the area presented, the harsher the sieving is. National and regional sources of information tend to exclude most minor places of interest and leave room for only the high-level attractive sites. They tend to present attractions potentially catering to mass tourism.

On the demand-side there is room for further theoretical conceptualization and psychological analysis of the decision-making processes involved in the fast-sieving procedures. On the supply-side, differences in the magnitude of the sieving ratio among different places and websites allow performing comparative analysis of the degree of sieving, searching for the reasons generating these differences, and forming policies to overcome the misrepresentation of the local attractions.

The suitability of the sieving concept for destination, lodging, and flight choices as well, and its usefulness for itinerary construction, should be further studied and deliberated. New, rapidly developing technologies applied to websites, social media and apps should be considered in order to observe how marketing, information, communication and representation keep intermingling in innovative ways and might affect the mechanisms of sieving and destination choice.

5 CONCLUSIONS

McCabe et al. (2016) call for a reappraisal of destination choice models. This need has been re-established here considering a number of dramatic changes which have been taking place in the tourism and tourism-related industries. In fact, recent literature appears to agree that travel decisions are made today faster than ever (e.g., Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005; Laesser & Dolnicar, 2012). Differences prevail, however, with respect to the naming of this phenomenon. This paper suggests to use the term sieving as an umbrella term covering many forms of fast travel decision making. Mentally, the act of selecting one preferred object or behavior from among the rest is an acquired habit accompanying human beings since early childhood. Since the number of satisfactory destinations is on the rise, travel cost is reduced, pre-trip information is abundant, and frequency of trips is growing, the selection of a destination is less risky and less demanding.

The term sieving has the advantage of fitting both sides of demand and supply. Customers are sieving a set of attractions to visit in their coming trip according to their financial and mental abilities. Producers of attractions supply information are presenting and editing the attractions available in destinations. However, this study shows that, when moving along the chain of attraction supply from the particular to the general platforms, a lot of niche and special interest group attractions are excluded. The rate of exclusion serves as a measure of the sieving ratio. In particular, the sieving ratio of SIG attractions on social media internet sites is found to be very high, which can be defined as a market failure with potentially significant impacts on local development.

Thus, the introduction of sieving as an umbrella term for fast travel decision-making, and the suggested measurable sieving ratio on the supply-side, constitute the main contributions of this research and a basis for further studies, tests, and discussions.

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The poetics of travel through unravelling visual representations on postcards: A critical semiotics analysis

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Abstract:
Purpose: *Visual representations, as the mechanism of tourism discourses, are vital to the constructed realities of tourism. This paper aims to contribute to ongoing research on tourist postcards and tourist imagery, exploring how contemporary photographic tourist postcards act as narratives of cultural representations and national identities, and how they constitute a 'poetics of travel' by communicating 'myths' about particular destinations.*
Methods: *The methodology has followed the semiotic analysis along with a critical approach, focusing on a corpus of approximately 4,200 picture postcards issued between 2003 and 2019. In addition to adopting a discourse approach, the study can be considered as 'auto-ethnographic' since it analyses the postcards as visual texts of Greece, which have been produced within Greece (by Greek editors and Greek photographers) and as the analysis has been made by a Greek researcher.*
Results: *The findings present some similarities and differences to those outlined in previous exploratory research, and clearly establish that throughout the years contemporary Greece keeps focusing on its self-representation as a historic, authentic and romantic tourist destination; as a the 'cradle of western civilization" and as an "unchanged paradise on earth".*
Implications: *Findings indicate that visual representations as the mechanism of tourism discourses are essential to the constructed realities of tourism, constituting a 'poetics of travel'. The fact that Greece is presented as a 'museum-like' destination, requires, however, special attention because the exaggerated language of the tourist discourse limits Greece in an eternal "unchanged" present, partly cancelling the potential image of modern progress.*

Keywords: *postcards, Greece, visual representations, tourist imagery, semiotic analysis, tourism discourse*

JEL Classification: *R41, L83, Z39*

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1 INTRODUCTION

We live in an era where the experience of modern tourism is mainly the experience of a world created by, transformed and projected through the travel industry and mass and social media. Taking into account both practitioners and clients, and especially actions of promotion, tourism has its own discourse and language, making use of written text, static and moving pictures, and audio-visual material (Dann, 1996; Christou, Sigala, Gretzel, 2016). Seen in this light, 'hegemonically-scripted discourses' (Mellinger, 1994), including films, television programs and advertisements, books, travel guides and illustrated magazines, brochures, posters and postcards, and, of course, the World Wide Web, determine the way that places are being expected, seen, transformed and experienced. They also structure both our sense of reality and notion of our own identity, whether as 'hosts' or 'guests'. Furthermore, the way destinations are represented inevitably influences the type of visitors they attract. At the same time, these multiple representations contribute to the formation of a 'poetics of travel' by defining the boundaries of the 'tourist gaze' which, in turn, according to Urry (2002), lies at the heart of the tourism phenomenon and tends to be directed towards sights and attractions that differ from everyday experience.

In Greece, tourism development has been a historical coincidence that put its mark on the neohellenic ideology and landscape photography (Papaioannou, 2005). The independent Greek State (1830), photography (1839) and tourism (1841) were all 'born' approximately during the same period, along with the establishment of archaeology as an institutionalized discipline in Europe and the beginning of state legislation and antiquities in the Greek State (1834).

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Their objectives and aspirations, therefore, have been affiliated with the landscape and its representations both commercially and ideologically (Sakellariadi, 2008). Acknowledging that tourism constitutes a meeting point of the local with the global (Yalouri, 2001), this paper draws upon the author's ongoing research of Greek postcards (Bonarou, 2009; 2012a; 2012b; 2017), focusing on aspects of national identity that the contemporary Greeks externalise for tourism purposes and the ways they understand and handle/manipulate the sense of 'Greekness' through the tourism representations of cultural landscapes.

The term 'poetics' derives from the Greek word 'poïesis' that means 'to make' and implies 'creation' or 'production'. There is no doubt, that postcards are sold to make a profit. However, their visual representations, as the mechanism of tourism discourses, are vital to the constructed realities and transformations of tourism. Given that, the aim of this paper is: a) to gain through semiotics an understanding of the way that photographic tourist postcards act as power-laden narratives of cultural representations and national identities, and b) to explore how postcard images constitute a 'poetics of travel' by communicating 'myths' about a country destination, in particular Greece. In this research context, the following questions will be discussed: a) how does contemporary/modern Greece perceive and, eventually, promote itself towards the 'others' via postcards imagery, aspiring on the one hand to be diversified within the world tourism context and on the other side to satisfy foreign visitors' expectations? and b) what is the role of ideologies, biases, omissions and stereotypes in the formation of the country's 'tourism myth' through the years?

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Given that postcard images are not reflections of the world, but culturally and socially constructed and conceptualised representations, the essence of their analysis lies in the communication and the attempt to understand and discuss their deeper meanings. People, after all, as Chandler (1994:2) highlights by using the term Homo Significans, are inspired, as a species, by the desire to find meaning, also known as signification, a concept which lies at the heart of semiotics. In particular, semiology or semiotics – considered more of a theoretical approach with an accompanying analytic method (O' Sullivan et al., 1994:281; Barthes 1979:39) – is based on a western way of thinking, having as its main idea that people think and communicate with signs – that is, with anything that can be used to represent something else (Berger, 1984). The key-idea in semiotics is a conception of the sign, defined as a bond between a 'signifier' and a 'signified' (MacCannell, 2000). As Echtner points out (1999:47), since signs are used to create and convey meaning, semiotics has also been referred to as the study and structure of meaning, examining the communications of meaning in its direct, indirect, intentional and unintentional forms. Within a post-structural perspective, by revealing the structure of sign systems, semiotics contributes in the more thorough understanding of human communication and behaviour, constituting at the same time a tool to record society's ideological values.

Images of destinations, peoples and landscapes have attracted significant research attention over the past decades, but related social scientific interest can be traced back to at least as early as the 1970s (Kanemasu, 2013). Semiotics has emerged as a well-adapted approach for the study of communication, but also behavior in tourism settings and there are various contributions to tourism research focusing on the value of semiotic methods, dating from Dean MacCannell's chapter (1989a) on 'The semiotics of Attractions and several papers collected in the special issue of the 'Annals of Tourism Research' on 'The semiotics of tourism' (MacCannell, 1989b, 2000; Chami and Kaminyoge, 2019). Since then, the majority of postcards' studies have focused primarily on the analysis of representations in bodies of postcards that usually have a common, ethnic topic (Cohen 2000). There are various studies that discuss the complex interrelationship between the postcards' imagery with the colonial discourse, orientalism, imperialism or even racism, such as Moors and Machlin (1987), Schor (1992), Alloula (2001/1981), Geary and Webb (1998), Yee (2004), Burns (2004) and Zwegers (2018). Scenic postcards are associated with a dual location in geographical space: the point of sale and the landscape, site or place they depict (Foltête and Litot, 2015), while at the same time they can also be used as a tool for advertising (Karabacak, 2014). Among the researchers who have examined postcard imagery and reached the conclusion that postcards play an important role in the construction and representation of destinations are Albers and James (1983, 1988), Mellinger (1994), Edwards (1996), Markwick (2001), Waitt and Head (2002), Pritchard and Morgan (2003), Garrod (2009), Mayes (2010), Milman (2012), Stylianou-Lambert (2012) and Yu (2018).

According to Urry (2002), the gaze is constructed through signs, and tourism involves the collection of signs; as for the tourist sites, they can be classified in terms of three dichotomies: whether they are an object of the romantic or collective tourist gaze; whether they are historical or modern and whether they are promoted as authentic or inauthentic. When tourists notice two people kissing on a Greek island, what they capture in the gaze is an aspect of the 'timeless romantic Greece'. Being a photographer means that one also becomes an amateur semiotician. Any tourist who photographs, or buys a postcard that depicts a golden beach, believes that through this they will keep the memory of 'a paradise on earth' (MacCannell, 1989a; Urry, 2002).

The act of photography (or owning a photographic postcard) authenticates the experience of the possessor (Sontag, 1979:9): it was there, I was there and I saw it with my own eyes. Like photographs of the tourist's own making, postcards are part of the guarantee of the 'correctness' of the immediacy experienced (Edwards, 1996:211). Taylor (1994) has argued convincingly that such images protect in a way the tourist from the anxiety of having failed to identify the desired object. By considering tourists as 'amateur semioticians' interested in everything as a 'sign' that stands for something else (Culler, 1981; Urry, 2002; Rojek and Urry, 1997; Amanatidis et al., 2020), we begin to understand why postcard imagery relates significantly to tourist's expectations and experiences. The postcards' images seem to symbolise desires and fantasies that motivate travelling.

Moving from poetics as the general theory of literary discourse to a 'poetics of travel' as a theory of tourism discourse, the focus goes on the sophisticated visual language deployed by tourism editions to represent Greece as a tourist destination. Therefore, far from being trivial 'ephemera' of tourism, photographic postcards have a key role in sustaining the tourism industry. Postcards, being a type of 'text' used to represent tourist landscapes, do not present reality impartially, with 100 per cent accuracy but, rather, project 'aspects of reality' depending on the cultural and social conditions, involving issues of politics, ideology and identity, while the rules and conventions of the representation systems are learnt each time in the framework of a given culture (Sturken and Cartwright, 2003; Milman, 2012; Chronis, 2012; Gretzel et al., 2012). Postcards, as photographs in general (Garlick, 2002:301), are never transparent with regard to the destination they depict, since they re-present it in a particular way, so that our knowledge for the said destination is never independent from postcards.

Travel, tourism and photography are inextricably connected, while picture postcards are among the most widely disseminated tourist icons, serving both as personal souvenirs of the travel experience and as a means of extending it to others, namely the potential tourists who receive a friend's postcard (Markwick 2001; Servidio, 2015; Misirlis et al., 2018). Photographic postcards have been fundamental to the proliferation of the tourist gaze that has emerged in the late nineteenth century and in the first decades of the twentieth century. Moreover, they are vital to successfully creating and communicating images of a destination since, as Urry argues (2002:78), what people 'gaze upon' are ideal representations of the view that they internalize from magazines, guidebooks, postcards and other mass-mediated images that in fact shape the visual perception of tourists and determine how they see and understand the objects of their gaze.

To better understand the power of the picture postcard, we should relate it with the power of photography as a fundamental part of the contemporary tourist experience (it is not a surprise that especially with recent trends in technology and the growing online culture that promotes the sharing of 'selfies', photography has even been associated with injuries and deaths within tourist environments (Weiler, Gstaettner and Scherrer 2021)! As Sontag (1979) and Edwards (1996) have noted, the photograph can bring the 'invisible' and the 'unnoticed' forward and make it 'visible' and 'noticed'; photography can also add complexity to simple things and simplicity to the more complex ones, enabling the postcard to signify or convey messages to the viewers. Tourist photography has its own ethics (Fennell and Yazdan Panah 2020), while tourists in their trips, always collect photographs as they collect souvenirs. Besides, tourist practices are tied up both with material objects and physical sensations (Haldrup and Larsen, 2006). However, while personal photos focus on the recording of the tourists themselves, their friends and families, postcards as photographic souvenirs focus on the destination and its "highlights", such monuments, natural miracles, unique view, local people, aspects of local life etc. (Bruner, 2000).

3 METHODOLOGY

Photographs and therefore photographic postcards offer visual knowledge about people, objects and places, which in part, means that the tourists/viewers can have power over them, even if only momentarily. Photographs tame the object of the gaze. Being a still picture, photographs freeze the image in space and time and can also de-contextualize the object of the gaze by transposing it to other contexts. The symbolic power of postcards can go far beyond the photographic theme. In other words, postcards as 'fragments' in both space and time can become symbols or metaphors which reify culturally shaped images as observed realities, rendering them 'objects' (Markwick, 2001; Edwards 1996).

Tourist postcards in the Greek market are in their vast majority reproductions of photographs claiming to provide realistic representations. The term 'representation' covers a whole spectrum of concepts and interpretations but, literally, the verb 'represent' means to present again. However, representation should not be considered as a reflection, but rather as an act of re-construction (Hall, 1982). In the context of the present paper, representation is understood as the ability of a 'text' to use elements of the world as a source of supply, showing them to the spectator not just as reflections but as constructions (O'Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2002; Sturken and Cartwright, 2003: 12–6). The term 'text' is widely used in modern cultural studies to include, in addition to the written/printed text, maps, tables, photographs or even landscapes themselves (Jenkins, 2003; della Dora, 2009).

To unravel the symbolic meanings of 'Greekness' in contemporary tourist postcards, the methodology has followed the semiotic paradigm (Echtner 1999), combining procedures from sources such as Barthes (1979) and Collier and Collier (1986), along with a critical approach (Hall 1982), analysing a corpus of approximately 4,200 picture postcards issued in Greece between 2003 and 2019. Access to a representative corpus of postcards' images, has raised various questions, with perhaps the most critical being the following: are we interested in a representative corpus of contemporary tourist consumption – in which case we must collect material from tourist shops, or in a representative corpus of contemporary tourist production – in which case we need to speak with publishers (Rose 2001: 58–9, Jokela and Raento 2012)?

Given that the focus has been initially set on the production of the contemporary tourist image of Greece, the collection of a representative corpus of postcards' images began with material and catalogues provided by the largest printing companies in Greece: Toubis, Haitalis and Summer Dream editions which have head offices in Athens and own the largest variety of Greek postcards, the largest distribution networks and the largest market shares, as well as Rekos editions, with head offices in Thessaloniki and mostly active in the areas of Northern Greece. It should be noted that a significant number of the postcards collected from the editors during the period 2003-2009 (3,700 images) have been still available in the Greek tourist market at the time of writing this paper. In addition, this corpus has been enriched over the years with postcards bought from souvenir shops in various places all over Greece (author's personal collection); therefore, the final corpus of approximately 4,200 picture postcards has combined the aspects of tourist production and consumption. At this point, it should be underlined that there are no available data regarding the total number of tourist postcards that are printed or sold annually in Greece. Each company keeps its own statistics. According to Toubis editions, the largest printing company, the demand for postcards decreases in the digital age: 'In the year 2000, our company sold approximately 7 million postcards, while in 2017 our sales were approximately 2.5 million' (Kourellou, 2018).

Postcards are considered multifaceted objects, that through their images can reveal multiple ways of presenting places and trigger imaginative travel (Andriotis and Mavrič, 2013; Pirnar et al., 2019). Acknowledging the opportunities for visual autoethnography in tourism research (Scarles, 2010; Mavragani et al., 2019), each postcard has been defined as an auto-ethnographic visual text, in that it is a 'text a culture has produced about itself' (Dorst 1987: 4, cited in Macdonald 1997: 155). Therefore, following Pritchard and Morgan (2003: 120), in addition to adopting a discourse approach, the study can be considered as 'auto-ethnographic' since it analyses the postcards as visual texts of Greece, which have been produced within Greece (by Greek editors and Greek photographers) and as the analysis has been made by a Greek researcher. The postcards' images were analyzed and sorted according to their pictorial content (Milman, 2012), focusing on repeated symbols, using the main photographic typologies employed in previous research (Bonarou, 2009; 2012a; 2012b; 2017). The postcards' representations form an apparatus via which tourist locations are reinvented based on the image of particular tourist motivations and wishes (Waitt and Head 2002: 320). Thus, it is desirable for postcards to be dealt with as 'popular cultural texts' which shape and promote particular characteristics for each destination and its identity; that is, as texts favouring specific representations of each culture, definitions of identity and specific aspects of the national history of the locations (Pritchard and Morgan 2003: 111–2).

4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The noteworthy increase of tourism flows to Greece that were experienced in the late 1970s and 1980s was facilitated by both natural and cultural resources, as well as by the existing airport infrastructure in major islands in combination with the lower cost of living in comparison with other European countries (Buhalis, 2001:440; EIU 1990:49; Fotiadis and Williams, 2018). Although Greece has been the focus of small-scale cultural/historical tourism for many years, mass tourism and sun-loving visitors have flooded into the country since 1974 (when Greece returned to democratic rule after a 7-year military dictatorship), reaching a record of approximately 34 million people visiting Greece in 2019. In attempting to attract as large an audience as possible, postcard producers seek to incorporate elements they expect to be attractive to different publics.

As it happens with repeat photographs, sequences of postcards throughout the years can be used to explain changes on the landscape (Christou, 2010; Sawyer and Butler, 2006), but also on the cultural space as well (Yu, 2018). Based on previous relevant research conducted by the author (Bonarou 2009; 2012a; 2012b; 2017), the present study re-affirms that during the last 16 years, Greece is self-represented mainly as a historic, authentic and romantic tourist destination, while four dominant discourses are shown about the country: a) Greece as the birthplace of European civilization; b) Insularity as the quintessence of the Greek Spirit; c) Tradition as an integral part of the Greek identity; and d) Greece as a 'sea, sun, sand and sex' tourism destination. Archaeological, pastoral and insular landscapes – with emphasis on the Aegean Sea – are dominant in the postcards' representations, often from the aspect of Orientalism. These images formulate a 'poetics of travel' by 'creating the destination' and they seem to have been gradually established in the Greek consciousness and memory and the collective unconscious, as well. Behind such a poetics lie three traditions: (a) the writings and paintings of western travellers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as well as the tourist guides and travel literature, which continue to reproduce the same expectations until this day; (b) landscape photography, both professional and amateur, as well as the work of intellectuals mostly of the so called 'Generation of 1930s'; and finally, (c) cinematography – namely foreign and Greek productions, particularly in the late 1960s and 1970s, praising the picturesque Greek landscapes – along with the Greek National Tourism Organization's campaigns, which create and promote the 'official' tourist myth of Greece.

In particular, the semiotic analysis of tourist postcards has traced the elements of Greek culture emerging as markers and symbols of Greekness – antiquity, nature, sky, sea, islands, folk architecture and decoration, churches, elderly locals and animals (cats, dolphins, donkeys) – and has revealed that the language used by Greek postcard editions is highly pictorial, combining aspects of the 'classical', the 'romantic', the 'picturesque', the 'pastoral' and the 'oriental'. In most cases, there is a strong depiction of primary colours and brightness: blues and whites (also colours of the Greek flag), oranges, reds, purples (colours of the sunset) and of course greens are typically overstated. This representation evokes the romantic view of the Mediterranean: its climate, nature, bright skies, blue seas and sandy beaches, in opposition to the climatic and emotional greys and depressions of northern Europe (Selwyn 1995:4).

Image 1: Greece is self-represented mainly as a historic, authentic and romantic tourism destination. Part of a postcard stand by Summer Dream Editions (photo by author)

Objects of the tourist gaze have been categorized by Urry (2002) in terms of romantic/collective, historical/modern and authentic/inauthentic. Following consideration of this categorization, contemporary Greece is self-represented in tourist postcards mainly as a historic and authentic destination of the romantic gaze, which emphasizes upon solitude and a personal, semi-spiritual relationship with the object of the gaze (Urry, 2002:150). These three concepts – historicity, authenticity, romanticism – coexist in several postcards, although there are also representations of the country as a destination of the collective tourist gaze, which entail cheerfulness and movement and promise enjoyments of the spirit and intense pleasures of the body.

Image 2: Tradition, romanticism and insularity are in the core of the Greek summer myth. Part of a postcard stand by Summer Dream Editions (photo by author)

In detail, Greece's representations as the 'birthplace of European culture' through the selection of monuments and archaeological sites covering all known eras of Greek history – with the Classical Antiquity as centrepiece, the spirit of which is transcended in a supernatural tone by the Acropolis' monuments – promote the country's historicity and provide a sense of continuity in time. It has also to be noted that via postcards, Venetian monuments or monuments of the English Occupation are positively and particularly romantically appraised, considering obviously that they 'reflect a common European past' contrary to the Turkish ones which are set aside or are absent, possibly being 'the symbols of a past misfortune' (Herzfeld, 1991:232–3). Taplin (1992:22) argues that Greece is in a way the homeland of every child of western civilization, while quoting the psychologist James Hillman who points out that 'we return in Greece so that we discover again the archetypes of our mind and also our civilization'. As depicted in a great number of postcards, Greece is a destination in which the tourist journeys backward in time to the Classic Era of the fifth and fourth century BC and more specifically the 'Golden Era of Pericles' (460–429) – the historic era with the greatest charm not only for tourists, but also for Greeks themselves. The built attractions of relics and ruins are the primary focus for the tourist gaze. Through visual representations, which highlight remaining structures and monuments, the visitor expects to find a historic destination, or even a land of myths; to uncover its mystical secrets and to marvel at the wonders of its glorious ancient past (see for the 'Myth of the Unchanged' as analysed by Echtner and Prasad, 2003:669).

Representations of insularity as the 'core of Greek spirit' (Elytis 2000), through separate aspects of insular living (simultaneous sensation of the limited and the infinite, privileged way of natural living, ideal shelter and a sense of utopia) in combination with sunset as an integral part of the Greek summer myth, showcase the country as a destination for those seeking romanticism. Postcards, which almost identify insularity with folk tradition – often 'staged' – without of course missing images of traditional continental Greece, highlight as symbols of the folk culture the local architecture and the presence of elderly locals, marking Greece as a 'pre-industrial' society, an 'authentic' destination where life goes by lazily and carefree. In particular, postcards with white chapels and blue cupolas or Meteora and Mount Athos showcase, on the one hand, the significance of Orthodoxy for Greek society and, on the other hand, the unbreakable connection between the Greek orthodox tradition and the development of architecture and its harmonization with space.

Despite the fact that Greece is a country with a long food and wine tradition, numerous vineyards and related tourism storytelling (Bonarou, Tsartas and Sarantakou, 2019) this aspect is not illustrated in contemporary postcards. With regard to postcards with nymphs and satyrs – ancient, as well as modern ones – they promote ancient Greece as an 'erotic heaven', while at the same time attempting to retain, with a humorous attitude, the myth of 'sexual liberation' of tourists visiting Greece, including clear references – often sometimes self-sarcastic – to the now declining 'philosophy' of the 'Greek kamaki' (Greek for harpoon) which peaked in Greek tourism during the 1960s–1980s.

The simultaneous release of various postcards addresses both the romantic and the collective tourist gaze. In addition, the co-appearance of both 'Apollonian' and 'Dionysian' representations mark Greece as a destination contradictory at first, but governed by a deeper unity. The Apollonian spirit (logic, spirituality, mental approach of the world) is embodied in postcards which praise harmony, the glory and all supernatural aspects of classic monuments, while the Dionysian spirit (body, instincts, passion, pleasure) is very much present in pictures related to the love life in Ancient Greece. If it is true that those visiting the country and tourists in general seek pleasure in its various aspects: esthetical, emotional, bodily, spiritual, sensual and sexual (Wickens, 1994; 2002; Ma, et al., 2017), then Greece seems to be the 'ideal' vacation spot. The country is considered a mature destination of mass sun tourism. However, in the tourist postcards representations, it looks more like a country in the first stages of tourist exploration or in the development phase of its life circle (Butler, 1980). As a result, the negative effects entailed by 'cheap' mass sun tourism (the '4s' kind), such as downgraded environment, improvident building activity, inappropriate tourist behaviour, and so forth, are silenced. A complete appraisal of Greece's representations via contemporary tourist postcards leads to the conclusion that the photographs selected – and always digitally processed, especially with regard to colours – place the destination in another era; in an era where there's always summer, uniting dream space with history, legend, culture, nature and tradition.

Image 3: Infographic on the 'poetics of travel' in Greece through contemporary tourist postcards (by author)

As Coleman and Crang (2002: 3) characteristically insist, the truly authentic, unspoiled location is always displaced in space or time – it is spatially placed in the next hill or has temporally lasted a generation ago.

Human presence rarely participates in the formation of 'age-old images' except for cases in which people are considered as a decorative element of the pastoral landscape. The representation of monuments and archaeological sites without people seems to imply a 'rupture' between modern Greeks and their glorious past. This suggests a form of decline for the modern country, rendered even more intense with the lack of contemporary urban life or European orientation images. The Greek culture is de-historicized and a poetics of timelessness and steadiness is dominant (Lalioti, 2009), while at the same time Greek nature frames the past monuments and emphasizes mysticism, harmony and the timelessness of the destination. It is a nature of high esthetical value, experienced mostly spiritually and not as suitable for pleasures of the body, even when the main theme of the postcard is not a glorious monument, but an endless, unspoiled shore. On the other side, of course, the absence of people does not seem to create a sense of discontent to the viewer, given that Greece has been established, already from the period of the first excursionists, as a country of the romantic view, encouraging meditation and the creation of a semi-spiritual relation with the viewed objects. A trip to the country-precursor of Europe is filled with a sense of nostalgia and melancholy, being a sort of 'holy' trip: tourists will visit it more as 'pilgrims', to invest themselves in the worshiping of the 'holy relics' (monuments, locations and people) and to experience a supernatural, invigorating experience. Images of mass tourism, night life and contemporary urban life would then constitute a degeneration of the magic of the moment or even some sort of 'sacrilege'.

The calling to the authentic and romantic Greece is made via representations of insularity and tradition, signalling the country as a picturesque location, as a pre-modern, 'museum-like' society and sometimes as an uninhabited land with notions of orientalism (Said, 2003). Even boats in harbours, used by local fishermen on a daily basis, are displayed as 'works of art', without any functional significance. The unspoiled beauty of the natural and man-made environment is promoted via bright or idyllic colours, and the almost 'vacant' space is friendly, accessible and available to become a leisure paradise for tourists (see, also, representations of Ireland in O'Connor and Cronin 1993). The 'couleur locale', the local colour of Greece, is now dominant not only in the landscape of Athens, where the first excursionists sought it among antiquity, but also on Greek islands, where the traditional, almost 'primitive' state of the areas offers visitors the opportunity to become more identified with the alternative, more natural way of life (Chtouris, 1995: 52).

The tourist representations of contemporary postcards call tourists to become excursionists and endorse more the discourse of education and spiritual cultivation and less the discourse of entertainment and game. Foreigners are invited to admire on the one hand the remnants of a glorious past and on the other hand to experience the simplicity and authenticity of the Greek islands, without, of course, missing suggestions for sensual pleasures of the body. Feelings of nostalgia and romanticism, which had motivated the first journeys to Greece make a 'comeback' via the artistic display of themes in order for the country to acquire, once more in the minds of these contemporary travellers, the image of a mythical location – an ideal. These are the images that Greece tries to sell to tourists in the form of postcards as representative of their trip, so that they can either send them to relatives and friends (advertising the country) or retain them as souvenirs; as memories they wish to remember, and are worth remembering, years later.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Visual representations as the mechanism of tourism discourses are considered of vital importance to the constructed realities of tourism, constituting a 'poetics of travel'. The aim of this paper has been to explore how photographic tourist postcards act as power-laden narratives of cultural representations and national identities by communicating particular myths about the country destination, in particular Greece. Through tourist postcards, Greece is self-represented mainly as a historic, authentic and romantic tourism destination, while four dominant discourses are discussed about the country: a) Greece as the birthplace of European civilization; b) Insularity as the quintessence of the Greek Spirit; c) Tradition as an integral part of the Greek identity; and d) Greece as a 'sea, sun, sand and sex' (4s) tourism destination. The signification of the 'poetic message' exists only when we assemble the elements and examine them in correlation with each other (Prud'homme and Légaré, 2006). Given that the tourist gaze is constructed through signs, the portrait of contemporary Greece in the postcard imagery is a mixture of sandy beaches, blue skies and red sunsets, romantic island scenery, ancient and … modern Nymphs and Satyrs and, of course, classical monuments –with the symbol of the Parthenon on the Athenian Acropolis in prominent place.

The Greece of ratio, measure and harmony on the spiritual and socio-political levels, has been the 'country – precursor' that the Europe of Humanism and Rationalism needed, the Europe of the rising urban class and the forming of national countries, the Europe of developing technology and colonialism (Andreadis, 1989; Broeder and Gkogka, 2020). Europe interpreted Ancient Greece according to its needs to create a common western identity and established contact with the combination of 'Greek culture – Greek nature' as a baptism in the culture of antiquity for the young noble men which made the Grand Tour during the eighteenth century. Until the 1950s, tourism in Greece was mostly 'cultural' as travellers continued, in some way, the tradition of the first excursionists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. During the last two – three decades, however, the spirit of mass consumption, as cultivated and expressed in the framework of mass tourism, contradicts the 'impenetrable uniqueness' of monuments, which are rendered prey to the 'tourist gaze', converting them from privileged locations to ingredients of a routine itinerary (Galani-Moutafi, 2002; Lyons and Branston, 2006; De Ridder and Vanneste, 2020).

The fact that Greece becomes understood as a whole in the form of a 'museum-like' location, however, requires special attention. The exaggerated language of the tourist discourse in Greek postcards, directed by the dominant discourse of the West about the country, predisposes tourists for a 'total reformation' of their self, but limits Greece in an eternal present, displaying it as unchanged in time, removing any right for development (Bruner 1991; Galani-Moutafi, 1995). In general, the formulated 'poetics of travel', through the postcards' discourse, expands two contradictory worlds: the West and the (albeit familiar) East, Europe and Greece (on the borderland of Europe), the present and the past, the modern and the traditional, the universal and the local. Greece is an endless open museum and postcards function as the museum showcases via which tourists can admire the 'authentic' and 'unchanged' by time exhibits: history, nature and tradition. The question is to what extend do the tourists acknowledge the symbolic values of these (visual) 'exhibits'? Production and consumption of tourist images, including postcards, have always been involved in a mutually sustaining relationship. As it has been highlighted through the present paper, postcards depicting the 'authentically different' seeking to employ on tourists' expectations, facilitate at the same time the reinforcement of perceptions about the destination, lending weight to photographs and stereotypes that have already been established and are still circulated through books, magazines, brochures and other mass & social media (Markwick, 2001, Chatzigeorgiou and Christou, 2019; 2020). Since the study has been qualitative in nature and focused on one particular country destination - namely Greece, attempts to generalize in the context of other tourist countries is problematic; however, the findings and related discussion and conclusions can be generalized and used in the context of the ongoing process of branding Greece.

Any given image carries multiple and multi-layered meanings, that require systematic unravelling and unpacking for the several messages to be communicated and 'revealed' (Markwick, 2001; Christou and Kassianidis, 2005; Milman, 2012). Within the present paper, it has been possible to indicate dominant illustrations of contested meaning in Greek postcard imagery related to the concept of Greekness and the country's 'tourist myth'. By gaining insight in the country's visual representations through the semiotics of 4,200 picture postcards issued between 2003 and 2019, valuable knowledge is created for Public Authorities, Destination Management Organizations (DMO's), as well as individual tourism enterprises and other related stakeholders interested in the country's image and branding. Undoubtedly, however, primary research focused on individual tourists' responses, regarding the reasons they prefer and buy/send postcards with specific themes, would contribute vitally to the dialogue on the construction of meanings of postcard imagery and of the tourist image of Greece. In addition, it would be interesting to compare contemporary Greek tourist postcards with contemporary postcards of other destinations, especially Mediterranean countries.

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The influence of eWOM credibility on visit intention: An integrative moderated mediation model

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Abstract:
Purpose: *This study examines the process by which eWOM susceptibility moderates the strength of indirect links between the perceived credibility of eWOM messages and the intention to visit a destination via the destination image and the perceived usefulness of these messages.*
Methods: *The research hypotheses were tested according to structural equations modelling and Hayes procedure, which made it possible to study simultaneously and rigorously the mediating and moderating effects, and to have a clear view on the model fittness.*
Results: *The results indicate that the mediation links of the destination image on the relationship between perceived credibility and intention to visit a destination, are moderated by the susceptibility of the eWOM (the comments generated by Internet users or the sharing of tourists' experiences on Facebook). This study also indicates that the relationship between the perceived credibility of the eWOM and the intentions to visit a destination is mediated by the usefulness of the eWOM messages and the destination image.*
Implications: *Tourism practitioners seeking to attract tourists can use the eWOM as a communication technique for product and/or service recommendations. Given the powerful influence of the eWOM, it should not be ignored or misused, but managed to improve the effectiveness of marketing strategies in hospitality, tourism and travel.*

Keywords: *perceived credibility, eWOM susceptibility, perceived usefulness, intention to visit, destination image*

JEL Classification: *L83, M31, Z33*

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1 INTRODUCTION

Social networks have brought about a major change in marketing concepts by integrating the different virtual communities, thanks to the exchange of information and the individualization of offers and experiences, customers become actors working freely in this new scene. This exchange of information available on different social media platforms influences consumer decision-making, which has made eWOM a topic of great interest in recent years (Suh, 2017, Pandey & Sahu 2020, Anubha & Shome, 2020).
eWOM is defined as content (positive or negative) delivered by consumers through electronic channels such as social networks, blogs and forums, etc., where people can interact with each other to comment on places (destinations), experiences, products and services (Brown et al; 2007).
eWOM is considered one of the most influential sources of information for consumers: for many researchers eWOM is one of the most important marketing tools (Anubha & Shome, 2020; Suh, 2017).

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Tourism research has analysed the role of online resources, including eWOM, in providing travel information (Ghidouche & Nechoud 2018; Pandey & Sahu 2020). Therefore, few researchs has been done on the relationship between perceived usefulness and choice of a destination (Kim, Kim & Shin, 2009) or the moderating role of eWOM susceptibility in the relationship between the perceived credibility of an eWOM message and a tourist's behavioural intent (Mourali, Laroche & Pons, 2005; Misirlis et al., 2018). Jalilvand & Heidari (2017) showed on 678 members of the TripAdvisor.com platform that eWOM has a stronger impact on attitude and travel intention than on WOM. Similarly, on the basis of 5,090 reviews online on yelp.com, Liu & Park (2015) revealed that the majority of customers use eWOM to collect information on travel products (destinations, hotels, etc.) in order to improve purchasing decisions. Likewise, Nhon & Khuong (2015), after collecting responses from 328 Vietnamese consumers, concluded that eWOM influences travel decisions. Ladhari & Michaud (2015) found that eWOM in the form of comments generated in virtual communities on Facebook influenced the hotel reservation intentions of 800 Canadian students. A study by Abubakar & Ilkan (2016) found that eWOM has a positive impact on the travel intention of 216 medical tourists to Cyprus. After interviewing 241 tourists who visited Iran, Doosti et al. (2016) found that eWOM has a positive, direct and significant influence on their visit intention.

Mehmood et al., (2018) found that eWOM has a significant impact on the attitudes and travel intentions of 280 domestic and international tourists to China. Likewise, Dissanayake & Malkanthie (2018), after collecting responses from 384 travelers visiting Sri Lanka, found that online reviews had a positive and significant impact on their intentions to book hotels.

Furthermore, according to the literature, few studies have yet analysed the combined effects of the perceived credibility of eWOM messages, the perceived usefulness of the eWOM, the image of a destination, the susceptibility to eWOM, on the intention to visit a destination.Thus, this study provides an integrative model by investagting the moderating effect of eWOM susceptibility between perceived credibility of eWOM messages (sharing experiences, online opinions, etc.) and the tourists' behavioural intention by (mediating effect), both the perceived usefulness of the eWOM message and the image of the city of Taghit.

2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

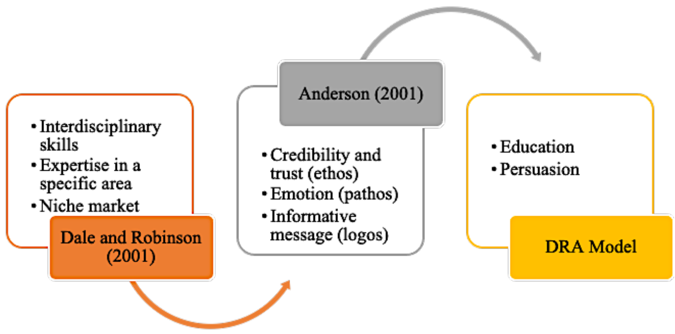
2.1 Perceived credibility of the source and intention to visit a destination

The credibility of the source has been extensively researched in the offline context (Walters & Mair, 2012) and increasingly in an online context (Ismagilova et al., 2020). Based on the work Seraphin et al., (2017), credibility is defined as individuals' perception of recommendations and opinions as credible, true and based on experience or facts. Thus, if the source is perceived as credible, the receiver believes the messages provided by that source (Grewal, Gotlieb & Howard,1994). Thus, consumers prefer eWOM messages because they provide complete and credible information that is not generally provided by brands on public platforms (Verma & Dewani, 2020).

In the context of tourism, the behavioral intentions of tourists include the intention to visit a destination which is defined as the willingness to visit the destination (Sigala & Christou, 2002, 2006; Chen, Shang & Li, 2014), and the intention to recommend a destination. The decision to visit a destination is interpreted as a rational calculation of the benefits of a set of alternative destinations, which have been derived from external sources of information, including websites, travellers' blogs and social networks (Chen *et al*., 2014).

Previous research has shown the link between the perceived credibility of information and consumer purchase intentions (Qiang et al., 2018; Daowd et al., 2020). Seraphin et al., (2018) not only corroborated this point of view, but also stated that for a message to be convincing and motivate the consumer to buy or visit, it must be credible (ethos), appeal to emotions (pathos) and finally informative (logos). The combination of these three factors (see Figure 1) has the potential not only to convince, but also to educate the potential visitor, which is extremely important because a potential visitor who has an intrinsic knowledge of the destination is less averse to external disruptive elements (political conflicts, natural disasters, terrorist attacks, etc.) that could alter his perception of the destination (Seraphin *et al*., 2018).

Figure 1: Dale Robinson and Anderson model (DRA)



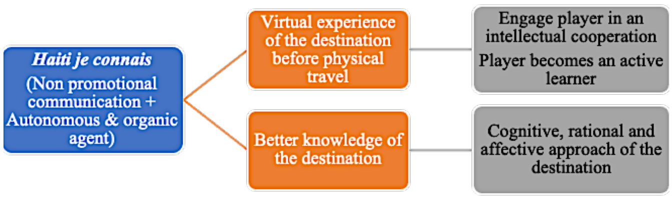
Source: Seraphin et al., 2018

The application of the DRA model is particularly important for destinations with a negative image (Seraphin *et al*., 2018). Seraphin *et al*. (2014), based on Haiti case, a tourist destination that has suffered from its negative image, explain that the educational aspect (which can be done through online educational tools) is important because it helps to develop an emotional link between the destination and the visitor (see Figure 2).

The study by Anubha and Shome, (2020) found that the perceived credibility of eWOM posted on social media influences the behavioral intentions of Indian urban millennials. These results join the results of previous studies (Doosti et al., 2016; Teng et al., 2017) which have shown that customers' perception of the credibility of reviews significantly influences their behavioral intentions. The first hypothesis is therefore proposed as follows:

H1: The perceived credibility of eWOM messages positively influences the intention to visit a destination.

Figure 2: Impact of an online educational tool (Visual Online Learning Material)



2.2 Mediating effect of perceived usefulness

Davis (1989) defined perceived usefulness as the degree to which the individual believes that using a particular system improves the performance of his task. Moreover, according to Deutsch & Gerrard (1955), when a message contains credible arguments, the receiver is more likely to consider the comments useful. On the other hand, receivers are less enthusiastic about adopting a message that lacks credible arguments.

Gefen, Karahanna & Straub (2003) reported that perceived usefulness has a significant effect on behavioural intent, as messages that appear useful lead to purchase intention. Venkatesh Morris, Davis, & Davis (2003) work in this direction shows that perceived usefulness affects the intention to purchase at a tourist site. Similarly, Kim *et al.* (2009) find that the perceived usefulness of this type of website positively affects the intention to use it again.

However, research on the perceived usefulness of online platforms and eWOM messages in making a destination decision is scarce (Kim *et al*., 2009). For this purpose, the work of Matute, Polo-Redondo & Utrillas (2016) analysed the mediating role of the perceived usefulness of eWOM messages in the relationship between the credibility and quality of eWOM messages and the intention to buy online. Ghidouche and Nechoud (2018) examined the indirect and direct effects of the perceived credibility of eWOM messages (comments generated by Internet users or sharing of tourists' experiences on Facebook) on the city of Taghit on the intention of Algerians tourists to visit this destination, through the perceived usefulness of these messages. Researchers found no studies of online travel reviews conducted in the Algerian tourism context to test the impact of mediated perceived usefulness. After collecting responses from 232 Algerian tourists, this study found that perceived usefulness mediates the relationship between the perceived credibility of eWOM messages on Facebook on a destination and the intention to visit the destination. It is therefore appropriate to focus on the mediating role of the perceived usefulness of eWOM messages, as a source of information on the intention to visit a destination. As a result, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H2: Perceived usefulness mediates the relationship between the perceived credibility of eWOM messages and the intention to visit the destination.

2.3 Mediating effect of destination image

Destination selection is defined as the process of choosing a destination from alternative competitors (Crompton, 1992). Cognitive and emotional processes involve the selection of destinations for a final choice that best meets the needs of a tourist (Crompton, 1992).

In addition to previous studies on the credibility and image of the destination, the tourism destination-branding model created by Veasna, Wu. & Huang (2013) suggested that the perceived credibility of the source positively influences the image of the destination. Their study pays little attention to virtual communities on social networks.

The conceptual model proposed in this study also uses elements from the research models of Ponte et al., (2015) and Suh (2017), which revealed the cause-and-effect relationship between perceived credibility, destination image and tourists' behavioural intentions.

Overall, previous studies have shown that the destination image affects the intentions of tourists to visit a destination (Nechoud & Ghidouche 2017; Ghidouche & Nechoud, 2018). In addition, Bruce, Foutz, & Kolsarici (2012) and Tham, Croy & Mair (2013) observed that tourists who have positive images of a destination are more likely to recommend the destination to others.

Tourist behavioural intentions have been studied to assess the impact of a credible destination image on tourists' decision making when planning their trip (Ponte *et al.*, 2015). The study of Ponte *et al.* (2015) reveals that the behavioural intentions of tourists depend on the perceived credibility of online content.

Although the literature on destination image has been discussed for four decades, there are only a very limited number of studies that have addressed the mediating role of destination image (Baloglu, 2000; Qu *et al.*, 2011; Nechoud & Ghidouche 2017; Ghidouche & Nechoud, 2018). The mediating effect of destination image thus remains largely unexplored in the field of tourism.

Baloglu (2000) indicated that there is a mediation effect of the destination's image on the relationship between the sources of information and the intention to visit, while Qu *et al.* (2011) found that destination image was a mediator between brand associations and future tourist behaviour. However, few studies have extended theoretical attention to the mediating effects of destination image in the relationship between perceived credibility and visit intention (Ghidouche & Nechoud, 2018).

Therefore, we predict that the perceived credibility of eWOM messages about a destination can improve tourists' perceptions of the destination's image, which in turn can have a positive impact on the likelihood of visiting the destination. Based on these justifications, the following hypothesis is proposed:

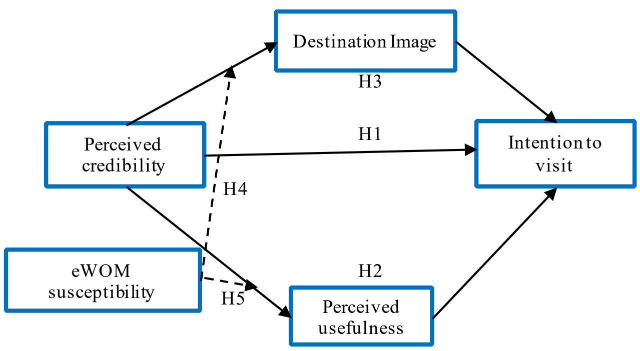
H3: The image of the destination mediates the relationship between the perceived credibility of the eWOM and intentions to visit the destination.

2.4 Mediating effect of eWOM susceptibility

Two types of influences have been identified in the literature: normative and informational (Bearden, Netemeyer & Teel, 1989). Normative influences refer to the tendency to conform to the expectations of others (Burnkrant & Cousineau, 1975). Informational influences refer to the tendency to accept information from other consumers and to be guided in the search for information and therefore in the decision to choose.

Individuals susceptible to informational influences tend to actively seek the opinions of other consumers before making decisions. eWOM messages are then perceived as an important source of information for their purchasing decision (Mavragani *et al*., 2019). From this perspective, sensitivity to interpersonal (informational) influences influences the purchasing decision. (Mourali *et al*., 2005).
The objective of this research is to explore the moderating of indirect effect of eWOM susceptibility on the relationship between the perceived credibility and intention visit a destination by (mediating effect), both the perceived usefulness of the eWOM message and the image of destination.
The direct impact of eWOM and on the behavioral intention have been demonstrated by previous studies (Mehmood et al., 2018; Malkanthie, 2018). Also, studies have statistically shown that eWOM is a predictor of the attitud and travel intention (Jalilvand & Heidari, 2017). But to the best of our knowledge and as far as the literature is concerned, no study has so far explored the moderating effect of eWOM susceptibility on the relationship between perceived credibility and the intention to visit a destination. Hence, it is the unique expected contributions of this current study which will enrich the marketin of destination and tourism literature.
For Bearden *et al*. (1989), susceptibility to interpersonal sources represents "*the willingness to comply with the expectations of others in terms of purchasing decisions and/or the tendency to learn more about products and services through the observation of others or to ask others for information*". The susceptibility makes consumers prefer interpersonal sources during the information retrieval process, which suggests that they will be influenced by eWOM messages because they consider them credible (Mourali *et al*., 2005; Halkiopoulos *et al*., 2020). Thus, the following hypotheses were proposed:
H4: eWOM susceptibility moderates the strength of indirect links between the perceived credibility of messages and the intention to visit a destination via the destination image.
H5: eWOM susceptibility moderates the strength of indirect links between the perceived credibility of messages and the intention to visit a destination via perceived usefulness.

Figure 3: The research model



3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The city of Taghit or "the enchantress" is one of the most beautiful oases in the entire Algerian Sahara. It draws a natural border with the great western erg (more than 600 km of dunes). Taghit is located at more than 90 Km in the South-East of Béchar (main wilaya of south-western Algeria). A very ancient settlement area, it is known for its engravings and rock paintings dating from the Neolithic period.

3.1 Sample and data collection

A survey was conducted using a questionnaire to test the proposed research model (see Figure 3). University students were considered appropriate for this survey due to the latest statistics showing that people between 18 and 34 years of age constitute the majority of social media users in Algeria (https://digitalreport.wearesocial.com). A preliminary question served to exclude respondents who had visited Taghit for leisure purposes in the past. The questionnaires were administered over a two-month period from November to December 2018.
A total of 428 students attending Algerian universities participated in the study. The sample size is considered satisfactory based on the recommendations of Sekaran & Bougie (2016) and Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson (2010). Although based on empirical sampling, the respondents provided sufficient diversity. Table 1 presents the characteristics of the surveyed population.

3.2 Survey instrument

The questionnaire was developed based on a comprehensive review of previous literature. The survey instrument was originally developed in English and then translated into Arabic and French by native speakers. The back-translation was conducted to ensure that the meanings and intent of the original instrument were retained. Likert scales ranging from 1 to 5 (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree) were used to measure the variables of the proposed model. A set of items borrowed from the literature review and adapted to this study were also included. A pre-test was done to test for the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. Based on this, minor changes have been made.
The questionnaire consisted of six sections: perceived credibility, perceived usefulness, image of destination, intention to visit, eWOM susceptibility and socio-demographic information. For the perceived credibility we employed five items from Flanagin & Metzger (2000). The perceived usefulness was measured with Six items adapted from previous studies on the perceived usefulness of information technology acceptance (ITA) (McKnight & Kacmar, 2007; Davis, 1989). Based on Goodstein (1993) and Qu *et al*. (2011), five items were used to measure attitudinal objectives to interpret the perceptions and impressions generated by the image of the destination.
Four items were used to measure tourist intention to visit a destination. This scale derives from well-established studies on behavioural intention (Moon & Kim, 2001; Venkatesh *et al*., 2003). Six items were used to measure the eWOM susceptibility. These items were adapted from extant literature. The scale proposed by Jalilvand & Samiei (2012) and modified for the tourism context, was used in the current study. Finally, socio-demographic information included questions on gender, region of origin and university cycle.

3.3 Data analysis and procedure

Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure that there were no missing values and that there were no severe non-standard problems. A step-by-step analysis process was conducted to test these hypotheses. The first step was to examine the general characteristics of the variables and refine the items of the constructs by an exploratory factorial analysis (EFA) conducted on SPSS 24. The second step was a confirmatory factorial analysis (CFA) on AMOS 24. In this second step, the measurement model was validated using the new latent variables.

The structural equations modelling (SEM) is used to examine the measurement model and the structural model. Finally, in the third step, the hypotheses were tested by examining the path coefficients and their significance levels using bootstrapping.

The analysis of indirect effects (mediation analyses) was performed in AMOS 24, according to the bootstrap procedure (5,000 resamples, 95% confidence interval) based on the recommendations of Cheung & Lau (2008). The proposed partial mediation model (M1, direct and indirect effects) was compared with a model with only direct effects (M2, no indirect effects) and a total mediation model (M3, no direct effects) (Diallo, Diop-Sall, Djelassi & Godefroit-Winkel, 2018) to better understand the influence of mediator variables. For the specific mediating effects test (individual indirect effects), the Monte Carlo method was used to assess the mediation effect (Diallo *et al*., 2018); this method can be performed using an online tool, available at http://www.quantpsy.org/medmc/medmc.htm.

Several scholars recommend the use of the Hayes method (a macro for mediation, moderation, and moderated mediation models for SPSS) (Hayes, 2015). The authors justified their choice by all the comparative advantages offered by this method. Essentially, it is the possibility of simultaneously testing indirect and conditional effects that can be obtained by this method and to produce reliable and robust results (Ribeiro Woosnam,Pinto & Silva, 2017). Also, the use of the boostrap procedure allows to generate more accurate results (Ribeiro *et al*., 2017).

4 RESULTS

4.1 COVID-19 in Italy: A chaos theory perspective

Of the 428 responses analysed, over 58% were female and over 63% of the surveyed population resided in the North. In terms of research objectives, students from the different cycles were targeted, with a majority of master's students, representing over 68% of the surveyed population.

Table 1: Descriptive summary of sample

	N	%
Gender		
Male	176	41.11
Female	252	58.89
University cycle		
Bachelor Student	120	28.04
Master Student	292	68.22
PhD Student	16	3.74

4.1 Validation of survey instrument

First, the proposed measurement model was tested to confirm the validity of the methods used. For this purpose, an EFA was applied using the principal component analysis as an extraction method, with a Varimax rotation. All the measurement scales used were one-dimensional and reliable. The values of Cronbach's alphas were all above (α>0.7), indicating good internal consistency for each construct (Table 2).

This exploratory analysis made it possible to purge the list of initial items. Items were selected based on a sufficient correlation to their factor, without being significantly related to other factors and with satisfactory communities. In addition, during the EFA, the initial measurement scale of the variables "eWOM susceptibility", "destination image" and "perceived usefulness" were adjusted by 1 item each and eliminated because of their very low factor contribution (less than .50).

A CFA was performed on the factor structure obtained in the previous analysis phase. Table 2 shows that the results are acceptable in terms of convergent and discriminant validity.

Table 2: Validity of measurement instrument

Factors (Alpha Cronbach)	Items	Mean	AVE	CR
Perceived usefulness PU (.842)	Util_1	3.82	.527	.847
	Util_2	3.63		
	Util_3	3.81		
	Util_5	3.62		
	Util_6	3.51		
eWOM susceptibility ES (.795)	eWOM_1	3.99	.503	.800
	eWOM_2	3.99		
	eWOM_3	3.83		
	eWOM_6	3.76		
Destination image DI (.826)	Image_1	4.28	.547	.828
	Image_2	4.35		
	Image_3	4.21		
	Image_5	4.10		
Perceived credibility PC (.903)	Cred_1	3.55	.663	.907
	Cred_2	3.39		
	Cred_3	3.53		
	Cred_4	3.42		
	Cred_5	3.37		
Intention to visit IV (.812)	Intent_1	4.33	.529	.817
	Intent_2	3,88		
	Intent_3	4,04		
	Intent_4	3,88		

The convergent validity, evaluated by the AVE (Average Variance Extracted) calculation, corresponds to the explained variance of the constructs. A first CFA identified that the variable "eWOM susceptibility" indicated a value below the suggested threshold of .50 (Hair *et al*., 2010). Therefore, this scale was adjusted to reflect an item with the lowest factor contribution. All the new measurements obtained in the second analysis exceed the minimum threshold of.50, which allowed to confirm that the convergent validity of each construct in the proposed model is acceptable. Convergent validity is also verified if the CR value (Composite

Reliability) >.70 (Hair *et al.*, 2010). This is the case for all the proposed constructs.
Discriminat validity is obtained when the square root of the AVE is greater than the variance shared between latent constructs (measured by the correlations between constructs). The results indicated a satisfactory discriminant validity of the constructs (Table 3).

Table 3: Correlation matrix, discriminant validity of constructs

Latent constructs	ES	DI	PC	PU	IV
ES	**.814**				
DI	.245***	**.739**			
PC	.416***	.338***	**.726**		
PU	.348***	.418***	.468***	**.727**	
IV	.136*	.254***	.289***	.379***	**.710**

4.2 Measurement model

The adjustment of the overall model was addressed by three families of indices. Absolute indices that examine the level of correspondence between the proposed model and the observed data. Incremental indices that compare the model under test to a basic restrictive model. Finally, parsimony indices that determine the number of parameters to be estimated to achieve the specific fit level. The overall measurement model was estimated using the recommendations of Hair *et al*., (2010). The obtained indices indicate a correct fit of the model to the data (Table 4).

4.3 Structural model

The following adjustment indices were obtained: χ^2/df = 2.127, p <.000, CFI =.948, SRMR =.052, RMSEA =.051 and GFI =.920. The proposed conceptual model fits the data correctly. Direct effects were assessed based on the value of the t-test and the p-value associated with each path. Table 4 indicates that these direct effects are positive and relevant.

Table 4: Adjustment indices of the search model

Index	χ^2/df	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA	GFI	AGFI	IFI	NFI
Measurement model	2.069	.951	.043	.050	.922	.901	.951	.910
Structural mode	2.127	.948	.052	.051	.920	.898	.948	.907
Acceptance threshold	<3	> .900	< .080	< .080	> .900	>.800	> .900	> .900

CFI = Comparative Fit Index, SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Residual, RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation, GFI = Goodness-of-fit Index, AGFI = Adjusted Goodness-of-fit Index, IFI = Incremental Fit Index, NFI = Normed Fit Index.

4.4 Hypothesis testing: Indirect mediation effect

The proposed partial mediation model (M1, direct and indirect effects) was compared with a model with only direct effects (M2, no indirect effects) and a total mediation model (M3, no direct effects) to better understand the influence of mediator variables.
The adjustment indices obtained for the M2 and M3 models were less satisfactory compared to the M1 partial mediation model for the case of the two mediators (Image and Utility). In addition, the difference test at χ^2 ($\Delta\chi^2$) showed a significant difference between the models in terms of fit. For the mediator variable "image", the χ^2 difference test between model M1 (χ^2= 425.723, df = 200) and M3 (χ^2= 432.723, df = 201) was significant ($\Delta\chi^2$ (Δdf=1) = 7; p<.001).

Table 5: Comparison of mediation models

Index	χ^2/df	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA	GFI	AGFI	IFI	NFI
M1	2.127	.948	.052	.051	.920	.898	.948	.907
DI								
M2	2.279	.940	.082	.055	.914	.894	.940	.900
M3	2.153	.946	.055	.052	.918	.897	.945	.905
PU								
M2	2.484	.931	.104	.059	.907	.884	.931	.890
M3	2.194	.944	.057	.053	.912	.890	.945	.903

Similarly, the difference between models M1 and M2 (χ^2= 460.283, df = 202) was significant ($\Delta\chi^2$ (Δdf=2) = 34.56, p<.001). However, the model of partial mediation of the destination image on the relationship between the perceived credibility of the eWOM and the intention to visit the destination presented the best fit.

Table 6: Assumptions testing of direct and indirect effects

	Hypothesized Path	B	Results
H1	PC → IV	.15**	Supported
H2	**PC → PU → IV**	**.11***[.39 x .27]**	**Supported**
H2a	PC → PU	.39***	Supported
H2b	PU → IV	.27****	Supported
H3	**PC → DI → IV**	**.05***[.22 x .24]**	**Supported**
H3a	PC → DI	.22***	Supported
H3b	DI → IV	.24***	Supported

** p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001*

The values of the confidence intervals (H2: [.029, .079]; H3: [.069,.145]) do not include the value 0. The hypothesis was validated on the indirect effects (Cheung and Lau, 2008).
Table 7 shows that the perceived credibility of the eWOM has a significant positive effect on the intention to visit a tourist destination perceived usefulness (β=.15; p <.01), thus validating the H1 hypothesis. In addition, the link between perceived credibility and perceived usefulness is significant (β=.39; p <.001). Similarly, the latter positively influences the intention to visit a touristic destination (β=.27; p <.001). The product of these two effects is significant (β=.11; p < 0.001), which allows the H2 hypothesis to be validated.
Analyses also showed that the perceived credibility of the eWOM has a significant positive influence on the destination image (β=.22; p <.001) which in turn has a positive influence on the intention to visit a destination (β=.14; p <.001). The product of these direct effects is significant (β=.05, p<.01), thus validating the H3 hypothesis.

4.5 Hypothesis testing: Conditional indirect effect

To test the hypothesis using Hayes procedure, the recommendations proposed by Hayes (2015) were respected. Based on the conceptual model proposed in this study, "model 8" was selected from the "templates.pdf" documents and the role of each of the variables in the model was specified. Table 7 summarises the results generated by the macro-Process.

Table 7: Indirect conditional effects test

Variables	Mediator variable M1 DI			Mediator variable M2 PU		
	β (SE)	t	95%CI	β (SE)	t	95%CI
X: PC	.182*** (.053)	3.428	[.078, .287]	.351*** (.051)	6.860	[.250, .451]
W: ES	.212*** (.056)	3.759	[.101, .323]	.239*** (.054)	4.402	[.132, .346]
XxW (Int 1)	-.164** (.059)	-2.761	[-.281, -,047]	-.057 (.057)	-.992	[-.169, .056]
	R^2= .09, F(3, 424) = 14.064, p<.001			R^2= .16, F(3, 424) = 26.505, p<.001		

Variables	Dependent variable Y IV		
	β (SE)	t	95%CI
X: PC	.113** (.036)	3.237	[.045, .182]
W: ES	.110** (.037)	2.986	[.038, .182]
XxW (Int 1)	-.067* (.031)	2.225	[-.132,-.008]
M1: DI	.172*** (.032)	5.435	[.110, .239]
M2: PU	.181*** (.033)	5.482	[.116, .246]
	R^2= .26, F(5, 422) = 29.977, p<.001		

Index for moderate mediation	Index	SE (boot)	95% CI
Mediator : DI	-.283	.016	[-.066, -.002]
Mediator : PU	-.010	.014	[-. 043, .014]

SE = Standard Error; CI = Confidence Interval (95% confidence interval for conditional direct and indirect effect using bootstrap); boot = Bootstrap. **p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001.*

The "moderate mediation index" section provides information on the significance of the moderate mediation tests. The conditional indirect effect model is significant for the mediating variable "Destination Image", since the confidence interval excludes zero [-.066, .002]. The H4 hypothesis is therefore validated. However, for the mediating variable "Perceived Usefulness", the conditional indirect effect is not significant since the confidence interval [-.043, .014] includes the zero, which does not confirm the H5 hypothesis.

It is also possible to locate the moderating effects on the different paths as specified in the conceptual model. Thus, three conditional effects are estimated. The moderating effect of eWOM susceptibility on the first section of the mediation relationship between "perceived credibility" and "Destination Image" is significant (β= -.164; p<.001) with a confidence interval [-.281, -.047] excluding zero.

On the other hand, the moderating effect of eWOM susceptibility on the section of the mediation relationship between "perceived credibility" and "perceived usefulness " is not significant (β= -.057; p>.05) with a confidence interval [-.169,.056] including zero. Finally, the moderating effect of eWOM susceptibility on the "direct" relationship between the Perceived credibility of messages and the Intention to visit a destination (direct conditional effect) is significant because the confidence interval does not include zero [-.132, -.008].

5 DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study demonstrated the importance of the perceived credibility of the eWOM on the intention to visit a touristic destination. Empirical findings indicate that when perceptions of credibility lead to a negative formulation of the destination image, this reduces intentions to visit the destination. We contribute to existing research by revealing the specific indirect effects of destination image between perceived credibility and visiting intention.

The results also indicate that the effect of eWOM susceptibility plays a moderating role in the relationship between perceived credibility and the intention to visit via the image of the destination. This study develops the research stream of social networks in destination marketing (Christou, 2010; Christou & Nella, 2012; Ayeh, Au & Law, 2013; Veasna *et al*., 2013; Ponte *et al*., 2015; Chatzigeorgiou, 2017) and has led to empirical validations that will help enrich the existing literature on the implications of eWOM on social networks.

This paper also draws implications for how a destination can better leverage this tool as a competitive advantage. Tourism practitioners seeking to attract tourists can use the eWOM as a communication technique for product and/or service recommendations.

However, only a few social media managers are currently aware that the value derived from the eWOM could be used to influence users' travel planning decisions (Ayeh *et al.,* 2013; Chatzigeorgiou & Christou, 2020) or to reinforce the image of their destination by creating positive eWOM. Moreover, consumer behaviour on social networks is influenced by interpersonal factors, particularly by shared comments and opinions about destinations, hotels, restaurants etc. An eWOM message perceived as useful reduces information asymmetry, facilitates decision-making and positively influences the intention to visit.

Thus, it is imperative to respect certain rules to ensure the credibility of the information in order to stand out from the competition. One way is to include testimonials from third parties, contact sections for information and quick responses. These results are particularly interesting because they are in accordance with the work of Suh (2017).

These results suggest that tourism industry stakeholders are expected to set up a "Social Media Manager" to monitor their online presence and follow comments and opinions that can influence tourists' behavioural intentions. Moreover, the impact of eWOM messages is judged on the basis of their perceived credibility and consumers consider the credibility of messages to be a problem of reliability, especially in a context where the sender is anonymous, such as in the case of eWOM, which allows companies or brand ambassadors to disseminate false opinions to promote their products (fake news). Given the powerful influence of the eWOM, it should not be ignored or misused, but managed to improve the effectiveness of marketing strategies in hospitality, tourism and travel.

The findings of this research also highlighted the important role of eWOM messages as a real source of information for companies. Indeed, they allow consumers' opinions on their offers to be known and thus improve the quality of services and customer relations in near real time. Travel stories online (blog, VLOG, eWOM) or offline (books) also have a strong potential to influence opinions because they are the result of personal experiences of the authors (Seraphin, 2015; Seraphin, 2014).

In conclusion, the important criterion for tourists is not only the analysis of the eWOM messages, but also the responses to them by destination managers. The latter are an opportunity to show the effectiveness of the customer relationship but also the attention paid to these tourists.

6 CONCLUSIONS

The current study found that the perceived credibility of eWOM (the comments generated by Internet users or the sharing of tourists' experiences on Facebook) influences the behavioral intentions of Algerian tourists. These results join the results of previous studies (Revilla Hernández et al., 2016; Doosti et al., 2016; Teng et al., 2017; Anubha and Shome, 2020) which have shown that customers' perception of the credibility of reviews significantly influences their behavioral intentions.

This study also indicates that the relationship between the perceived credibility of the eWOM and the intentions to visit a destination is mediated by the usefulness of the eWOM messages and the destination image. The study by Suh (2017) and Ghidouche & Nechoud, (2018) also confirms these results.

This study is subject to a number of limitations, both in terms of the selection of model variables and the methodology used. There are several possible approaches to research. The conceptual model of this study is based on the interactions between the concepts of perceived credibility, perceived usefulness, image of the destination and intention to visit a destination. In addition, the moderator variable of the proposed model, eWOM susceptibility, was treated using a one-dimensional approach. However, it needs to be addressed in a multidimensional way (volume, valence, content) to refine the conceptual model and better assess the effects of the other dimensions.

Second, it would have been more interesting to replicate the study on more diversified samples, with, for example, different professions, young professionals over 30 years of age, because the latter represent an important target for tourism professionals. In addition, this research focused on a sample of Algerian students, while an international comparison would have made it possible to take into account the influence of culture on the tourist's behavioural intention as part of the proposed research model.

Finally, it would still be interesting in the case of this conceptual model to study the role of e-influencers rather than consumers, which is a promising area of research to explore in the future.

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Heritage tourism and ethnic identity: A deductive thematic analysis of Jamaican Maroons

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Abstract:
Purpose: *The purpose of this study is to explore heritage tourism within the framework of ethnic identity by examining tourism as a tool for promoting ethnic identity and traditions of the Maroons in Jamaica.*
Methods: *Qualitative research using in-depth interviews was used to collect relevant data. The findings were analyzed using the deductive thematic analysis approach and discussed within the theoretical framework of ethnic identity.*
Results: *A major deduction of the study is that there are factors that either hinder or promote the Maroon's identity and traditions. The study concludes that the Maroon's ethnic identity can be promoted through ethnic tourism which is a form of heritage tourism. This form of tourism facilitates the showcasing of their traditions which is consequently passed on to the younger generation for posterity.*
Implications: *The findings will be very resourceful to the Maroon communities in Jamaica and across the Caribbean, especially in terms of best practices in preserving their heritage and ethnic identity. It will also inform government and other tourism stakeholders as to their role in providing the necessary resources to enable the preservation of the Maroon's ethnic identity and traditions.*

Keywords: *heritage tourism; ethnic identity; ethnic tourism; Jamaican Maroons; African culture, deductive thematic analysis*

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1 INTRODUCTION

Tourism is classified among the largest industries in the world (Hrubcova et al., 2016) and by nature facilitates travel around the globe for the purpose of business, leisure, sports and for persons to enjoy the natural environment as well as interact with local communities. The latter travel motivator is becoming a prominent reason for travel. People are seeking engagement and experience with local cultures (Hawkes & Kwortnik, 2006). This is to obtain cultural knowledge and insights and to share in the meanings of the cultural practices and significances (Gibson & Connell, 2003). It is also found that the most experienced travelers are desirous of experiencing different cultures (Pearce & Lee, 2005) and that cultural reasons are important for the purposeful cultural tourists (McKercher & Du Cros, 2003; Pirnar et al., 2019).

This authentic experience is encapsulated in the terminology, ethnic tourism which according to Yang and Wall (2009) can encourage economic and cultural development. Ethnic tourism requires the demonstration of ethnic identity, which is the display of an individual's "sense of belonging to an ethnic group and the part of one's thinking, perceptions, feelings, and behavior that is due to ethnic group membership" (Rotheram & Phinney, 1987, p. 13). This form of special interest tourism can encourage economic and cultural development (Yang & Wall, 2009). Ethnic tourism is incorporated into heritage tourism (Neilson, 2016) as the latter allows for the transmission of traditions from the past to the present (Timothy and Boyd, 2003).
Supporting the view that ethnic identity is the cornerstone of ethnic tourism, Vergun and Grishin (2020) argues that a group's ethnicity encourages the development of a new tourist product that allows visitors to appreciate the

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uniqueness of ethnic communities. There are, however, indications of the decline in ethnic identity, some of which are external influences (Henderson, 2003; MacCannell, 1984). For example, some indigenous and local communities have lost or are on the verge of losing their ethnic identity as well as traditions due to a lack of sustained initiatives to preserve their culture. As indicated by Lumsden, Percy and McKenzie (2013), the Maroons in Jamaica is one such ethnic community whose culture and traditions are not being sustained, especially among the younger generation. The Maroon community is one of Jamaica's most prized ethnic possessions which according to Campbell (1988) was established by slaves brought in from the African continent and who later fled the reign of the Europeans. The Maroon's unique cultural resource developed from their resistance to enslavement, resettlement history and ties to Africa (Taylor, 2016). From these experiences, they shape their own 'social organization patterns of culture, kinship, and defense' (Bilby, 2005).

It is believed that the Maroons in the Caribbean are hoping that tourism can save their culture (Jamaica Observer, 2012). Nonetheless, Kearn (2015) finds that the Jamaican culture was virtually erased in the tourism industry's effort to promote the "authentic" Jamaican culture, particularly through its online materials. Overall, it is construed that tourism can construct and reconstruct culture as its offerings are based on connections to the host culture (Taylor et al., 2014; Fotiadis et al, 2019; Vassiliadis et al, 2013)). Tourism is also a conduit for ethnic communities to share their identity while simultaneously advancing the economy (Neilson, 2015). In particular, Yan and Wall (2016) declare that ethnic tourism is an effective means for strengthening the identity of ethnic communities.

The purpose of this study, therefore, is to explore heritage tourism within the framework of ethnic identity by examining tourism as a tool for promoting ethnic identity and traditions, focusing on the Maroons in Jamaica. The literature also calls for greater focus on cultural and social issues in small island states to increase awareness of the strengths and adaptability of its people (Scheyvens & Momsen, 2008). Hence, the study will examine the Maroons' traditions and ethnic identity to provide insight into their way of life as well as how the Maroon culture has progressed or regressed based on ethnic identity factors.

The study will be analyzed using a qualitative research design. Data collected by way of interview were analyzed using the deductive thematic analysis approach. The findings of the study were discussed within the framework of ethnic identity. This is a plausible theory as it explains the psychological functioning of members of ethnic and racial minority communities (Pinkney, 1990). The Maroons are described as having a distinct ethnic identity which created a cultural distinctiveness despite their integration into the wider political and economic systems (Bilby, 1981). In support, the ethnic identity theory proposes that each individual belongs to groups that are differentiated by patterned interactions and relationships because of their ethnicity (Stryker & Burke, 2000). Additionally, the use of the theory within the context of the Maroons in Jamaica will be a novel approach as Yeh and Hwang (2000) purports that the multidimensional ethnic identity theory has predominantly been used in the literature to study Asian American populations and not necessarily applied to the historical context of Afro-centric immigrants in the Caribbean.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In exploring the role tourism can play in promoting the retention, identity and traditions of the Maroons in Jamaica within the context of ethnic tourism, the literature was reviewed to ascertain information on ethnic tourism, the theory of ethnic identity, a historical review of the Jamaican Maroons, factors that hinder and promote their ethnic identity as well as the role of tourism in promoting and retaining ethnic identity and traditions.

2.1 Preamble of ethnic tourism

Ethnic tourism is "tourism marketed to the public taking into consideration the "quaint customs of indigenous and often exotic people" (Smith, 1977, p. 2). It is an effective tool to strengthen the identity of ethnic communities by offering opportunities to display local culture, revitalize customs, vernacular and ethnic pride (Boissevain, 1996). This form of tourism displays indigenous communities and their cultural artifacts such as music, costume, and dance as the primary tourist attraction (Hiwasaki, 2000). Through this exchange, there are usually three groups of people involved consistently in ethnic tourism: the tourist, the "touree" and the middleman (Mavragani et al., 2019). The "touree" is usually a member from the community acting in the role of the culture display; while the middleman mediates the interaction between the tourist and the "touree" for financial gain (Van den Berghe, 1994). Unfortunately, the agent that functions as the middleman retains a larger portion of the benefits accrued from ethnic tourism (Picard & Wood, 1997), even though the central attraction and performance are exhibited by the "touree".

This problem creates a unique opportunity for local leaders embedded in the tourees' society to play an active role in ethnic tourist interactions, in that they are advocating for the best interest of the touree. The discourse associated with ethnic enclaves has promoted dialogue among scholars through the lens of the 'tourism gaze' (Urry, 2002), that either aids or hinders the social or economic well-being of members in ethnic communities. For example, on one hand, tourist exploitation tendencies have been uncovered in a mass tourism context when multiple tourism parties were involved (Christou, 2006; Samarathunga, 2019), but on the other hand, tourist gaze has enabled community members to gain financially from displaying their cultural values and practices (Woodside, 2015).

Urry (2002) developed the theory of tourist gaze to explain that tourists are able to alter their perception of a place, people or activity based on their observation and interaction with the tourism product or service. Since then, this theory has evolved into a multi-faced concept to include local gaze, host gaze and intra-tourist gaze, explaining contextual forces that shape actors gaze as part of a comprehensive performative tourist practice (Thompson, et al., 2016). A critical review of the tourist gaze literature reveals that out of the multi-faced gaze, host-guest encounters are more dominant (Lin & Fu, 2020); Nevertheless, several studies have identified the absence of domestic institutions that significantly affect the tourist gaze (Gillespie, 2006; Moufakkir, 2011). Notably, some scholars escape discussions about the cultural preservation and improvement of cultural values due to tourism gaze (Samarathunga & Cheng, 2020). This is an important perspective to explore in that it positions a unique element of the tourism destination's ethnic enclaves, as a product that has the potential to be commoditized from tourist gaze if properly monitored through institutions that have the touree's best interest.

2.2 Understanding the theory of ethnic identity

Although ethnicity is often used interchangeably with culture, they are separate terms (Bolaffi, 2003). On the one hand, ethnicity is described as the grouping of individuals who connect on the basis of common values that differentiate them from other groups and these differences reside in their traditions, ancestry language, and religion as well as their social treatment within their residing area (Peoples & Bailey, 2010). On the other hand, culture refers broadly to a group's values, norms, attitudes, and behaviors that may not be derived from ethnic affiliation (Phinney, 1996). Culture is usually based on variables such as religion, language and class (Holliday, 2010). Hence, there is the demarcation between one's cultural identity and ethnic identity. Cultural identity relates to the identity of a group of people based on their culture (Stryker & Burke, 2000; Wong, et al., 2011) while, ethnic identity is often used to discover more detailed information about the knowledge, beliefs, and expectation of a particular ethnic community (Phinney, 1990).

Albeit complex in definition, ethnic identity has been framed as a durable, prominent feature of self that extends one's feeling of belonging in a social unit (Tajfel, 1978). This theoretical framework has been extended by Arredondo (1999) to include a multidimensional perspective that accounts for one's social, cultural, historical and familial context. It is argued that these contexts broaden people's perspectives about what is normal and desirable behavior patterns (Arredondo, 1999).

Taking a progressivism approach, recent scholars have framed ethnic identity as a process of development that accounts for individual changes overtime in identity, values, and behavior as people interact with various cultures (Berry et al., 1986) instead of being portrayed as a static or final outcome (Sue & Sue, 1990; Chami& Kaminyoge, 2019). Arguably, an ethnic community that is knowledgeable about its ancestral roots is more inclined to conform and integrate awareness to the values, identity, traditions, and customs of their ancestors than those who are unaware (Sue & Sue, 1990).

2.3 Historical review of the Jamaican Maroon

The origin of the Maroons dates back to 1655 when the British gained control of Jamaica after the Spanish invasion (Campbell, 1988). Jamaica was formerly inhabited by the Tainos for over 150 years. These aborigines were virtually erased by the time the British came to Jamaica (Kopytoff, 1978). The Maroons were former slaves predominantly from African descent who fled their Spanish captors and later English attempts to re-enslave them, to establish autonomous communities in the mountainous parts of Jamaica, also known as the Cockpit Country (Campbell, 1988). They divided into two groups and settled in either Leeward (those occupying the western part of the island) or Windward (occupying the eastern part of the island) locations (McKee, 2017).

The Maroon communities in Jamaica are often termed free villages. Accompong, Charles Town, Moore Town and Scotts Hall are cited by Bilby (1981) as the four major ones in Jamaica (Figure 1). They are located in the mountainous areas, predominantly in the eastern parishes of Portland and St. Thomas. On the eastern side of Jamaica are Charles Town and Moore Town in Portland, and Scotts Hall in St. Mary. Accompong Town spans across St. Elizabeth in the southern section of Jamaica and the Cockpit Country in the west. These communities resulted from the 1739 Treaty between the British and the Africans who ran away from slavery to the mountainous regions (Campbell, 1988). This allows the Maroons legal control of the lands on which the communities exist, the rights to conduct trials for petty crimes and the selection of their leaders. Some tourists to Jamaica visit these areas to observe and engage in the traditions of this indigenous sect (Taylor & Kneafsey, 2016).

The growth of the Maroon villages was a result of slave rebellions, individual and group escape from the plantations as well as plantation raids by Maroons who captured or recruited slaves to join their societies (Patterson, 1970). Furthermore, the Maroons were skilled fighters who were not so easily overcome by the British soldiers and would put up strong defenses when pursued. The ongoing battle between the Maroons and the British went on for decades until in 1739, the British who failed to overpower the Maroons, signed a peace treaty (Hart, 1980). The agreement was for the Maroons to hunt or return future run-away slaves and in return, the British would acknowledge their freedom, grant them land and allow small-scale trading between the two parties (Patterson, 1970). The Maroons' ethnic identity was predominantly influenced by Coromantee or Akan cultures in West Africa. According to Taylor et al. (2014), extensive research has shown similarities between the Maroon culture and the Akan-speakers of West Africa, particularly in their religious practices of obeah, musical instruments such as the abeng and in language. The following information provides comprehensive details of each of the Maroon communities:

(i). Accompong Town

This Maroon community is located in the south-western part of the island particularly in the Cockpit Country which spans across the parishes of St. Elizabeth and Trelawny. It is stated that when the British bombed the Blue Mountains and its environs, the Maroons fled to the Cockpit Country in Trelawny and after many years they eventually spread into the area now known as Accompong Town. The village was originally named after an early Maroon leader. Led by Cudjoe, the Maroons of Accompong signed the 1739 Treaty (DjeDje, 1998). The occurrence took place under the Kindah Tree and this symbolic tree forms part of the attractions in Accompong. The area comprises of 1500 acres of land and as with other Maroon communities, this free community was given political autonomy and economic freedom which remain currently. Since 2009, Colonel in Chief Ferron Williams has been leading the Accompong Maroon Community aided by the Council. Cultural practices in Accompong are unique as these are a combination of traditions from the Akan and Asante African ancestors, and the Taino Indian aborigines. There is an annual Accompong Town Festival held on January 6 to celebrate the birthday of the former leader, Cudjoe (DjeDje, 1998). This festival showcases the cultural and heritage legacies of the Maroons to include music, drumming dance, costumes, food and artifacts.

(ii). Charles Town

Originally known as Crawford Town, Charles Town is in the east-central parts of Jamaica (Bilby, 1981) and is established on approximately 1,000 acreages of land. It was then headed by Captain Quao who was instrumental in signing the 1739 Treaty (Johnson, 2020). Subsistence farming has been the predominant mainstay of the community. Due to the need to expand the economy of the community, the area was opened to tours by both local and international visitors. This historical tour includes a visit to the museum to see the traditional artifacts; music, drumming and dancing in the Asafu Yard; a trip to the old coffee plantation and to Sambo Hill which was a strategic lookout point to the sea and surrounding landscape; and the eating of jerk chicken and pork which is a traditional way of preparing meats with special blends of herb and a particular cooking method using pimento sticks. This form of community tourism has added to the economic sustainability of the community. Since 2006, an annual Maroon Festival is held in June to celebrate the victory of Captain Quao, commemorate the traditions of the Maroons and honor their ancestors.

(iii). Moore Town

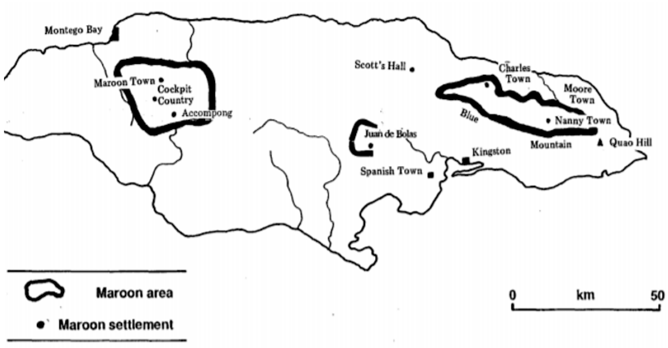
This Maroon community is located in the parish of Portland in the Blue Mountains (Johnson, 2020). It is the largest of the Maroon communities and was originally known as Nanny Town with its first leader, Nanny who became one of the National Heroes of Jamaica (Johnson, 2020). This community was quite extensive having 140 houses built to accommodate families who ran away from the institution of slavery. These were, however, burnt by the British militia but through reliance and zeal, were subsequently rebuild. The terrain of the area enabled the Maroons to use ambush and crossfire tactics to evade the British many times.

The current leader is Colonel Wallace Sterling and the main attraction for the area is the Bump Grave. This is an oblong stone and plaque marking the gravesite of Nanny. Annually, on October 19, there is a festival in Moore Town to celebrate the birthday of Nanny.

(iv). Scotts Hall

Located in the parish of St. Mary in the eastern section part of the country this Maroon community was originally called Kushu Town (Elliott, 2020). It was established after the first maroon war ended and is the first Maroon village to have a Court House and its own hospital. Since 2015, the community is being led by Colonel Rudolph Pink who succeeded Noel Frey after 33 years of service in that capacity. Each year the community celebrates August 1 to commemorate the signing of the peace treaty in 1738. In order to preserve its heritage, efforts were put in place to construct a museum, community center, and internet cafe. These are, however, not fully completed. Scotts Hall is known for a range of medicinal herbs and other plants for healing.

Figure 1: Maroon areas of Jamaica. Source: Baldwin-Jones, 2011



2.4 Factors that hinder the Maroon ethnic identity

As the Maroon communities grew, the merging of many independent groups into larger units became quite challenging. This resulted in a period of active feuding, highly influenced by land ownership, ethnic rivalries, whether the slave was captured or ran away freely (Kopytoff, 1978), language and gender (Bush, 1990). In Kopytoff's (1978) analysis of the early development of the Jamaican Maroon societies, it was argued that areas of refuge diminished as the Maroon bands grew, causing them to constantly compete for territories as they ran into each other. Furthermore, the rivalries increased if the Maroons were of different ethnic identity.

Separate from the Jamaican Tainos, other Amerindians, as well as Madagascar slaves, joined the Maroon communities in the 17th and 18th centuries (Wright, 1970). The Madagascar slaves were closely related to Malaysia and later integrated into the Leeward community, where they were taught the common culture of the Maroons, but continued separately as an ethnic community using their own language and customs in private for many years (Kopytoff, 1976). Also, there were Spanish ex-slaves left by the Spaniards when the English took over. They formed a distinct reference group among the Maroons (Dallas, 2010). Rivalries even persist within certain Maroon ethnic groups such as the Coromantee as well as between African and Creole Maroons (Maroons born in the woods without experiences of plantation life) (Patterson, 1967). For example, the Coromantee Maroons in the Leeward part of the Island seemingly displeased with the contractual terms and agreement, united with Coromantee slaves on a neighboring plantation to wipe out the entire Creole Maroons or those who came from foreign countries to create their own Coromantee society (Kopytoff, 1976).

The historical records also show a limited number of women and children in the Maroon society between 1739 and 1749 (Kopytoff, 1976). This sexual imbalance can be traced back to periods prior to the peace treaty in 1739 where the slaves were not reproducing; furthermore, the challenge of constantly being pursued by the English was a major factor that enabled this adversity (Kopytoff, 1976). The Maroons' numbers only increased when escapees joined the societies or when Maroons would raid nearby plantations. Consequently, reliance on outside sources for growth and strength hindered the Maroon's ability to develop at a rate they were capable of as a society and made them unaware of alternative options within that could have been just as effective.

Today, the Maroons constitute a minor portion of the population in Jamaica. Approximately 5,000 persons are living in the country, others have migrated This could possibly result from the 'foreign minded' perception among Jamaica's most intelligent youths who would relocate to another country today if possible (Baines, 2017). Seo (2012) concludes that areas with a declining population are challenged in retaining inhabitants and sustaining economic activity.

2.5 Factors that promote the Maroon ethnic identity and traditions

The mixture of African descendants in the Caribbean today ensures that only a handful of people's identity is contingent on a particular African area or ethnic group (Smith, Augier, & Nettleford, 1967). It is indisputable that the Jamaican Maroons ethnically diverse population in the early 18th century created challenges such as ethnic rivalries that took some time to address, but they eventually integrated as a society (Kopytoff, 1974). Since the majority of those enslaved were among the Akan-speaking people of the Gold Coast of West Africa, Kopytoff (1978) argue that prior to slavery, the Coromantee slaves who were not originated from similar regions might have been hostile rivals in their homeland. However, they were bonded together in Jamaica by a wide range of commonalities that redefined their ethnicity to now being part of an "ethnic pool of slaves from broadly similar backgrounds" (Kopytoff 1978, p. 35) or the simple fact that they may have shared the middle passage or will forever be cut off from their ties at home. Kopytoff (1978) further stated that in order to develop commonalities, adjustments were made to the differences in languages, customs, and cultures to merge into a common culture that all would accept.

Another factor that promoted ethnic identity and traditions were the marriages between local white planters and certain Jamaican Maroons during the inter-war years between 1739 (the year the peace treaty was signed) and 1795 (the Second Maroon War) (Hoogbergen, 2008). During this time, the Maroons and local white planters had many social interactions. For example, Whites observed Maroon ceremonies and dances, slept with and marry Maroon women and even went as far as learning the Maroons' Kromanti language (Burnard, 2001). Also, Maroons would give the names of prominent white planters in the area to their children (McKee, 2017). During this time, there were no reports of violent clashes over land, or any incidence of violence (McKee, 2017). Most of the tensions surrounding land disputes were resolved in non-violent relations (Campbell, 1988). In particular, the Maroons chose representatives from their own people to resolve disputed land boundaries instead of those assigned by government officials (McKee, 2017). Extending Kopytoff's (1974) analogy of Maroon treaties with the local white farmers as 'sacred charters'; McKee (2017) stated that this was also a transitionary period that enabled the Maroons to redefine self and their capacity to function in Jamaica society, thus, shedding their former identity as slaves to establish new roles as Maroons. Burnard (2001) further proposed that in order for free people to escape the stigma of slavery, changing the names formerly given by their masters would complete their assertions to creating a new identity.

The Maroons were also resilient fighters who employed many strategies to maintain their freedom. Like the Native Americans who also experienced a history of bondage, the males, in particular, were often victims of ritual torture and sacrifice when enslaved (Littlefield, 1977 as cited in Johnson, 2014); Consequently, this experience enabled them to become warriors who were integral to the expansion and protection of the Maroon villages. Women were also invaluable resources in the Maroon societies in that they took on several roles such as wives, mothers, and laborers (Johnson, 2014). How formerly enslaved women arrive at the maroon villages was an indication of their bravery and strength; that is, whether the women fled to the Maroons willingly or were forced by Maroon raiders (Johnson, 2014). Traits of strength and bravery made women ideal partners and mothers to raise future Maroon warriors (Bush, 1990). Nanny, one of the Maroons in Jamaica was elevated in that society. She and her four brothers escaped their plantations and Nanny became an influential leader in the Windward Maroon community that contributed to the escape of over 1000 slaves in her lifetime (Bilby, 2017). Today, she is known in Jamaica as the only female national hero (Cummings, 2012).

2.6 The role of tourism in promoting and retaining ethnic identity and traditions

Today, Jamaican Maroons are no longer hindered by inter-ethnic rivalries or the need to resolve conflicts related to internal land territories (Kopytoff, 1976; Patterson, 1967); neither are they limited by their ability to procreate (Kopytoff, 1976), since recent data shows a higher percentage of women compared to men (50.4) (Worldbank.org, 2019), who can move freely across the parishes in Jamaica. However, the Jamaican Maroon's posterity is threatened by internal migration from these communities to other parts of the Island and overseas in pursuit of economic opportunities (Baines, 2017), which endangers the preservation of their unique culture and pride. Correspondingly, as Jamaican Maroons promoted their ethnic identity and traditions through adjusting to their new reality of living off the land, inter-marriages and becoming resilient fighters (Hoogbergen, 2008; Johnson, 2014), the same can be achieved through tourism.

The Maroons unique ancient traditions can be packaged into tourism products that have the potential to simultaneously promote ethnic identity and revive economic opportunities, suppress migration of the youth and maintain cultural pride. Considering the growing interest in community-based tourism experiences (Mayaka et al., 2019), and heritage tourism (Timothy, 2018); there is a need to explore alternative tourism generating opportunities, especially for communities with a rich historical background as the Jamaican Maroons.

The tourism industry in Jamaica has developed over the years through the chronological efforts of several organizations such as the Jamaica Tourist Authority (JTA), Tourist Trade Development Board (TTDB), Jamaica International Exhibition Act of 1891 and the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB).

However, these efforts were unable to change the typical sun, sea, and sand image of Jamaica to one that integrates the uniqueness of local communities in the tourism product (Stupart & Shipley, 2013). Currently, the Jamaican tourism market is dominated by the all-inclusive accommodation concept that allows tourists to purchase a package deal that includes almost everything that appeal to the guest including transportation, transfers, lodging, food, beverages, entertainment and activities (Ozdemir et al., 2012). Due to the availability of everything on the property, tourists rarely have the need to visit other locations or spend time outside the hotel property (Anderson, 2008), thereby contributing to the ongoing issue of tourism revenue leakage from local residents to foreign investors (Bahar, 2004).

Alternatively, ethnic tourism has the potential to raise revenue and currency for countries with ethnic minority communities since it promotes the concept of tourists experiencing first-hand the authentic culture of its people in their own communities (Jamison, 1999; Wood, 1998). In addition to the economic benefits to be derived, the literature reveals that ethnic tourism can revive the identity of ethnic communities by offering opportunities to display local culture, revitalize customs, vernacular and ethnic pride (Boissevain, 1996)

Similarly, heritage tourism's (a term used synonymously with ethnic tourism) appeal to tourists goes beyond the physical presentation or attractiveness of the product to include "the significance of the images, meanings, and symbols attached to them" (Park, 2014, p. 2). To discover these meanings, one must be present to experience, feel and touch the tangible and intangible elements that such tourism products have to offer. Today's tourists are not motivated to passively view the natural resources when traveling to a destination, but to actively immerse themselves through activities such as people watching, walking around, and engaging with residents way of life and local culture (Yeoman, 2012; Smith & Robinson, 2008). These experiences translate into richer tourists' memory of the experience that can be relieved when they return home (Taylor, 2016). Promoting these models of tourism experience extends tourism benefits into local communities since locals are usually the ones who manage and execute these authentic experiences that travelers seek.

According to the Jamaica Social Investment Fund / JSIF (2009) the 'natural and creative energy of the Jamaican on display would transform average citizens into entrepreneurs. Arguably, this effort will require an 'integrated approach' from all stakeholders (Stupart & Shipley, 2013), but the time, cost and effort to secure, monitor and execute community-based tourism at any level will far outweigh the benefits and promote a sustainable approach to tourism (Sebele, 2010). Government and other stakeholders have an important role to play in the development and sustainability of ethnic tourism (Yang et al., 2008). In fact, local populations tend to rely on them for assistance (Baptista, 2010).

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

The study seeks to explore heritage tourism within the framework of ethnic identity. It examines tourism as a tool for promoting ethnic identity and traditions with a focus on the Maroons in Jamaica. The research is exploratory in nature and utilized a qualitative research design employing in-depth interviews. This type of interview is aimed at collecting detailed information which according to Guion, Diehl and McDonald (2011) would otherwise be difficult to obtain from other sources.

Based on this premise, in-depth interview was used and although a lengthy process, the interviewees were passionate about their way of life and thus, were very cooperative and responsive. Hence, they were able to provide detailed information regarding the Maroon communities in terms of traditions, factors that either hinder or promote the preservation of these traditions and, their perceptions of tourism in promoting the Maroon's identity. Not only is an in-depth interview able to garner detailed information about a person's thoughts but also to provide the context in relation to other sources and to form a complete picture of the Maroon communities and surrounding matters (Boyce & Neale (2006). It is therefore ideal in conducting this research so as to provide a more complete picture of the Maroon communities and surrounding matters.

The interviews are intended to substantiate the literature and garner primary data. They were conducted with colonels from four selected Maroon communities in Jamaica between December 2017 and January 2018. They are Accompong, Moore Town, Charles Town and Scotts Hall. These communities were selected for the study because they are designated Maroon communities (Bilby (1981). The in-depth interviews were conducted via telephone. This is because in-depth interviews can be lengthy, and the use of telephone calls would reduce time in terms of travelling to the hilly terrains to conduct the interview as well as the associated costs.

The in-depth interview approach is supported by Glogowska, Young and Lockyer (2011) who posit that telephone interview is an effective way of collecting qualitative data when compared to the in-person interview. Some of the advantages include decreased cost (Chapple, 1999), increased access to geographically dissimilar subjects (Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004; Sweet, 2002), and the ability to take notes discreetly (Carr & Worth, 2001). In addition, telephone interview permits participants to stay on "their own turf" (McCoyd & Kerson, 2006, p. 399), influence anonymity (Sweet, 2002) and privacy (Sturges & Hanrahan, 2006), decrease social pressure, and increase rapport (McCoyd & Kerson, 2006).

To adequately address the aims of this study, the steps of deductive thematic analysis as described by Braun and Clarke (2006) were used to analyze the interview responses. They are: (1) Familiarization, (2) Generation of Initial Codes, (3) Searching for themes, (4) Reviewing themes, (5) Defining themes and (6) Scholarly report. The deductive approach was chosen based on a priori themes identified in the literature prior conducting the research. These themes are factors that hinder the Maroon's identity and traditions; factors that promote the Maroon's identity and traditions; and the role of tourism in promoting and retaining the Maroons' identity and traditions.

This method is driven by theory but still goes beyond merely counting words and phrases to infer latent meaning and relationships among themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

3.2 Deductive thematic analysis

The deductive thematic approach was used to analyze data gathered by way of the telephone interviews. This is appropriate where there is a predetermined framework and theory (Gill et al., 2008). Following Braun and Clarke's (2006) deductive method of analysis, after familiarization with the data, initial codes were developed to identify common responses based on the established themes. This is important since the interview notes only describe the situations but do not provide interpretations and explanations (Gill et al, 2008). Consequently, the following three themes were identified:

1. Factors that hinder the Maroon's identity and traditions
2. Factors that promote the Maroon's identity and traditions
3. The role of tourism in promoting and retaining the Maroons' identity and

4 ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to explore heritage tourism within the framework of ethnic identity by examining tourism as a tool for promoting ethnic identity and traditions. The study focused on designated Maroon communities in Jamaica. The findings are analyzed within the context of the literature on the Maroon communities in Jamaica and the results of the deductive thematic analysis.

4.1 Literature review analysis

The literature revealed that the Maroons in Jamaica are a particular sect in the society, residing in the mountainous regions of Jamaica. Their current residential location is as a result of their ancestors fleeing the institution of slavery to live in those areas because they were hiding from the British colonialists who were not familiar with the location and terrain of the mountainous areas. Despite being a minority group as pointed out by Abeng Central (n.d), the Maroons have established their own identity with unique cultural practices. Smith et al. (1967) justified this minor composition by pointing out that many people's identity in the Caribbean is dependent on a particular ethnic group. The original 'run away' slaves should be credited for this.

Notwithstanding their varying African origin, they bonded together and developed communities among their cultures as well as established a common culture that was acceptable to all of them (Kopytoff, 1978). They have established their own ethnic identity which as described by Tajfel (1978), is the connectedness of people within a social group and by Stryker & Burke (2000) as patterns of interactions and relationships that differentiate them.

Whether consciously or unconsciously, the Maroons' connectedness to Africa boosted their self-esteem and resiliency, enabling them to do whatever was necessary to sustain themselves and their people. According to Taylor et al (2014), the inherency of the Maroons' African identity along with the idea of self-sustenance enabled them to look beyond their present hardships to future aspirations. Their memory of life prior to captivity fueled their resistance to the European attempts to re-enslave them, are invaluable stories that could be integrated into the tourism experience, either at the management or experiential level.

4.2 Scholarly report on the deductive thematic analysis

Tables 1 to 4 illustrate the responses from the Maroon communities regarding the three themes that were deduced. Given the ethical obligation to the research process to protect the identity of representatives from each Maroon community and to assure confidentiality, the names of each community were identified as "A", "B", "C" and "D".

Table 1: Summary of responses from the Maroon Community A

Maroon community	*Factors that hinder the Maroon's identity and traditions*	*Factors that promote the Maroon's identity and traditions*	*The role of tourism in promoting and retaining the Maroons' identity and traditions*
A	A small portion of the Maroons do not show much pride and confidence in their culture due to the perception that tradition is not worthy to be preserved and that the tradition is backward and Afro-centric. These cause them to be apprehensive and they do not want to be identified as Maroon descendants. Some persons of the Christian religion do not embrace the Maroon practices and beliefs. Income from tourism activities is inadequate to sustain the community	Maintaining tradition. Many Maroons show pride in their culture. Strong preservation thrust to pass on tradition to younger generation. Promotion of culture through food/cuisine, selling of drums and exposing visitors to the traditions. Friday evening drumming and dancing, primarily for the community members but open to outsiders. Annual conference held in June to include the community, scholars and researchers locally and overseas to document history and traditions. Group performs at local hotels. There is the need to tour overseas.	Tourism promotes and retains the Maroons' identity and traditions through frequent tours of the community; visitors having appreciation and knowledge of the artefacts, history and heritage; consuming the traditional food; and participating in the traditional music, dancing and drumming.

There are several hindrances that cause some level of decline in the preservation of the Maroon's ethnic identity. The study finds that some of the Maroon descendants take part in the country's General Elections and this is not customary to do as they have their own governance system. There is also another concern where some Maroons are entrenched in the Christian religion and will not participate in the rituals, traditional practices, and beliefs of the Maroon. As posited by Peoples and Bailey (2010), religion is among those factors that identify an ethnic group. These findings are justified by Henderson (2003) who points out that external influences are hindrances to the upholding of ethnic traditions.

Table 2: Summary of Responses from the Maroon Community B

Maroon community	*Factors that hinder the Maroon's identity and traditions*	*Factors that promote the Maroon's identity and traditions*	*The role of tourism in promoting and retaining the Maroons' identity and traditions*
B	Some Maroons have no pride in their culture. Some are resistive due to religious belief; mainly Christianity and so do not embrace the Maroon culture. There is also a perception formed about Maroons which cannot be prevented.	Some Maroons are proud of what their ancestors have done. The Maroon culture and traditions are promoted through their unique dance, songs, and the Maroon dialect. The young generations are taught these traditions. There is a Culture Center. There is intention to build a Cultural Village, but this needs funding. There is also the Annual Celebration in October held on the third Monday to honor the life of Nanny.	It has helped; visitors spread the word around about their offerings. Showing their cultural practices helps to promote the traditions of the Maroon.

Table 3: Summary of responses from the Maroon Community C

Maroon community	*Factors that hinder the Maroon's identity and traditions*	*Factors that promote the Maroon's identity and traditions*	*The role of tourism in promoting and retaining the Maroons' identity and traditions*
C	Not a lot of Maroons have held on to their identity. They vote in the General Election. The Colonel does not vote in the General Election in an effort to preserve the Maroon identity. The leadership of the Maroon communities needs to pressure government to recognize their rights for example to stop the payment of land taxes. There is the need to: i). change name from British / Colonist origin to African / Indigenous Maroon. ii). Have indigenous birth and marriage certificates. iii). Have indigenous ID to be identified as a Maroon.	Efforts to preserve maroon culture and tradition include the blowing of the abeng which is the first communication instrument. There are varying sounds for different messages ...sick, death, newborn.	There is no tourism in this area. No tourist comes to the area. Therefore, tourism does not help to promote and retain the Maroons' identity and traditions. Regular tourism could create jobs for the people.

An analysis of the findings for three themes studied (factors that hinder the Maroon's identity and traditions, factors that promote the Maroon's identity and traditions, and the role of tourism in promoting and retaining the Maroons' identity and traditions) are presented in the following sections.

Table 4: Summary of responses from the Maroon Community D

Maroon community	*Factors that hinder the Maroon's identity and traditions*	*Factors that promote the Maroon's identity and traditions*	*The role of tourism in promoting and retaining the Maroons' identity and traditions*
D	The main hindrance is "Americanism" where a few persons want to bleach to change their skin tone. Bleaching, scamming and other breach of the law are not tolerated. If persons do otherwise, then they are tried and punished by the Maroon law. Although there are Christians in the community, these persons still participate in the Maroon traditions as these are not considered contrary to the Christian belief. There are seven denominations / churches. There are also rum bars.	Their identity and tradition are promoted through drumming, dancing and annual festival activities. The people are proud of their heritage and the culture is instilled in the young from an early age. Revenue is gained from the performances both in and outside of our town, but this could be improved.	Yes, tourism educates both visitors and the young generation of Maroons. When tourists visit and return home, they share the information about the Maroons and our town. The government will also benefit as tourists will return to Jamaica and others will visit. The 280 years of African heritage and history of our ancestor that fought for freedom in Jamaica is to be recognized as if it was not for them, we would still be in bondage. Tourists want to see the culture. They go on tours and watch the performances. In doing so the Maroons maintain their traditions. Accommodation is also provided in our town. This also helps in promoting and retaining the Maroons' identity and traditions.

Theme 1: Factors that hinder the Maroon's identity and traditions

Aside from external influences, it is reported that some Maroons do not show pride in their culture as it is perceived as being backward. These hindrances according to Berry et al. (1986) are due to changes in an individual's identity, behavior and values. To mitigate some of these hindrances, one Maroon community intends to revert to having original African names so as to strengthen their ethnic identity. As noted by McKee (2017), Maroons would give the names of prominent white planters to their children to maintain peace after the treaty. Having original African names could possibly strengthen their ethnic identity. These names would be within the African language and according to Peoples and Bailey (2010) one's ancestry language is a component of one's ethnic identity.

Theme 2: Factors that promote the Maroon's identity and traditions

The study finds that there are factors promoting the Maroon's identity and traditions. Having a rich history that started in the 17th century and the many artifacts, monuments and cultural practices are valuable characteristics of the Maroon's ethnic identity. This is supported by Arredondo (1999) who identified historical and cultural contexts as two of the three dimensions of ethnic identity. The study also finds that a majority of the Maroon communities are using their historical and cultural legacies to showcase for tourism during tours by visitors as well as the various festivals. As explained by Yang and Walls (2009), these can encourage both economic and cultural development. Additionally, the study reveals that tourism is promoting and retaining the identity and traditions of the Maroons through their cultural practices. This is supported by Sinclair-Maragh and Gursoy (2017) who find that tourism contributes to the preservation of culture which further helps to sustain cultural identity and build residents' sense of belonging in small island states.

The use of their unique identity and practices for tourism is conceptualized as ethnic tourism and as substantiated by Hiwasaki (2000), ethnic tourism displays the culture of the host community. This study also finds that revenue is gained from tours of the communities and their environs, the sale of food and artifacts as well as from performances of the art form in terms of dancing, drumming, and music. These economic activities enable local development and visitors are left with fulfilling experiences from their engagements which Yeoman (2012) purports is the trend for current tourists. According to Taylor (2016), these experiences will translate into a richer memory of experiences when visitors return. Additionally, the artifacts are ideal memorabilia to support the experiences. Sinclair-Maragh (2016) believes that memorabilia are important in reinforcing the experiences and memories of visitors. Ethnic tourism can therefore be used to bridge the gap mentioned in Urry's (2002) theory of tourism gaze in this context, as tourists are given the opportunity to interact with the Maroons and learn more about their traditions that have shaped their culture.

Another finding of the study is that the Maroon's ethnic identity and traditions were further promoted through efforts to preserve their cultural practices and from passing on these traditions to the younger generation through practice. Their annual celebrations honoring the initial leaders also help in showcasing the traditions of the Maroons and by way of learning and participating; these are preserved and passed on from one generation to another.

Theme 3: The role of tourism in promoting and retaining the Maroons' identity and traditions

The study reveals that tourism can promote and retain the Maroons' identity and traditions. Through ethnic tourism, the Maroon descendants are able to promote their cultural identity and traditions. They are in a better position to offer more valuable insights into ethnic tourism compared to different sects of Jamaicans that work in other tourist destinations. This is because they are armed with more knowledge regarding their culture as passed on to them by their ancestors. Their stories of how they overcame challenges of diversity in the early 17th century and emerged as an integrated society are pertinent knowledge that can be shared with pride. As pointed out by Sinclair-Maragh (2016), having relevant information is a positive cue for heritage attractions. This also suggests that ethnic identity is formed as one becomes aware of historical events that have shaped the current way of life. The importance of ethnic identity is garnered based on the uniqueness observed in one's values and behavior as one interacts with other cultures. The history of slavery and freedom as experienced by Africans in Jamaica during the colonial periods of Jamaica's history has shaped a unique strain of ethnic identity that has evolved through the years to now be prized as an accomplishment, especially when one reminisces about the sacrifices made by the Maroons and what have been accomplished to date.

In one of the Maroon communities, it was believed that government has an important role to play in the development of the community. There is the need for better infrastructure in terms of roads, potable water supply to homes and the construction of a cultural center in the community. Government has an important role to play in developing ethnic tourism by providing the required resources (Yang et al., 2008) as well as enabling tourism flows and marketing (Yang & Wall, 2016). With this realization, the government of Jamaica through the Ministry of Tourism pledged to assist the Accompong Maroon Community through the improvement of infrastructure to include repairs to roadways and public facilities and new signage. Included in the plans is the construction of a Cultural Centre to enable the preservation of cultural practices through the development of talents and capabilities. This village will be the first to be included in the general marketing thrust to market experiences in Jamaica. The aim is to promote the annual January 6 Maroon Festival held in the community and improve visitor count to the area (Jamaica Observer, 2017).

It was deduced from the interview, that one of the Maroon communities has actually developed a working relationship with the government where plans are in place to construct a recreation area and reinstate the original Maroon village. The aim is to provide gainful employment and generate income.

5 FURTHER DISCUSSION

The study explored heritage tourism within the framework of ethnic identity by examining tourism as a tool for promoting the ethnic identity and traditions of the Maroons in Jamaica. The findings show that tourism has the potential to not only promote the Maroon's identity and traditions but also to retain them for generations to come. Tourism provides a structured approach for the showcasing of their heritage and traditions to visitors and in doing so, these practices are being passed on to the younger generation as they themselves are involved in the activities.

The main significance of the study is that tourism can be used as a tool for sustaining ethnic identity under the premise of ethnic tourism which is a form of heritage tourism. This finding can therefore be generalized to other ethnic groups in Jamaica as well as other Maroon communities in the Caribbean and South America with both regions being renowned tourist destinations. The ethnicity and traditions of these aborigines or indigenous sects will be preserved and this can rebuild ethnic pride. Although the Maroons are integrated into the respective country's social and political affairs, they will remain distinct as an ethnic group and maintain communalism. Aside from emotive benefits, ethnic groups can benefit from sustainable heritage or ethnic tourism businesses through performances and the selling of craft and artifacts to visitors.

For the Maroon's ethnicity to be used for and maintained through tourism, proper planning, coordination, training and financing would be required. In addition, there is the need for resources such as infrastructure development to include accessible roadways and transportation to these communities as well as road signage and other infrastructure. These plans are to be considered and implemented by the tourism ministry through its agencies. Both parties stand to benefit as ethnic tourism will diversify the tourism product from the mass concept of sun, sand and sea, creating more attractions and deriving additional revenue. The government needs to put more focus on this type of tourism by creating the policy framework to institutionalize ethnic tourism for the Maroon sect. Private sector entities in tourism can likewise enable ethnic tourism through partnership with the Maroons. This can be achieved through planned tours from the hotels to these communities and having Maroon performances as a part of their entertainment packages in hotels, restaurants and events.

A major contribution of the study is that it will advance the literature on ethnic tourism and its role in preserving culture and traditions. Future studies can extensively examine the role of government and other stakeholders in sustaining the ethnic identity of the Jamaican Maroons through ethnic tourism. Likewise, a comparative analysis of the factors that are hindering and promoting the Maroons' identity in Jamaica with other Maroon communities across the Caribbean can be carried out.

6 CONCLUSIONS

The Maroon communities in Jamaica were established as free villages when the slaves fled the colonial plantations to the mountainous regions of the country. These African descendants are endowed with unique ethnic traditions, however, their inter-ethnic rivalries, lack of internal resources, the decline in ethnic pride and over-reliance on external resources have been identified as factors that are hindering them from sustaining their ethnic identity. Nonetheless, the leaders in these communities are using their best efforts to promote and preserve the heritage and identity of this ethnic group despite these influences. This determination to preserve the Maroon's ethnic identity is being enabled by the respective community annual celebrations as well as through their cultural performances to include dancing, drumming and singing. Overall, the Maroon communities are aiming at sustaining their ethnic identity through ethnic tourism which is a form of heritage tourism.

The government is having a better appreciation of the Maroon's ethnicity and is aiming to improve, develop and market their tourism product, which will subsequently enable the further preservation of their culture. This is reassuring as Jamaica's tourism industry's constant reliance on external resources and investments from other countries can hinder the destination's ability to grow sustainably. Ethnic tourism by way of the Maroon sect can be among the special interest tourism offerings.

A major limitation of the study is that the in-depth interviews were conducted three years prior to the publication of this study. In addition, current literature particularly on the subject matters of ethnic tourism and the Maroon communities in Jamaica was not available for review and analysis. Likewise, the location and terrain of the Maroon communities made it difficult to visit these locations to conduct the face-to-face interview as well as observe their traditions and surroundings.

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COMMENTARY

The decline of book reviews in tourism discipline

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1 COMMENTARY

The psychological motivations to write a short note on the importance of book review in the fields of tourism coincides with my appointment as book review editor of the Journal of Tourism, Heritage & Services Marketing. In this respect, one might speculate the tradition of a book review is far from being consolidated in tourism research. As Korstanje (2010) observes, book reviews not only provides fresh insight to other scholars of new advances in the discipline –first and foremost in case of polemic theses- but validates a second viewpoint to the involving authors. In the English speaking circles, book reviewers are well-renowned experts in the fields they are convoked (Korstanje 2010). Sometimes books are accepted and published in consideration of the potential profits, not the content quality. Under some conditions, books are certainly published by the author´s reputation with minor remarks in the review process (Korstanje, 2010). Having said this, the book review strips out the veils of the editorial project from its sainthood. Beyond any speculation, it is safe to say that the book review process is a vital part of the professional maturation of any discipline and applied-research (Goldthorpe, 1973). At a closer look, books often are published out of the strict peer review process which is proper of academic journals. In other cases, the culture of publishing and perish marks the pace of professional researchers who are pushed to publish full-length papers instead of books (Hall, 2011; Korstanje 2016). The problem of metrics and the obsession to publish in top-ranked journals –probably with the end of improving the citation impacts- leads invariably to a crisis of identity in the field which merits to be discussed (Fennell 2013). Interesting studies show how while the number of publications exponentially increased over the recent decades, the numbers of research notes or book reviews slump down (Ertas & Kozak, 2020). As book series editor of two leading publishers, I hold that it is hard to select distinguished authors or voices, which had the time either to write or edit a book in our days. They often exclaim: I am interested but you know, I need to publish two papers in Q1 journals to keep my position as professor, or my university only pays me for published papers in journals indexed in Scopus or WOS. Quite aside from this, academic pressure in scholars to publish in peer review journals seems to be a point that has not been widely approached (Buckley 2019). This begs the following vexed questions: what is a peer-review process and why is it so important for tourism-related scholars?

At a first look, a peer review process includes the revision of colleagues who are expert in the field who make a substantial or minor objection to the manuscript. Whenever the identity of the author and reviewers is not open, it calls the blind review process. Academicians strongly believe the process is more objective under the blind review process and a simple peer review stage. If readers ask me, this is far from being true!

The process is certainly based on countless contradictions, errors and discrepancies that often a small portion of what is being published is a high-quality piece (Tobin & Roth, 2002). Ideological or partisan viewpoints without mentioning the surface of the idiomatic barrier during the process of publication (De Vries, Marshall & Stein, 2009). To the best of my knowledge, the manuscript is subject to three or four rounds of revision, some of them in charge of different reviewers. Not only this delays the publication times but also puzzles researchers who are passively forced to face unjust and harsh comments, above all when English is not their primary option. As a result of this, reviewers exert pressure on authors when the main argumentation of the text does not match with their views. This seems to be particularly true when managerial viewpoints collide with sociological one in the tourism-research. Since the review is not paid, the lack of descent reviewers is one of the headaches of editors. What is equally important, the top-ranked journals receive hundreds of submission in the month, most of them of low quality. The editorial board member list appears to be not enough to

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manage the flow of incoming manuscripts, in which case, editors make the decision to perform high desk-rejection rates. The negative effects of these rejections are threefold. Firstly, since the review process follows an emotional logic, authors desist to submit new initiatives to the journals where they were mistreated; doubtless affecting the credibility of the journal. Secondly, editors should take attention to minor points instead of the common-thread argument of the text. To put the same in bluntly, texts are simply rejected by editors because of some minor grammar issues or the lack of updating in the bibliography. Potential good papers are declined because of minor issues. Secondly, reviewers sometimes recommend their publications (to enhance their citation impact) or press authors to cite 5 works previously published in the targeted journal. These unethical practices harm not only the innovative works which commonly confront with the dominant paradigm but also in the resulted quality. Third, authors are exaggeratedly compelled to cite their own works in which case, the reviewer knows exactly who is or are the authors.

In a nutshell, there is an erroneous belief that punctuates those journals featured of high-rejection levels are most prestigious than those low-rejection rates. In consequence, a whole portion of scholars and professional researchers jostle to publish in top-tiered outlets while low-tiered journals are on the brink of collapse (Seglen, 1997). The culture of publishing or perish is, in fact, a war of all against all, with no clear winners, at least to the long-run. In the mid of this mayhem, it is tempting to say that books are not being considered by academicians to make public their recent advancements (Korstanje 2010).

As the previous argument is given, scientific journals pursue scientific methods which mean either the possibility to recreate outcomes at a later stage or validating the previous hypothesis following the marked path. The peer-review process is essential in the configuration of scientific knowledge because the information is validated and tested by experts (Spier, 2002). The problem lies in the fact that in tourism fields, journals are not scientific but marketing-led magazines. The publications one may read in the leading tourism journals are studied based on consumers´ motivations, push and pull factors, organic image destination or tourism management. As Adrian Franklin (2007) puts it, one of the problems of tourism research seems to be the tourist-centricity, which exhibits an uncanny obsession to understand what the tourist believes. The tourist situates, in this way, as the only credible source of information for professional field workers. In the same way, tourism research mainly consists of interviews or open-end questionnaires administered to tourists or visitors in different transport hubs, hotels or airports. This tourist-centricity is gradually leading the epistemology of tourism into a serious crisis. Invariably, so to speak, other voices and methods are relegated to the periphery. For some voices, it marks the triumph of the managerial perspective over the sociological perspective (Harris, Wilson & Altejevic, 2007; Tribe 1997; 2007; 2010). Quite aside from this, let´s remind readers the significant importance of books to knowledge production, at the best the method I have been educated when I pursue the anthropology degree.

Scientific papers are often seen as objective pieces that crystallize a mix-balanced argument oriented to test hypotheses by the application of a rational method. There are a lot of guidebooks, and tips in the social network explaining and indicating how to write a coherent scientific paper to avoid desk-rejection (Spier, 2002; Davis, Davis & Dunagan, 2012).

Above all, scientific production coincides with scientific communication (Duppe & Weintraub, 2014). I start from the premise that papers crystallize a stage of maturation –in applied research- where previous ideas, prejudices and hypotheses are empirically tested, but what is more important papers come from the critical reasoning only books give. To yield theory, fieldworkers should dive into the magic world of books, which provide with the bones to the flesh. Books not only allow all-encompassing viewpoints but they are the conceptual tenets of applied research. Of course, because of time and space, books contain information, debates and theories which are impossible to reflect in a manuscript twelve pages of length. To write a good paper, the first step consists in reviewing a seminal book. A book review seems to be simply a net of critical ideas about the main argument of the book, or a description of its chapter. The review should attend three main relevant aspects: why did the author study the theme or what is his socio-economic context? what has he or she said? And what are the limitations or contradictions of the book?

A book review is a very important piece that places the main argumentation under the critical lens of the scrutiny of the expert. Above all, in a moment of the editorial market where not all books are certainly peer-reviewed. The books review, solicited or not, still remains as the most important face of applied research. Some voices agree that unsolicited book reviews run the risk to be written by lay-persons, postgraduate students –but not experts. So preferably is the solicited book review, but it is not limited to. Excellent book reviews have been performed by students and lay-persons interested in a specific topic. Needless to say, the set of different reviews –all they organized revolving around the same topic- result in an essay review. For doing an essay-review, authors should synthesize each review in no more than five or six lines, stressing on the different conceptual lens of authors to approach the same theme, their commonalities, and differences of methods as well as their conceptual limitations or involuntarily flaws. Ultimately, a coherent abridged version of the full essay review comes to fruition in the state of the art of the next applied research.

Any scientific paper is mainly centered on three clear-cut pillars; so to say, a thorough review of the specialized literature which stems from the reading of scientific materials, books, journals and proceedings accompanied by a selection of the best theory that explains the problem placed by authors in the introduction. Here some scholars somehow misunderstand the difference between the state of the art and the theoretical framework. While the former represents all that has been published in consonance with the studied object, the latter signals to the most optimal theory carefully selected by the researcher to be empirically validated or discarded. Neither the state of the art not the theoretical framework successfully goes ahead without books. Finally, the empirical validation of dataset, as well as the operationalization of measured variables, takes part of the empirical (last) section of the research.

Hence this short note encourages scholars to review books while alerting on the problem of the obsession for full-length papers. In his trailblazing book, The Sociological Imagination, Charles Wright Mills (2000) call the attention on the importance of the books to skip the humdrum routine of the peer-review process and scientific papers. Per his viewpoint, any discipline evolves according to a moment of imagination, disruption or creation which takes a room with the art of writing books. Wright Mills exerts a caustic critique on what he dubbed as "theories of middle-range" which mean the rise of applied research saturated with empirical information that goes nowhere. In fact, he strongly believed that theories of middle-range will put the sociology into a conceptual stagnation.

Although rich in information these theories lack any critical and new (innovative) perspective, validating or recreating the conditions towards an ecological fallacy. For the sake of clarity, an ecological fallacy can be defined as a set of ideas, stereotypes or beliefs based on a formal fallacy (speculation) that happens when inferences about the nature of individuals are deducted from the inferences about the collective to which individuals belong. To put this in bluntly, a common ecological fallacy is given in the field of risk perception when researchers obtain the conclusion that indicates women feel further risks than men. Researchers erroneously infer genre correlates directly to risk perception. A closer look of the same data reveals the opposite so to speak, both genres perceive risk in the same way. While women are socialized to express their emotions, men repress their inner-world sublimating his fear in angry. Last but not least, book review not only is an important task for the evolution of the discipline but the touchstone of empirical research. For these reasons, students, professional researchers and consecrated scholars should never forsake the custom to review books to expand their constellations and horizons. All said leads me to believe that books and book review are always the touchstone of professional research.

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BOOK REVIEW

Tourism Development in post soviet Nations: From communism to capitalism

Susan Slocum & Valeria Klitsounova (eds). 2020. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, ISBN 978-303030715-8

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1 BOOOK REVIEW

At the best for the scholarship, tourism and the capitalist system of production seem to be inextricably intertwined. The WWII end not only accelerated the expansion of Western economies but laid the foundations towards stable economic institutions for the multiplication of international travels and mobile cultures. Although the point was widely investigated in the literature less attention was given to the rise of tourism in the post soviet world. Susan Slocum & Valeria Klitsounova´s edited book fills the gap in this direction. The present editorial project in question is formed by 13 chapters which are organized in two clear cut parts. The first (prefatory) chapter discusses theoretically the institutional challenges of post-soviet nations while the second one provides empirical study cases with a fresh focus on the importance of rural tourism to stimulate leisure consumption practices. On this introductory chapter in charge of editors speaks us of the soviet dismantling as well as the opportunities posed over tourism as a mechanism of development in the post soviet economies in Eastern Europe. Editors emphasize on the merits of the book which coincides with the ammunition of different case-studies given by non-English native speakers, probably confronting with the Anglo-Saxon ethnocentrism. The Soviet collapse was accompanied by the formation of a new national identity which incorporated liberal cultural values as consumerism and cultural exploitation –both key forces in the consolidation of the tourism industry, as Slocum & Klitsounova adhere. Tourism development goes through three different stages such as the period of socialism (1945-1990), the transition (1990-2004) and global emergence (since 2005). While the former signals to a period marked by low mobilities economically financed by the state, the latter refers to a gradual opening of visa restriction that encouraged many international flights without mentioning foreign investment. The global emergence starts with the opening of the EU (European Union) to Eastern markets. This new global world enters in conflict with the old long-dormant values of socialism and its legacy. To some extent, this conceptual model keeps constant in all revised chapters.

In the second chapter, Ruukel, Reimann & Tooman explore the development of rural tourism in Estonia. The collapse of the Soviet Union presses Estonia to re-accommodate production in rural farms passing from agriculture to tourism

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as the main form of commercial activity. The bankruptcy of farmers started a new privatization process which gradually attracted numerous foreign investors interested in developing tourism. The third chapter (which is authored by Stankova et al.) describes the pre and post-communist tourism policies destination in Bulgaria. Most certainly, Bulgaria represents a unique case in regards to the rest of the soviet bloc. Since 1980s Bulgaria is a targeted destination not only for Soviet but Western nations. Far from being liberated from the cage, the collapse of the Soviet Union affected negatively tourism industry in Bulgaria –while losing its dominant position before Greece, Turkey and other destinations. In consonance with this, P. Zmyslony & M. Nowacki offer a fourth chapter which delves in the connection of politics and Polish urban tourism. Using Butler´ method (TALC) as a predictive instrument, authors hold that the evolution of Polish tourism was mainly determined by the deregulation of the market as well as the formation of legal institutions to replace Moscow´s restrictions. However, tourism development was subject to some cyclical disruptions, as authors lament. The fifth chapter (S. Wroblewski et al.) dissects the necessary institutional changes for promoting tourism in Kazakhstan in the post-Soviet era. In this country, tourism development occurred in two different stages. Since the 90s decade, a disorganized growth of outbound travel enterprises arose escaping to the state-planning or intervention while a second period ranging from 2001 to date was marked by the sanction of Law on tourist Activity in the Republic of Kazakhstan. The same bottom-up growth replicates in the sixth chapter which is limited to analyze the case of Slovakia (Kucerova, Gajdosik, Elexova). The chapter shows how in spite of the several tourism awards granted by the European Union to foster tourism in the region serious material asymmetries proper of the post-socialist era widely persisted.

The second part of the book which is shaped by empirical-based chapters is oriented to validate the conceptual model presented in the introductory chapter by Susan Slocum & Valeria Klitsounova. Budapest, Hungary, is the epicenter of Kay Smith & Puczko´s chapter which stresses the positive role of the image branding (over Hungary) in comparison with other Eastern destinations. The eighth chapter authored by S. Stoyanova-Bozhkova places the pro tourism discourse in the last 20 years in the critical lens of scrutiny. Although tourism governance has been valorized by authorities as an efficient instrument towards development less planning and appropriate monitoring take place in politics. Bulgaria starts from the urgency of radical transformations that are not prioritized by local authorities. The ninth chapter written by M. Campelj reviews carefully the ebbs and flows of tourist guides as a leading professional option -career- in Slovenia. Tourist guides occupy a central position mediating between hosts and foreigner guests. Taking the cue from Salazar´s concept of cultural immersion facilitator, which means those facilitators organized to negotiation through selective identifying segments of local culture to be shared with visitors, the chapter gives a fresh insight on the challenges of Slovenia to develop tourism as well as the leading tourist guides shall play in the years to come.

In the tenth chapter, V. Klitsounova describes with detail the potential of networking and clustering as a vehicle towards creativity to promote Belarus as an international destination. The formation of tourism clusters allows a rapid formation of valid diagnosis to understand the interaction between a private and public organization in a Post Soviet context. The concept which is forged in the introduction alludes to the transformation of rural destinations equipped with low infrastructure which characterizes the classic economies of Soviet republics towards new market-based economies which face new challenges and problems. The eleventh chapter (Graja-Zwolinska, MacKowiack, & Majewski) goes in that direction, as well as a twelfth chapter (Englander & Robitashvili) which focuses on Georgian experience. The last chapter on the ink of editors, S. Slocum & V. Klitsounova centers on the commonalities of selected chapters. The Soviet Union´s collapse not only put the region with an emerging transformative process but also with daunting challenges. The annexation of Eastern economies to West (UE) accelerated the passage of classic domestic tourism to international demand. This poses serious challenges and risks for Eastern economies, problems which have been very well materialized in the book. The Post-soviet nations go through what experts dub as transitional economy which denotes the radical transformation oriented to form market-based institutions while undermining centrally-planned economy to private investment. The book addresses with different scenarios which range from the financial support given by the EU to some eastern economies to the resistances of other economies to adopt the westernized model of tourism development without mentioning the lack of progress in attracting further international segments.

After further inspection, this book, at the best for this reviewer, consists of a compilation of high-quality chapters that revolve around the needs of describing the radical shift of Eastern economies while adopting a westernized version of the tourism industry. Although the Soviet Union stimulated domestic tourism, it creates some financial unbalances which remain in Eastern economies even to date. The adoption of international tourism opens the doors to new forms of consumption but at the same time, it puts some risks for involving stakeholders. Tourism governance occupies a central position to keep economic stability in the Post Soviet World. In sum, this is a recommendable book for those economists, sociologists, tourism experts moved to understand tourism beyond the borders of the dominant paradigm forged by westernized models.

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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:

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Corrigenda submitted by the original authors are published if the scientific accuracy or reproducibility of the original paper is compromised. JTHSM will publish corrigenda if there is an error in the published author list, but not usually for overlooked acknowledgements.
Readers wishing to draw the journal's attention to a significant published error should submit their comments as a "Letter to the Editor". Such "Letters to the Editor" will be carefully reviewed by unrelated and neutral referees. On editorial acceptance, the paper will be sent to the authors of the original paper to provide an opportunity for their early response.
Addenda are judged on the significance of the addition to the interpretation of the original publication. Addenda do not contradict the original publication, but if the authors inadvertently omitted significant information available to them at the time, this material will be published as an addendum after peer review.
Retractions are judged according to whether the main conclusion of the paper is seriously undermined as a result, for example, of subsequent information coming to light of which the authors were not aware at the time of publication. In the case of experimental papers, this can include e.g. further experiments by the authors or by others which do not confirm the main experimental conclusion of the original publication.
Readers wishing to draw the editors' attention to published work requiring retraction should first contact the authors of the original paper and then write to the journal, including copies of the correspondence with the authors (whether or not the correspondence has been answered). The editors will seek advice from reviewers if they judge that the information is likely to draw into question the main conclusions of the published paper.

Infringements of professional ethical codes, such as multiple submission, bogus claims of authorship, plagiarism, fraudulent use of data, or the like, will also result in an article being retracted.

All co-authors will be asked to agree to a retraction. In cases where some co-authors decline to sign a retraction, the editors reserve the right to publish the retraction with the dissenting author(s) identified.

Article removal: in very rare circumstances it may be necessary to remove an article from JTHSM. This will only occur where the article is clearly defamatory, or infringes others' legal rights, or where the article is, or there is good reason to expect it will be, the subject of a court order, or where the article, if acted upon, might pose a serious health risk.

In these circumstances, while the bibliographic information (title and authors) will be retained online, the text will be replaced with a page indicating that the article has been removed for legal reasons.

Journal Sections

EDITORIAL

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.

FULL (RESEARCH) PAPERS

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.

CASE STUDIES

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 the readers of the Journal of Tourism, Heritage & Services Marketing. Each article should have the following structure: a) abstract, b) introduction (including an overall presentation of the case to be examined and the aims and objectives of the article), c) main body (including, where appropriate, the review of literature, the presentation of the case study, the critical review of the case and relevant discussion), d) conclusions (including also, where appropriate, recommendations, practical implications, and suggestions for further study), e) bibliography, f) acknowledgements, and g) appendices. All Case Studies are subject to blind peer review (by at least two anonymous referees). The decision for the final acceptance of the article will be taken unanimously by the Editor and by the Associate Editor.

RESEARCH NOTES

Research Notes should be no longer than 3,000 words and not shorter than 1,000; these papers may be either empirical or conceptual, and will be subject to 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 may present research-in-progress or my focus on the conceptual development of models and approaches that have not been proven yet through primary research. In all cases, the papers should provide original ideas, approaches or preliminary findings that are open to discussion. Purely descriptive accounts may be considered suitable for this section, provided that are well-justified and of interest to the readers of JTHSM. 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.

BOOK REVIEWS

Book Reviews should be no longer than 1,500 words and not shorter than 1,000; these articles aim at presenting and critically reviewing books from the greater field of tourism, heritage, services and marketing. Most reviews should focus on new publications, but older books are also welcome for presentation. Book Reviews are not subject to blind peer review; the decision for the final acceptance of the article will be taken unanimously by the Editor-in-Chief and by the Book & Conference Reviews Editor. Where appropriate, these articles may include references and bibliography. Books to be reviewed may be assigned to potential authors by the Book & Conference Reviews Editor, though JTHSM is also open to unsolicited suggestions for book reviews from interested parties.

CONFERENCE REPORTS

Conference Reports should be no longer than 2,000 words and not shorter than 1,000; these articles aim at presenting and critically reviewing conferences from the greater field of tourism, heritage, services and marketing. Most reports should focus on recent conferences (i.e., conferences that took place not before than three months from the date of manuscript submission), but older conferences are also welcome for presentation if appropriate. Conference Reports are not subject to blind peer review; the decision for the final acceptance of the article will be taken unanimously by the Editor-in-Chief and by the Book & Conference Reports Editor. Where appropriate, these articles may include references and bibliography. Conference reports may be assigned to potential authors by the Book & Conference Reports Editor, though JTHSM is also open to unsolicited suggestions for reports from interested parties.

INDUSTRY VIEWPOINTS

Industry Viewpoints should be no longer than 1,500 words and not shorter than 500; these articles may have a "commentary" form, and aim at presenting and discussing ideas, views and suggestions by practitioners (marketing industry professionals, marketing planners, policy makers, other marketing stakeholders, etc.). Through these articles, JTHSM provides a platform for the exchange of ideas and for developing closer links between academics and practitioners. Most viewpoints should focus on contemporary issues, but other issues are also welcome for presentation if appropriate. Industry Viewpoints are not subject to blind peer review; the decision for the final acceptance of the article will be taken unanimously by the Editor-in-Chief and by the Associate Editor. These articles may be assigned to potential authors by the editor, though JTHSM is also open to unsolicited contributions from interested parties.

Notes for Authors

MANUSCRIPT SUBMISSION

Manuscripts should be written as understandably and concisely as possible with clarity and meaningfulness. Submission of a manuscript to the Journal of Tourism, Heritage & Services Marketing represents a certification on the part of the author(s) that it is an original work and has not been copyrighted elsewhere; manuscripts that are eventually published may not be reproduced in any other publication (print or electronic). Submissions are accepted only in electronic form; authors are requested to submit manuscripts (full research papers, case studies, research notes and all other types of manuscripts) through Easy Chair online submission system used by JTHSM, accessible at: https://easychair.org/conferences/?conf=jthsm1
All submissions should include author's and co-authors' – if any – ORCID (compulsory for all submissions since volume 5, issue 1, 2019).
Feedback regarding the submission of a manuscript (including the 3 anonymous reviewers' comments) will be provided to the author(s) within six weeks of the receipt of the manuscript. Submission of a manuscript will be held to imply that it contains original unpublished work not being considered for publication elsewhere at the same time. If appropriate, author(s) can correct first proofs. Manuscripts submitted to JTHSM, accepted for publication or not, cannot be returned to the author(s).

MANUSCRIPT LENGTH

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.

MANUSCRIPT STYLE & PREPARATION

All submissions (research papers, research notes, case studies, book reviews, conference reports, industry viewpoints, and forthcoming events) must have a title of no more than 10 words.
Manuscripts should be double-line spaced, and have at least 2,5 cm (one-inch) margin on all four sides. Pages should be numbered consecutively.
The use of footnotes within the text is discouraged – use endnotes instead. Endnotes should be kept to a minimum, be used to provide additional comments and discussion, and should be numbered consecutively in the text and typed on a separate page at the end of the article.
Quotations must be taken accurately from the original source. Alterations to the quotations must be noted. Quotation marks (" ") are to be used to denote direct quotes. Inverted commas (' ') should denote a quote within a quotation. If the quotation is less than 3 lines, then it should be included in the main text enclosed in quotation marks. If the quotation is more than 3 lines, then it should be separated from the main text and indented.
The name(s) of any sponsor(s) of the research contained in the manuscript, or any other acknowledgements, should appear at the very end of the manuscript.
Tables, figures and illustrations are to be included in the text and to be numbered consecutively (in Arabic numbers). Each table, figure or illustration must have a title.
The text should be organized under appropriate section headings, which, ideally, should not be more than 500-700 words apart.
The main body of the text should be written in Times New Roman letters, font size 12.
Section headings should be written in Arial letters, font size 12, and should be marked as follows: primary headings should be centered and typed in bold capitals and underlined; secondary headings should be typed with italic bold capital letters; other headings should be typed in capital letters. Authors are urged to write as concisely as possible, but not at the expense of clarity.
The preferred software for submission is Microsoft Word.
Authors submitting papers for publication should specify which section of the journal they wish their paper to be considered for: research papers, research notes, case studies, book reviews, conference reports, industry viewpoints, and forthcoming events.
Author(s) are responsible for preparing manuscripts which are clearly written in acceptable, scholarly English, and which contain no errors of spelling, grammar, or punctuation. Neither the Editorial Board nor the Publisher is responsible for correcting errors of spelling or grammar.
Where acronyms are used, their full expression should be given initially.

Authors are asked to ensure that there are no libelous implications in their work.

MANUSCRIPT PRESENTATION

For submission, manuscripts of research papers, research notes and case studies should be arranged in the following order of presentation:
First page: title, subtitle (if required), author's name and surname, author's ORCID (compulsory for all submissions since volume 5, issue 1, 2019), affiliation, full postal address, telephone number and e-mail address. Respective names, affiliations, emails and addresses of co-author(s) should be clearly indicated. Also, include an abstract of not less than 100 and not more than 150 words and up to 5 keywords that identify article content. Also include a short biography of the author (about 25 words); in the case of co-author(s), the same details should also be included. All correspondence will be sent to the first named author, unless otherwise indicated.
Second page: title, an abstract of not more than 100 words and up to 5 keywords that identify article content. Do not include the author(s) details, affiliation(s), and biographies in this page.
Subsequent pages: the paper should begin on the third page and should not subsequently reveal the title or authors. In these pages should be included the main body of text (including tables, figures and illustrations); list of references; appendixes; and endnotes (numbered consecutively).
The author(s) should ensure that their names cannot be identified anywhere in the text.

GUIDANCE ON WRITING ABSTRACTS

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:

- ***Purpose***: describes the objectives and hypotheses of the research.
- ***Methods***: describes important features of your research design, data, and analysis. This may include the sample size, geographic location, demographics, variables, controls, conditions, tests, descriptions of research design, details of sampling techniques, and data gathering procedures.
- ***Results***: describes the key findings of the study, including experimental, correlational, or theoretical results. It may also provide a brief explanation of the results.
- ***Implications***: show how the results connect to policy and practice, and provide suggestions for follow-up, future studies, or further analysis.

REFERENCING STYLE

In the text, references should be cited with parentheses using the "author, date" style – for example for single citations (Ford, 2004), or for multiple citations (Isaac, 1998; Jackson, 2003). Page numbers for specific points or direct quotations must be given (i.e., Ford, 2004: 312-313). The Reference list, placed at the end of the manuscript, must be typed in alphabetical order of authors. The specific format is:

- *For journal papers:* Tribe, J. (2002). The philosophic practitioner. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 29(2), pp. 338-357.
- *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.
- *For papers presented in conferences:* Ford, B. (2004). Adoption of innovations on hospitality. *Paper presented at the 22nd EuroCHRIE Conference.* Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey: 3-7 November 2004.
- *For papers published in conference proceedings:* Jackman, F. (2008). Adoption of innovations on hospitality. *Proceedings the 26th EuroCHRIE Conference.* Dubai, United Arab Emirates.
- *For unpublished works:* Gregoriades, M. (2004). The impact of trust in brand loyalty, *Unpublished PhD Thesis.* Chios, Greece: University of the Aegean.
- *For Internet sources (if you know the author)*: Johns, D. (2003) The power of branding in tourism. Http://www.tourismabstracts.org/marketing/papers-authors/id3456. Accessed the 12 th of January 2005, at 14:55. (Note: always state clearly the full URL of your source)
- *For Internet sources (if you do not know the author)*: Tourism supply and demand. Http://www.tourismabstracts.org/marketing/papers-authors/id3456. Accessed the 30 th of January 2004, at 12:35. (Note: always state clearly the full URL of your source)
- *For reports:* Edelstein, L. G. & Benini, C. (1994). *Meetings and Conventions*. Meetings market report (August), 60-82.

PLAGIARISM

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Authorship confers credit and has important academic, social, and financial implications. Authorship also implies responsibility and accountability for published work. The following recommendations are intended to ensure that contributors who have made substantive intellectual contributions to a paper are given credit as authors, but also that contributors credited as authors understand their role in taking responsibility and being accountable for what is published.
The JHTSM recommends that authorship be based on the following 4 criteria:

- Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; AND
- Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content; AND
- Final approval of the version to be published; AND
- Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

In addition to being accountable for the parts of the work he or she has done, an author should be able to identify which co-authors are responsible for specific other parts of the work. In addition, authors should have confidence in the integrity of the contributions of their co-authors.
All those designated as authors should meet all four criteria for authorship, and all who meet the four criteria should be identified as authors. Those who do not meet all four criteria should be acknowledged as contributors (see below). These authorship criteria are intended to reserve the status of authorship for those who deserve credit and can take responsibility for the work. The criteria are not intended for use as a means to disqualify colleagues from authorship who otherwise meet authorship criteria by denying them the opportunity to meet criterion 2 or 3 (see above). Therefore, all individuals who meet the first criterion should have the opportunity to participate in the review, drafting, and final approval of the manuscript.
The individuals who conduct the work are responsible for identifying who meets these criteria and ideally should do so when planning the work, making modifications as appropriate as the work progresses. It is the collective responsibility of the authors, not the journal to which the work is submitted, to determine that all people named as authors meet all four criteria; it is not the role of journal editors to determine who qualifies or does not qualify for authorship or to arbitrate authorship conflicts. If agreement cannot be reached about who qualifies for authorship, the institution(s) where the work was performed, not the journal editor, should be asked to investigate. If authors request removal or addition of an author after manuscript submission or publication, journal editors should seek an explanation and signed statement of agreement for the requested change from all listed authors and from the author to be removed or added.
The corresponding author is the one individual who takes primary responsibility for communication with the journal during the manuscript submission, peer review, and publication process, and typically ensures that all the journal's administrative requirements, such as providing details of authorship, ethics committee approval, clinical trial registration documentation, and gathering conflict of interest forms and statements, are properly completed, although these duties may be delegated to one or more coauthors. The corresponding author should be available throughout the submission and peer review process to respond to editorial queries in a timely way, and should be available after publication to respond to critiques of the work and cooperate with any requests from the journal for data or additional information should questions about the paper arise after publication.
When a large multi-author group has conducted the work, the group ideally should decide who will be an author before the work is started and confirm who is an author before submitting the manuscript for publication. All members of the group named as authors should meet all four criteria for authorship, including approval of the final manuscript, and they should be able to take public responsibility for the work and should have full confidence in the accuracy and integrity of the work of other group authors. They will also be expected as individuals to complete conflict-of-interest disclosure forms.

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Publication Ethics & Malpractice Policy

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This journal has adopted a comprehensive publication ethics and publication malpractice statement, composed using the publishing ethics resource kit and in compliance with Elsevier recommendations and COPE guidelines, as described in-details bellow.

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The Editor-in-Chief and any editorial staff do not disclose any information about a submitted manuscript to anyone other than the corresponding author, reviewers, potential reviewers, other editorial advisers, and the publisher, as appropriate.
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Unpublished materials disclosed in a submitted manuscript are not used in Editor's or Reviewers' own research without the explicit written consent of the author(s).
Publication decisions
The Editor-in-Chief of *JTHSM* is responsible for deciding which of the submitted articles should be published. The Editor-in-Chief may be guided by the policies of the journal's Editorial Board and constrained by such legal requirements as shall then be in force regarding libel, copyright infringement and plagiarism. The Editor-in-Chief may confer with other editors or reviewers in making this decision.

DUTIES OF PEER REVIEWERS

Contribution to editorial decisions
Peer review assists the Editor-in-Chief in making editorial decisions and, through the editorial communication with the author, may also assist the author in improving the manuscript.
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Reviews should be conducted objectively. Personal criticism of the author is unacceptable. Referees should express their views clearly with appropriate supporting arguments.
Acknowledgement of sources
Reviewers should identify relevant published work that has not been cited by the authors. Any statement that an observation, derivation, or argument had been previously reported should be accompanied by the relevant citation. A reviewer should also call to the JTHSM Editor's attention any substantial similarity or overlap between the manuscript under consideration and any other published data of which they have personal knowledge.
Disclosure and conflict of interest
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Authors reporting results of original research should present an accurate account of the work performed as well as an objective discussion of its significance. Underlying data should be represented accurately in the manuscript. A paper should contain sufficient detail and references to permit others to replicate the work. Fraudulent or knowingly inaccurate statements constitute unethical behaviour and are unacceptable.
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The authors should ensure that they have written entirely original works, and if the authors have used the work and/or words of others they are responsible to ensure that this has

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Authorship should be limited to those who have made a significant contribution to the conception, design, execution, or interpretation of the reported study. All those who have made significant contributions should be listed as coauthors. Where there are others who have participated in certain substantive aspects of the research project, they should be named in an Acknowledgement section. The corresponding author should ensure that all appropriate co-authors (according to the above definition) and no inappropriate co-authors are included in the author list of the manuscript, and that all co-authors have seen and approved the final version of the paper and have agreed to its submission for publication. All submissions should include author's and all co-authors' – if any – ORCID (compulsory for all submissions since volume 5, issue 1, 2019).

Disclosure and conflicts of interest

All authors should disclose in their manuscript any financial or other substantive conflict of interest that might be construed to influence the results or their interpretation in the manuscript. All sources of financial support for the project should be disclosed.

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When an author discovers a significant error or inaccuracy in his/her own published work, it is the author's obligation to promptly notify the journal's Editor-in-Chief and cooperate with them to either retract the paper or to publish an appropriate erratum.

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In cases of alleged or proven scientific misconduct, fraudulent publication or plagiarism the Publisher (School of Business & Economics, International Hellenic University), in close collaboration with the JTHSM Editor-in-Chief, will take all appropriate measures to clarify the situation and to amend the article in question. This includes the prompt publication of an erratum or, in the most severe cases, the complete retraction of the affected work.

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Scientific misconduct includes fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism by the authors.

Breaches of publication ethics include failure to reveal financial conflicts of interest; omitting a deserving author or adding a non-contributing author; misrepresenting publication status in the reference list (erroneously claiming that a paper is "in-press"); self-plagiarism without attribution; and duplicate or redundant publication.

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- Plagiarism is the use of others' ideas or words without properly crediting the source. If authors include one or more sentences verbatim from another source, the original source must be cited and the sentence(s) put in quotation marks to avoid plagiarism. Authors must not use materials of others (text, figures, images, tables) without permission and attribution, including their own published work.
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