International Case Studies for Hospitality, Tourism and Event Management Students and Trainees

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edited by

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Cover from an original painting in acrylic: 'Moli des Torrent', now a restaurant in Santa Maria del Camí, Mallorca, by John Ineson.

This volume is dedicated to

The Brave People of Ukraine

especially

Kateryna Fedosova PhD

for her invaluable and unstinting contribution to the activities of La Fondation pour la Formation Hôtelière

Kateryna is an Associate Professor in the Department of Hotel and Restaurant Business, Odesa National University of Technology in Ukraine, Head of the Restaurant Consulting Group, ConsultingHUB, and Co-owner and Art Director of the Creative Studio, DeFazz; she is a member of the Southern Association of Chefs of Ukraine. When Russia's war in Ukraine began to threaten Odesa, to protect herself, her immediate family and her cat, Kateryna drove them in her car from Ukraine on a European tour of exile through Moldova, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic and Germany to Poland where they stayed for six months then Kateryna moved to Spain where she resides currently.

Disclaimer

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Preface

Volume 14 comprises another series of international case studies, focusing on problems and key issues related to hospitality and tourism management and education. They originate from, or are set, not only in Central and Eastern Europe, including Czech Republic, Hungary, North Macedonia, Poland and Serbia, but also in Germany, Singapore, Spain and the United Kingdom. The contributors, who represent 10 countries, have developed the cases based on their specialist knowledge and real-life experiences. The cases offer students, management trainees and managers opportunities to consider and to respond to realistic scenarios of varying and increasing complexity.

The introduction provides a brief overview of the case study and its possible role in teaching, and training, particularly in cross-disciplinary fields. To provide a suitable format, the cases have been divided into two sections: Part 1, non-revealed and Part 2, revealed. The cases in Parts 1 and 2 may require the students/trainees either to read prior to, or after, the class/training. The Part 2 cases may also necessitate some individual written work and there may be a requirement for further follow up activities or discussions. The main topics covered are: airline travel; carbon footprint calculators; complaints; consumer perspectives; cultural issues; destination branding; ethical considerations; food poisoning; gamification; hotel operations; impacts and consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on education and training; legal issues; life cycle assessment; measuring tourism competitiveness; remote/virtual management education and training; service recovery, sustainability; technology-based solutions; themed restaurants; tour guiding; virtual service learning; and World Tourism Day.

The non-revealed case studies may be distributed as part of a teaching or training session, and responses may be prepared by the individuals, debated by groups of students, trainees or managers, or enacted using role play, to develop a joint solution; the cases focus on at least one curriculum area or department including education and training, food and beverage, hotel operations, restaurants, tour operations, tourist destinations, and transportation. Each of the non-revealed cases poses a series of questions for consideration by students, trainees or managers; the cases may require some preparatory work, in addition to follow-up reading, that the facilitator considers to be advantageous in advance of the discussion sessions.

The revealed case studies are more complex and the students/trainees require time to respond to and prepare responses to the questions or to participate in the activities. They are inter/cross-disciplinary, encouraging consideration of issues and problems that focus on broader managerial, international and cultural perspectives. Some of the revealed cases are accompanied by reading or research suggestions which are recommended in order to respond to the questions and/or inform the participants so that they can conduct the follow-up activities which include: application of theories to practice and justifying recommended course of action; debates; deduction; desk research; local research; location and interpretation of numerical, graphical and verbal information; critiquing and evaluating information in the light of practical and written evidence; ethical considerations; marketing and promotion; planning and designing; problem resolution; making sensible practical recommendations based on evidence; role play; online searching and research projects; groupwork; preparation of programmes, guidelines and presentations; development of typology; drawing diagrams, developing action plans; speech writing; and suggesting strategies for the future.

The case questions and activities are designed to encourage and promote experiential learning, embracing a practical problem-solving approach to achieve the learning outcomes. They are of varying types and levels of difficulty, from very simple to extremely complex, posed to promote activities such as brainstorming followed by practical and theoretical problem-solving. Part 3 includes a series of points to promote initial discussion, or further consideration, of the issues pertaining to each case.

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Introduction

by Graham Stone and Elizabeth M. Ineson

Cases provide a learning strategy through which students and trainees are required to consider, debate and offer possible solutions to the questions posed. They can apply their knowledge of a range of academic theories, and/or their work experiences, to identify, analyse and evaluate the problems involved. Such experiential learning is of value in developing in students and trainees informed and considered managerial decision-making within learning and training environments, where the importance of problem identification and problem-solving skills is emphasised. In turn, a variety of geographical, cultural and different legal contexts provide a framework within which a broad spectrum of learning outcomes can be achieved.

The Role of Case Studies

Case studies are summaries of real-life or simulated business situations, based on personal or "second-hand" experiences, observations, interviews, word-of-mouth information and/or desk/practical research. The cases might incorporate information from within an organisation, for example, past events, stories, critical incidents, etc. as well as external factors and influences. The cases included in this book are all based on, or developed from, real events. They enable management students and trainees to appreciate, comprehend, consider and resolve realistic departmental, inter-departmental and unit/Company problems and situations that may be encountered by guests, operatives, supervisors, managers and/or senior managers in hospitality, tourism and event management. Some of the cases also offer further opportunities to conduct research and to make management decisions and plans, as indicated by the additional activities.

It is emphasised that case studies are designed to make students and trainees aware that, in solving problems, there may not be a clear or single solution; they enable the application of theories in a real-life context, and they provide insight into issues that can assist students/trainees to develop and refine their knowledge and understanding in addition to their analytical and problem-solving abilities. The cases selected for study, at any point in the academic course or training programme, should be appropriate to the abilities and experience of the students and/or trainees and, ideally assist in meeting the learning outcomes/training objectives.

From an academic perspective, case study research is more comprehensive than conducting research on one specific topic. In addressing the more advanced cases, students/trainees are encouraged to collect relevant and appropriate data from a variety of both academic and commercial sources, including the media, as appropriate. They are encouraged, not only to consider this information but also to employ divergent thinking, to brainstorm the case, followed by convergent decision-making to devise and justify the solution(s). Questions such as: 'How?' and 'Why?' need to be addressed in the context of the scenario, paying attention to the human element in terms of customer care and the fair and correct treatment of employees and peers. Such studies allow students and trainees to gain valuable work related, problem-solving and planning, managerial experience without losing money, upsetting customers and staff, or putting themselves or others into positions that might evoke embarrassment, pressure, anger or stress. From a practical perspective, students and trainees need to employ their work and life experiences to offer possible feasible, practical and, when appropriate, cost effective solutions.

Assessment

Case studies allow the assessment not only of knowledge and application but also of higher order skills comprising analysis, synthesis and evaluation. The forms of assessment employed depend on the learning outcomes to be measured, and are at the discretion of the teacher, trainer or facilitator. These may include: individual or group assessment; contribution to debates; written responses in the form of answers to questions; report writing; the development of strategic plans; workplace guidelines; production of training manuals etc.; and/or individual or group presentations. No time limits are set or even recommended for responding to/solving the cases, as these depend on the nature and type of the requested feedback, the specific nature of the assessment employed and the depth to which the issues are examined.

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See also https://www.thecasecentre.org/caseWriting/guidance/articlesBooks

Part 1

Non-revealed Case Studies

The Role of the Tourist Guide – Exceeding Expectations

by Michael Risteski and Mirjana Sekulovska

Nikola was already an accomplished and professional tourist guide with more than 10 years' experience in guiding tours in the Republic of North Macedonia. He worked as a freelancer for domestic and foreign tour operators and travel agencies and was active mostly in his hometown of Ohrid – the tourism centre of his country. Ohrid is the destination with the most registered tourist overnight visitors in North Macedonia (Sekulovska, Marinoski, Nestoroska & Risteski, 2018). The majority of Nikola's tours lasted for between two hours and a full day, but he had also some experience in guiding longer tours of up to several days when his role was that of a tour leader. The walking tour in Ohrid usually took three to four hours to complete. It included visiting several locations in the old town of Ohrid, which is situated on a hill. Ohrid has many sites and sights to offer its visitors; in fact, 'The Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region' is a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site (See https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/99/ for further information). The main function of the professional tourist guide is to lead, coordinate and guide a group of tourists (Mak, Wong & Chang, 2010). Some of the widely known roles of a professional tourist guide are: providing information about the destination; managing emergencies; ensuring the safety of all participants; resolving conflicts; and problem solving (Caber, Unal, Cengizci & Güven, 2019). Professional tourist guides have to manage problems constantly and have to find the best solutions available. They often have to change various components of the tour in order to maintain the tour's quality and keep the participants satisfied (Geva & Goldman, 1991). All these and other roles have to be fulfilled during a tour in a way to meet customers' satisfaction while also trying to increase tourists' intentions to attend future tours. The competition amongst tourist guides was high in Ohrid; if they were charismatic (cf. Teng & Tsaur, 2021), they had the best employment prospects. Nikola was one of the most successful tourist guides, with a high degree of charisma as well as leadership potential.

One day Nikola was guiding a German speaking group that consisted of about 20-25 people who were visiting Ohrid as part of an eight day Balkan trip. Like most of his day tour clientele, the group comprised elderly people who were interested in the rich culture of the place. Although some of these elderly tourists were finding the hilly terrain a little challenging, Nikola was making enough short stops to explain the history of the town, individual sites, the nature, climate or the socio-political situation and everyday life in order for the guests to get some rest before continuing on their walking tour.

Because there was no public toilet in the old part of the town, halfway through the tour a coffee break was arranged it was not difficult to organise the break because there were two coffee shops in the old town, although they were located on opposite sides of the hill. Depending on the details of the programme, Nikola was used to organising a coffee and a comfort break in one of those two establishments, of course, in agreement with the guests. On the day in question, the planned coffee break would take place in the coffee shop next to a beautiful church and important excavation site. The coffee shop, "Ohrid Sun", offered outdoor seating places with a partial view of the lake. It also offered some sweets, cakes and ice cream. Usually the guests were delighted with its location and the toilets were clean, so naturally it was always a desirable choice.

The establishment was not too busy at the time, so the guests could freely choose their seats. The weather was also warm and sunny, perfect for a refreshment stop; however, on this occasion, there was only one person - Kliment - serving in the establishment. As two of his colleagues had not appeared for work, Kliment had to manage everything by himself so he had to be both a waiter and bartender at the same time. This should not have been a problem if the guests had had some time to spare during their tour, but for this particular tour this was not the case. The plan was to finish the tour by noon, because the clients needed free time for lunch following the tour, after which they continued by coach to Albania. It was also a bad idea to rush the guests and encourage them to walk faster during the remainder of the tour.

The tourist guide Nikola assessed the situation and based on his experience, he knew that it would take about 40-50 minutes to serve everyone, including the guests paying for their ordered food and drinks. There were also some individual guests who had just arrived at the 'Ohrid Sun', while others were preparing to pay and leave. Nikola knew that he had to intervene if the group were not to be late for their drive to Albania to enable them to reach the next hotel in a reasonable time. To visit the other coffee shop was out of the question because they already passed it eight minutes ago. Also, the planned tour programme would take them in a different direction to a couple of sites at the back of the hill.

Nikola was in a dilemma: Should he remain informal but professional and explain to his group that there is no time for coffee and that they could only use the toilets and leave the establishment or intervene directly to shorten the time for serving the guests? As some of the guests were already thirsty and others were keen to try a local drink, Nikola asked the waiter, Kliment, if he himself could help with the service, explaining that he had had previous experience as a bartender and waiter. First, all of the guests had to be seated in order not to create a queue at the small bar where, normally, people could order drinks directly. Nikola explained the situation and told the guests to take a seat so that the waiter could take the orders of everyone. Then, after taking all the orders, Kliment proceeded to prepare the food and drinks. Nikola offered to make the coffees on the coffee machine, while Kliment made the special coffees, like Turkish coffee. Turkish coffee is served on a small tray with a cup and *gjezve* – a small, long-handled pot in which the coffee is prepared and brewed. The guests are expected to pour the coffee by themselves into their cups. This method of serving coffee was attractive to the guests; therefore, the group ordered several such special coffees.

Some guests noticed that the tourist guide was working in the bar himself and that he had started to make coffees on the coffee machine and prepare other drinks. After preparing drinks for three tables the tourist guide Nikola came outside with the ordered drinks on a serving tray and proceeded to serve them to the guests. Then he went back inside to prepare more drinks. With his help, everyone in the party was served quite swiftly. The guests were surprised by the tourist guide's competence in service provision, bearing in mind that for the past 1.5 hours they listened to his detailed explanation of the local history and culture, about which he was very knowledgeable. They were also amused by being served by the tourist guide himself, who was obviously experienced in drinks' preparation and service.

After serving all the guests, Nikola sat and chatted with them and answered their questions. The questions were not only about Ohrid but also why he had served them and his previous experience as a bartender/waiter, as well as other personal questions. Through his decision to help, the tourist guide was able to develop a more informal approach with the tour group so initiating more questions during the second part of the tour. The guests became more actively involved in the tour itself after the coffee break so Nikola's involvement had enriched the tour group's overall experience that day; the group's reviews, ratings and tips indicated that the guests all had a special and satisfying tour of Ohrid.

After the tour, Nikola went back to the establishment by himself to speak with the manager in order to discuss the problem. The direct intervention by him in the process of preparing and serving drinks was only possible because the establishment was not crowded. If there had been more than a few additional guests, he would not have intervened because the other customers would have mistaken him as part of the hospitality staff in the establishment. Nikola also explained to the manager that some of his tour groups just did not have the available time to spend in their establishment unless the service was speedy due to the nature and structure of their programmes.

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Questions

1. What might the tourist guide do in the future in order not to face the same problem again?
2. What might have been the reasons for the problems that arose in the coffee shop?
3. Was it a wise decision to take direct action in serving his guests of the tour? Justify your response.
4. What are your recommendations regarding anticipation of, and solutions for, this problem?

Professor Freeborn's Travel Experience

by Michael Evans, Sean Chung and Neil Robinson

Michael Freeborn is a professor in Nuclear Physics at the University of Universe in Evansville, a city in the Northwest of England. Michael was invited to attend a Nuclear Energy conference in Robofield city in the Northeast of USA and his institution's travel office arranged for his flight from Evansville to Robofield city via Canada and booked his hotel accommodation as well.

Unbeknown to Michael who is a citizen of Trinidad and Tobago, his institution's travel office had assumed that he had a British passport and without checking with him, had gone ahead and booked a best price flight with one of the major international airlines. The travel itinerary included a transit in Canada which required Michael to have acquired a Canadian transit visa to be able to connect a flight from Canada to the United States of America. Michael knew there was no issue with travelling to the United States of America as his 10-year multiple visitor's entry visa was still valid.

Michael's travel story started when he checked in at Evansville international airport. The check-in clerk looked up at Michael and told him there was no way he could travel to his destination in the USA via Canada. Michael was confused and asked for the reason why he could not travel to Robofield city. The check-in clerk informed Michael that, with his foreign passport, he needed a Canadian transit visa because his country of origin did not have visa waiver for their citizens so she advised Michael that he would have to rebook him on a longer, much later flight from Evansville to Robofield city via the USA, therefore, circumventing the Canadian visa requirement. She advised Michael that she could make this change on his behalf at an extra cost of £200 return. Michael was relieved that he could make it to the conference with the airline change. He thanked the clerk for her intervention and help then waited several hours for his flight to the USA.

Upon arrival in Robofield city international airport, Michael went to the correct arrival baggage claim carousel for his luggage, but his suitcase was not among those delivered. He then went to enquire about his luggage from the airlines office and was simply told his suitcase was delayed and that he should fill out a form. Michael then filled out the form with his hotel address so that the luggage could be forwarded when it eventually arrived at the airport. Michael requested the attendant to check on the airline's system for the next possible time that the delayed luggage might arrive in Robofield city, but the attendant was dismissive and told Michael to go to his hotel and that the baggage would be delivered upon arrival; immediately the attendant started chatting on his mobile phone. Michael was feeling the jet lag and he was not happy with the response from the attendant; however, he had no option but to leave the airport and check in to his hotel.

The next day, Michael phoned the number given to him by the airline attendant to check on the status of his luggage. He was kept on hold for a considerable time and eventually, when someone did answer, he was told there was no news on his delayed baggage. Michael was getting extremely frustrated with the negative response so he decided to go to the airport and talk to the airline's delayed baggage office attendant or his superior to ascertain the whereabouts of his suitcase.

Upon arrival at the airport, the attendant informed Michael that the supervisor was busy elsewhere in the airport and would not be able to see him. Furthermore, the attendant did not show any empathy to Michael's plight but just told him there was nothing they could do for him and that the delayed luggage form that he completed the previous day was on the airline's bag tracing file.

Michael's suitcase which had been misrouted to a different destination arrived at his hotel three days late. Upon his return to the United Kingdom, Michael made an official complaint to the airline for the inconvenience caused by the delay of his suitcase and the poor service encountered with his contact with the delayed baggage office clerk at Robofield airport.

Moreover, when Michael asked for compensation for the delayed luggage, the airline referred him to their terms and conditions of carriage. He was not offered any restitution for the poor service he had experienced nor did they reply with an apology. Therefore, Michael decided never again to fly with the airline and he also posted his bad experience with the airline on a popular consumer social media platform, in addition to sharing his experience with friends and family.

Questions

1. In your opinion, who was responsible for Michael's problems? Justify your response

2. If you had been Michael, how would you have dealt with the problems he encountered?
3. In what ways could Michael have been compensated had he been more informed and persistent?
4. What complaint handling techniques could have been applied by the delayed baggage attendant to alleviate Michael's distress at the airport?
5. What are the ingredients of effective service recovery strategy, and what aspects could have been applied to the case study?

Recommended Reading

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Together in Electric Dreams: Hospitality Management, Education and Training post COVID-19 - the Challenges and Opportunities offered by Technology

by Crispin Dale, Neil Robinson, Nicholas Catahan, Chris Doran, Stuart Marsh and Michael Evans

Introduction

The recent events associated with the global pandemic have had huge impacts on how Undergraduate (UG) students engage in the educational process. The new norm seems to be remote learning via online devices from which students watch, listen and interact with their tutors and peers. Whilst, in some instances, the traditional classroom approach has been replaced with an online equivalent, many have argued that the technological equivalent does not engage UG students sufficiently; it has been argued that the majority are seeking a more personal scholastic experience. The purpose of this case is to identify the challenges and opportunities that online learning presents to UG hospitality and tourism students. The present case also offers suggestions on how such teaching challenges might be mitigated in the future.

Impact of COVID-19 on Service Sector Education and Training

The COVID-19 global pandemic has had a big impact upon the learning and educational skills sector (Dale, Robinson & Shiekh, 2021; Krishnamurthy, 2020). During a period of nearly two years educational institutions have seen their main income drivers and key educational stakeholders (i.e. the students) have been forced out of the traditional lecture hall/demonstration kitchen/ laboratory/workshop etc. to an online alternative location (Sobaih, Hasanien & Abu Elnasr, 2020). The purpose of this discussion is not necessarily to beguile the online platform akin to technology driven education, but to review its pitfalls and to offer some suggestions as to where good/positive/worthwhile online educational provision might fit in the future.

The very nature of service sector training and education is to ensure that the learning experience, at best, matches reality. In the context of hospitality education, the learning experience may be defined broadly as point of sales/reception activities, craft related food production and skills-based service environments/training restaurants, for example. Whilst many of these environments employ technology to facilitate the billing, revenue management and other cost related activities, they are underpinned predominantly by practical skills and interpersonal based competences; the learning and development of such skills and competences may present problems when the face-to-face education and training is removed and substituted by online learning.

From a work-based learning perspective, it can be argued that the real hands-on experience highlighted in the student's placement has been reduced greatly as a consequence of the global pandemic so skills based service sector competences might take years to fully recover. This very issue may be evident in the students who have been taught remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. They may be reluctant to engage with a classroom equivalent educational experience or even display signs of anxiety and fatigue when presented with a real in-house/face-to-face didactic learning opportunity. Running parallel to these problems, we must also not forget those students engaging in craft-based courses, where touch, smell, temperature and taste are key to the learning experience. For a service/craft based educational experience to be of value, one surely must feel, hear, taste, experience and consume the fruits of one's own labour and that of others. Unless it is well-planned and executed an artificial/overtly technology driven educational experience can offer few real tangible benefits for those looking to gain an increased knowledge of the hospitality/service sector environment. That said, the role of technology and virtual reality driven educational chambers might offer some possible solutions as and when global events prevent us from experiencing the touchy-feely side of craft based/service sector learning environments.

Evolution of Online Learning as a Consequence of COVID-19

Bilsland, Nagy and Smith (2020), Chakraborty, Bhandari and Mittal (2022), Kukreti and Mishra (2021), O'Connor (2021) and Specht, Chatterton, Hartley and Saunders (2021), among others, highlight that online learning is not new, and its use is well-documented across the extant literature; however, with the advent of COVID-19, the world witnessed the rapid, transformative, democratisation of online teaching and a transition to a service of disruptive, online learning with distinct contextual challenges for students and teachers alike.

Bassett-Dubsky (2021) considers how COVID-19 has shifted the ways in which Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) support, recognise and measure student engagement, going on to state that it is important for all students not only to be present but also to participate and achieve in evolving virtual learning environments. Furthermore, educators and trainers need to be aware of digital exclusion as a key issue, whilst recognising and embracing opportunities and benefits of personalised, relational, flexible, digitally enabled practice. HEIs should retain the flexibilities of hybridised, blended learning experiences, and recognise instances of student engagement during lockdown (cf. Bassett-Dubsky, 2021).

Fiorini, Borg and Debono (2022) also state that online learning was well received during COVID-19 by the adult part-time UGs in their study and this market wanted online lectures to continue post COVID-19; the authors go on to state that there were more benefits than problems in relation to learning online. Familiarity with online platforms is beneficial and training is also advised to ensure greater efficacy of the online learning experience, alongside a blended teaching and learning approach (Fiorina et al., 2022).

O'Connor (2021) highlights the contemporary student who wants options of learning anywhere, anytime and in any format, leading to discussions on travel and tourism higher education facing disruptive changes due to, and enforced by, COVID-19 and online learning amongst other external issues, yet with opportunities to ensure that virtual active learning environments are in place for all students. It would appear that this view point is shared by many students not only across the HEIs' spectrum but also in other teaching, training, and learning settings; however, it seems an emphasis regarding active learning strategies and measurement of learning outcomes, including engagement as a quality indicator, are distinctly preferable. Online learning may be perceived as a diverse channel with a plethora of opportunities for all educational institutions, staff, students, and policy makers in terms of learning achievement and outcomes (cf. Batdı, Doğan & Talan, 2021).

Specht et al. (2021) promote an 'all in it together' approach with curriculum design leading the agenda alongside targeted support, including an emphasis on academics embarking on online teaching whilst addressing contextual forces hindering efficacy in relation to moving to online teaching. These authors' studies into digital transformation and nurturing a belief in online teaching were co-developed employing insights from staff and students. Subsequently, a training programme for transition from classroom to online teaching was developed - a fruitful, improved experience and opportunity in fostering an institution-wide belief in, and commitment to, online teaching. Kukreti and Mishra's (2021) research into tourism students' receptiveness to online learning during COVID-19 was attributed to better infrastructure, provision of internet access for all, training of tourism teachers and ensuring all students were 'technology-ready' and equipped.

Opportunities and Challenges in the Hospitality Service Environment

It seems that there are several distinct questions relating to opportunities and challenges with the future landscape of hospitality service-related education:

1. Will the salience of infrastructure be of sufficient quality to support a new mode of delivery?
   This new mode of delivery may be in the form of virtual and/or augmented reality demonstrating practical techniques that can be replicated in a live context. For example, the role of ChatGPT and Chatbots can be used to illustrate how these technologies can be used in servicing customer care.
2. Will the provision of resources (human, financial and physical) be at the forefront of any cost-based decisions that are made?
   Such provision should include costs associated with furnishing the classroom with Information Technology (IT) savvy infrastructure and employing suitably trained support operatives. The key issue and challenge here is that any technology that is employed to aid understanding and scholastic development must be suitably matched with informed operatives who are able to use the IT infrastructure to support student learning. In those environments where technological infrastructure is non-existent or limited, this issue may present information dissemination challenges.
3. What measures and benchmark standards should be introduced to ensure the consistency of provision?
   When different learning environments have varying resources and facilities, the quality of the learning experience needs to be assured. For example, the manner in which technology facilitates student learning needs to be standardised so as to ensure continuity and value. This method of facilitation will differ across nation states, but each one needs to have its own quality monitoring system in place.
4. In a practical hospitality context, how can the technology be used to recreate the sensory experience that is so close to the service-related experience?
   Providers would need to ensure that students had the opportunity to understand the aromas, sounds and smells that are generated in a hospitality service context. In the future, the role of augmented reality will potentially be key to leveraging this experience and understanding (cf. Kerruish, 2019) and, in turn, could expand student learning.

Conclusion

From the aforementioned discussion, the authors advocate additional further research into the manner in which technology, alongside traditional blended and active learning methods, may be employed to facilitate the educational road map of the future. It is imperative that we continue to research, explore, and measure the efficacy of technological offerings as part of our teaching and learning practice.

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Questions and Activities

1. From an UG educational perspective, identify the key challenges that learning online presents to the students (use your own experiences as examples).

2. From your own learning experience what do you consider to be the key benefits of using IT to aid the UG learning experience?

3. How do you envisage technology will be used in the future to facilitate service sector educational and training needs?

4. "In the future all levels of teaching will become 100% technology driven and the role of the traditional academic will be redundant" (Anon.). Discuss.

5. Read and consider the paper by Specht et al. (2021) then, based on your experience, offer examples mapped to their three-pronged approach to drive collective success of moving to online learning, under the themes: 'All in it together'; 'Curriculum design leading the agenda'; and 'Targeted support'.

Recommended Reading

Specht, D., Chatterton, P., Hartley, P., & Saunders, G. (2021). Developing belief in online teaching: Efficacy and digital transformation. *Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice, 9*(2), 68-76. https://doi.org/10.14297/jpaap.v9i2.486

Measuring Tourism Competitiveness

by José Luis Durán-Román and Juan Ignacio Pulido-Fernández

Since the 1950s, a series of transformations took place in society's customs and ways of life (shorter working day, flexibility and division of annual holiday leave, better infrastructures, lower cost of air travel, easy access to information through new technologies, etc.), which contributed to a steady rise in tourism (Durán-Román, 2020). However, this trend was interrupted in 2020 by COVID-19, where world tourist flows fell by 74% (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2021); with the subsequent recovery during the years 2021, 2022 and 2023.

Different destinations, therefore, focus on attracting a share of the tourist market. The nature of the act of choosing a destination is exclusionary, i.e. when a tourist chooses one destination, s/he is renouncing all others in the market that may be capable also of satisfying the same needs and motivations (Cárdenas, 2012). Additionally, the difficulty in finding a tourist destination specialised in a unique typology, even if it is a search for a specific product (Crouch & Ritchie, 2012), may mean that the task is not easy. Therefore, to try to capture a tourist flow, competitiveness is one of the main objectives and a key element in the performance of international tourist destinations (Nasr, 2017), especially given the significant increase and diversification in the number of destinations (Luštický & Štumpf, 2021).

The term 'tourism competitiveness' is used regularly in the media, within politics, business and even academia (as the subject of study and research for decades), but the questions are posed for consideration:

- What is meant by tourism competitiveness?
- In relation to what can tourism competitiveness be delineated?
- How can tourism competitiveness be analysed and measured?
- Is there a commonly accepted method for analysing and measuring tourism competitiveness?

Answering these questions is not an easy task, since there appears to be no commonly accepted definition of what is meant by tourism competitiveness or the competitiveness of tourist destinations, partly attributed to the complexity and heterogeneity of factors that it encompasses (technology, capital, human resources, government policies, etc.) (Enright & Newton, 2005), its relative character (competitive with respect to what or whom) and its multidimensional nature (economic, political, organisational, business) (Abreu-Novais, Ruhanen & Arcodia, 2018),

With regard to the concept of competitiveness, there are numerous definitions. Dwyer & Kim (2003) conceptualise it as the ability to provide goods and services that outperform other destinations in those aspects of the tourist experience considered important by tourists. Ritchie & Crouch (2003), meanwhile, identify the competitiveness of the destination as the ability to increase tourism spending and the number of visitors, while providing the visitors with successful experiences, in a profitable way alongside increasing the well-being of the resident population and preserving the natural capital of the destination. Croes (2011) understands that competitiveness is related to the ability of the destination to create a high-quality product. More recently, several authors have argued that the competitiveness of a destination refers to its ability to create and deliver value, while preserving available resources and maintaining its market position relative to its competitors (Croes, Ridderstaat & Shapoval, 2020; Goffi, Cucculelli & Masiero, 2019). Tourism competitiveness has also been linked to a destination's ability and/or capacity to achieve certain targets (Hanafiah & Zulkifly, 2019). Thus, the main objectives pursued by a destination may be classified into three dimensions: economic and those associated with the well-being of the population (Azzopardi, 2011); attractiveness and satisfaction (Enright & Newton, 2005); and sustainability (Durán-Román, Cárdenas-García & Pulido-Fernández, 2021).

Nevertheless, beyond this conceptual debate, over the past two decades efforts have focused on measuring tourism destination competitiveness via the identification of different approaches. On the one hand, qualitative approaches are considered, using survey data of tourist opinions and perceptions (Chens, Sok & Sok, 2008) and those based on the empirical evaluation of a series of subjective indicators of tourism competitiveness obtained through surveys of key tourism actors (Crouch, 2011; Dwyer, Cvelbar, Edwards & Mihalič, 2012). On the other hand, there are those critics of this type of approach, who argue that such surveys are subjective and prefer to use quantitative approaches, which they claim deliver more precise and accurate results. To this end, they use published secondary data (Kubickova & Martin, 2020).

Of all the indexes that measure tourism destination competitiveness, the most comprehensive one was developed by the World Economic Forum (WEF) (Rodríguez-Díaz & Pulido-Fernández, 2021). The tourism competitiveness index prepared by the WEF aims to measure different aspects identified as determining factors of tourism competitiveness in 141 countries around the world. Through detailed analysis of these factors, companies and governments should be able to understand the challenges they face when seeking to grow tourism activity, favouring decision-making regarding investment and policy development.

Since its first version, in 2007, the index developed by the WEF has evolved, both in its consideration of the determinants of tourism competitiveness and the methodology employed to calculate the index. Table 1 shows the most recent version, which is called the Travel & Tourism Development Index (TTDI) (World Economic Forum, 2022) and highlights some of the changes incorporated in the determinants of competitiveness with respect to its predecessor, the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI) (Calderwood & Soshkin, 2019).

Table 1

Evolution of the Tourism Competitiveness Index prepared by the World Economic Forum

Travel & Tourism Development Index				
Enabling Environment	Travel and Tourism Policy and Enabling Conditions	Infrastructure	Travel and Tourism Demand Drivers	Travel & Tourism Sustainability
Business Environment	Prioritization of Travel and Tourism	Air Transport Infrastructure	Natural Resources	Environmental Sustainability
Safety and Security	International Openness	Ground and Port Infrastructure	Cultural Resources	Socioeconomic Resilience and Conditions
Health and Hygiene	Price Competitiveness	Tourist Service Infrastructure	Non-Leisure Resources	T & T Demand Pressure and Impact
Human Resources and Labour Market				
ICT Readiness				

*New subindex and pillars

Authors' modified version of the Travel and Tourism Development Index Framework
Source: World Economic Forum (2022, p. 8).

According to the World Economic Forum (2022, p. 7): "*The TTDI benchmarks and measures "the set of factors and policies that enable the sustainable and resilient development of the Travel and Tourism (T&T) sector, which in turn contributes to the development of a country*." The current TTDI is composed of five sub-indexes (used for presentation and categorisation purposes only): Enabling Environment - captures the general conditions necessary for operating (doing business, make investments, etc.) in a country; Travel and Tourism Policy and Enabling Conditions - capture specific policies or strategic aspects that affect the T&T sector directly; Infrastructure - captures the availability and quality of physical infrastructure in each country's economy; Travel and Tourism Demand Drivers - capture the principal reasons for travelling; and Travel and Tourism Sustainability – captures the current or potential T&T sustainability challenges and risks. In addition, each sub-index contains a series of pillars, 17 in total, which, in turn, contemplate 112 individual indicators, distributed among the different pillars (World Economic Forum, 2022).

However, as mentioned previously, the newly developed TTDI offers certain developments with respect to the TTCI. First, one of the main changes is the incorporation of three new pillars of tourism competitiveness (Non-Leisure Resources, Socioeconomic Resilience and Conditions, and Travel and Tourism Demand, Pressure, and Impact), increasing the drivers of Tourism Competitiveness from 14 to 17. Second, a new sub-index has been defined, directly linked to sustainability (Travel & Tourism Sustainability), which includes the former Environmental Sustainability pillar, when the TTCI was located in the Travel and Tourism Policy and Enabling Conditions sub-index. Third, the former Natural and Cultural Resources block has been renamed T&T Demand Drivers, incorporating a new pillar, Non-Leisure Resources (World Economic Forum, 2022).

Next, the weighting of the pillars in the calculation of the overall index has also been modified. Thus, the overall score obtained by each country in the TTDI is an average of the score obtained in each of the 17 pillars contemplated - the five sub-indexes are not factored into the calculation of the index. Therefore, each of the pillars contributes 5.88% to the final score obtained by a country, whereas, in the TTCI, the score obtained by a country came from a weighted average of the score obtained in each of the four sub-indexes that the main index comprised. In turn, the score on each sub-index is calculated proportionally through its pillars. Thus, each of the five pillars of sub-index A has an impact on the final index with a weighting of 5%. Each of the four pillars of sub-index B has a weighting of 6.25%, the three pillars of C have a weighting of 8.33% and the two pillars of D has a weighting of 12.5% (World Economic Forum, 2022) .

However, the indexes drawn up by the WEF are not without criticism, especially from a methodological point of view (Rodríguez-Díaz & Pulido-Fernández, 2021). More specifically:

i) the composition of each index, especially the combination of statistical data with information obtained through surveys; ii) the employment of variables with weak theoretical justification; iii) the comparability of countries with different levels of development; iv) the arbitrary weighting of variables; and (v) the reliability and validity of the index and the statistical methods used to demonstrate the usefulness of the index.

Finally, it should be noted that the current measures of competitiveness do not respond to the needs of all destinations (since there are regions with heterogeneous characteristics). The individual regions that make up a country often play a key role as tourist destinations, since powers related to tourism are frequently devolved to them. As a result, new contributions have emerged, which have sought to measure competitiveness at the regional level (as an administrative unit within a country) and even at the destination level (cities and/or municipalities).

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Questions

1. To what extent do you think that improvements in a destination's competitive position, leading to an increase in inbound tourism can diminish the sustainability of the destination? What measures might be put in place to avoid or circumvent this situation?
2. What is your opinion of the change in methodology, from TTCI to TTDI? Do you think that all the pillars considered by the WEF contribute the same percentage to the final score obtained by a destination or not? Justify your response.
3. What types of objectives can a destination achieve by improving its tourism competitiveness? Do you think that a destination should prioritise any of these objectives over others? Justify your response.
4. Do you think that the methodological changes introduced by the WEF (new sub-index, new pillars, and percentage that each pillar contributes to the final score) benefit a specific type of country? If so, why and what type of country? Why not?
5. Do you think that a destination with significant comparative advantages (natural resources and cultural resources) will necessarily be competitive, just as not having these advantages will make a destination uncompetitive? Justify your response.

Virtual Service-Learning (V-SL): An Opportunity to Advance Education in Sustainability for Tourism Studies

by Yaiza López-Sánchez and Juan Ignacio Pulido-Fernández

Social and institutional progress towards sustainable development requires education in line with current challenges. Education plays a key role in raising awareness and commitment to sustainability. It is urgent and necessary to transfer the concepts and challenges linked to sustainable development in a didactic and interactive way to students, getting them involved by assuming an active role in the progress towards sustainability; in achieving this objective, higher education institutions play an essential role. Furthermore, considering the worldwide impacts (positive and negative) of tourism, this globalised activity must find a balance between human and economic development and environmental conservation. Therefore, the tourism sector, like the education sector, faces important challenges. Cultural exchanges, globalisation, the climate threat and continuous social changes demand that the four pillars of sustainability (social, economic, environmental and institutional) go hand in hand in both sectors to face the global demands and problems of the 21st century (cf. Burford et al., 2013). There follows a brief, hopefully convincing, summary of the recent emergence and the exciting potential of the Virtual Service-Learning methodology in the field of tourism, which could become a strategy for training future professionals in the field of tourism in sustainability.

Fernández-Pérez (2017) recalls that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and therefore the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 by the United Nations (UN), signified the introduction of sustainable development and its respective dimensions in education at all levels, with sustainability at the epicentre. Two objectives were pursued: first, that all human beings should have the possibility of acquiring knowledge and values that contribute to sustainable development; and second, to encourage students' knowledge of the agendas, programs and actions to promote sustainable development (Fernández-Pérez, 2017).

Relating the above to the tourism sector, it is crucial to train human capital in sustainability in higher studies in tourism. Tourism will be sustainable if the people who work in tourism believe, value and bet on sustainability from conviction. There is no better way to involve university students in real sustainability, according to Sandia and Montilva (2019), than through an innovative teaching methodology, such as Service-Learning. Using this approach, the students develop the ability to reflect on their actions and the impacts of these, thanks to the work of pro-sustainable values favouring education in sustainability in the university environment (Leiva-Brondo, Lajara-Camilleri, Vidal-Meló, Atarés, & Lull, 2022).

Active methodologies are a series of pedagogical strategies, sometimes combined with technology, which aim to obtain significant learning by the student, placing him/her at the centre of education (Moya, 2017). The dimensions that make up these active educational methodologies are: efficient communication between the student and teacher; active participation both in and out of the classroom; developing learning autonomy in the student; and conducting meaningful activities that trigger significant learning (cf. Moya, 2017).

In recent years, Service-Learning (SL) has received a significant attention from both academicians and researchers in every academic discipline (Salam, Awang Iskandar, Ibrahim, & Farooq, 2019). Service-learning began within the framework of the New School in which constructivist experiential methodologies were particularly important following various studies, such as those by John Dewey and his "Learning by Doing" philosophy (Dewey, 1938). In few words, SL is an educational proposal that combines learning processes and community service through a project where the participating students learn while working on real needs of their environment in order to improve it (Puig, Batlle, Bosch & Palos, 2007). Working on the business and social needs of the educational environment, empowers the students to improve their knowledge of a discipline, while expanding their social responsibility and commitment through training in values. Students are encouraged to respond to community problems by linking the service to be provided with the objectives of the curriculum, realising projects and then reflecting on their learning experience. These ingredients are the so-called configuring elements of the SL and on which its methodology is based. Batlle (2013) indicates that SL is a methodology that merges social responsibility with learning, with the purpose of performing a service to the community while learning and contends that SL should have the following objectives (cf. Batlle, 2013):

a) To empower students to promote positive changes in their environment.
b) To help the community while learning.
c) To educate good citizens.

In any SL project, students are active participants, and with their active involvement they gain vital skills and competences, such as communication skills, ability to work independently, teamwork, critical thinking, problem-solving skills, social awareness and sense of civic responsibility (Mtawa, Fongwa & Wilson-Strydom, 2021).

It should be noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has encouraged changes in the ways of studying or working, leading towards virtual practice. In this sense, the importance of the virtual in today's educational world, together with the importance of education in sustainability, justify the opportunity of the application of an active educational methodology such as Virtual Service-Learning (henceforth V-SL). V-SL is SL mediated by ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies); in short, V-SL was an unusual methodology until the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. It is clear that spatial confinement, often referred to as lockdown, led to the evolution of this active educational methodology and towards its virtual modality.

There exists extensive scientific literature on active educational methodologies and, specifically, on SL applied to tourism studies (Choi, 2022); however, regarding V-SL, the research base is scarce; the boom in virtual study during lockdown in 2020 has given rise to a number of recent publications. For example, García, Izquierdo & Ruiz (2021), analysed the V-SL concept and the causes of its increase including current technological innovations, the rise of virtual education and the impact of the recent health pandemic. Nevertheless, the application of the V-SL methodology in higher undergraduate and graduate studies in tourism appears to be practically non-existent. V-SL is a variant of SL immersed in digital technologies. It allows all tourism students, including distance learning students who may not be able to participate in local SL projects, to participate in programmes that are focused on sustainability education. Therefore,
the authors perceive V-SL to be simply an evolution of SL, which is conduced remotely using technology and, in turn, it offers an opportunity to increase human capital in sustainable tourism. They consider its characteristics would be as follows (cf. García, Izquierdo & Ruiz, 2021):

- Ubiquity and globality. This aspect of V-SL methodology is focused on communication between teachers, students and social entities; however, in distance studies, this communication is enriched in a technological way. Therefore, it can become an educational opportunity, even more so when the Internet is employed as a learning environment for students;

- Humanising and humanistic digital measurement. The development of the online pedagogical process must enact a humanistic purpose regardless of whether the overall use of technologies addresses it or not;
- Commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and society, through technology-enabled ubiquity. The ultimate goal is to raise awareness of the SDGs through education. Cyberspace makes it possible to learn about another culture, another reality and to interact remotely so that students become involved in the actions they take. Distance education enhances meaningful learning because it makes it possible to "go beyond" the student's personal environment.

Bourelle (2014) defined online SL as an experiential learning approach, for developing virtual relationships between students, educational institutions and community partners. It may be concluded that with ever-growing interest and use of SL in face-to-face and online medium, it is imperative for academicians across different disciplines to understand the application of SL in diverse academic areas and theoretical rationales, bearing in mind the limitations of previous SL implementation frameworks.

The theoretical review presented here accentuates the benefits of active methodologies for education in pro-sustainable values. It should be noted that some authors, such as Delors (1996; 2013), state that if the aim is to consolidate democracy, improve justice, achieve civic coexistence and sustainable principles, active methodologies are the way forward. In that sense, V-SL is a useful instrument for citizen training and, as such, offers a great opportunity for educators to promote critical and pro-sustainable awareness. Therefore, applying these premises to the tourism sector, V-SL presents an opportunity to use the advantages of modern technologies to promote education in tourism, an economic activity that is perceived to be crucial to truly move towards a balance between the economic, social and environmental aspects at a global level.

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Questions and Activities

1. After reading this case study, how would you define the SL methodology?
2. Research briefly then cite three scientific works that apply SL methodology to the tourism sector.
3. What characterises V-SL, and when can it be useful for education in sustainable tourism?
4. Do you consider it is important to educate (i) students and (ii) the general public in sustainability? Justify your response.
5. How can V-SL help to educate future tourism workers on sustainability? Give a practical example.

Part 2

Revealed Case Studies

Integrating Sustainability in Hospitality Operations: The Case of Carbon Footprint Calculators

by Detlev Remy and Michael Kruesi

Introduction

The hospitality industry is increasingly facing pressure to "go green" and operate in a more sustainable manner. Among others, such as Adams, Kageyama and Barreda (2022), the authors maintain that, although there is no single preferred definition of sustainability, it revolves around taking actions that will allow future generations to have the same quality of life as the current generations do. The more hotels begin to go green, the better it will be not only for the environment but also for their own long-term profitability and customer retention (Grant, n.d.).

The hospitality industry is a major driver of adverse impacts on the environment (Sloan, Legrand, Tooman & Fendt, 2009) including, but not limited to, the consumption of natural resources such as energy and water (cf. Verma & Chandra, 2018). Therefore, the topic of sustainability is increasingly relevant for hoteliers, especially due to the size and rapid growth of the hospitality industry (Stipanuk, 2022). Human consumption, in relation to the global carbon footprint, impacts the environment before, during and after the existence of hotel businesses, exemplified by food and beverage operations, the construction of physical structures and buildings, the depletion of natural resources and travel by both employees and guests (Burton, 2012; Kadaei, Shayesteh Sadeghian, Majidi, Asaee, & Mehr, 2021; Verma & Chandra, 2018).

The hospitality industry relies heavily on the natural environment such as beaches, clear bodies of water, pristine natural landscapes and fresh air to attract its guests. However, the pressure that hotels put on the environment through their existence has resulted in growing concern that the industry is damaging the very foundation on which their business model is built (Adams et al., 2022). This fact, coupled with increasing pressure from the public and private sector in terms of regulation and competition respectively, has been driving the growing motivation for hoteliers to make sustainability part of their corporate strategy (Adams et al., 2022; Roxas, Rivera & Gutierrez, 2020). Particularly, it is the use of technology that is allowing hotels to become more sustainable. Although the literature suggests that the hospitality industry has been lagging behind in readily purchasing and adopting technological solutions in general, citing reasons such as high costs and a hesitancy to adopt new systems (cf. Siguaw, Enz & Namasivayam, 2000), the last decade has spurred unprecedented growth in the industry's adoption of smart technologies (Rosete, Soares, Salvadorinho, Reis, & Amorim, 2020; Songur, Turktarhan & Cobanoglu, 2022), with a specific focus on "green technologies" (Songur et al., 2022).

The functionalities of the latest technology-based sustainability solutions are much more advanced than simply turning off the power when the guest leaves the hotel room. In fact, the latest green technology is becoming increasingly efficient in controlling overall energy and water consumption, hence lowering the carbon footprint of hotels, as well as reducing and upcycling waste. One such example is the use of machine learning which permits effective forecasting demand so enables hoteliers to effectively predict the exact amount of inventory and labour that that would be needed at any given time to increase efficiency and reduce costs (Berthelsen, 2017). However, by far the most widely used and easily implemented green technology is known as eco-feedback technology (E-FT) (Calitz, Cullen & Odendaal, 2020), typified by the carbon footprint calculator (Biørn-Hansen, Katzeff & Eriksson, 2022). Carbon footprint calculators, a tool that allows hotel guests to personally assess the environmental impact of their holidays, have been a driving force in raising sustainability awareness and impacting the behaviour of hotel guests during their stay (Biørn-Hansen et al., 2022; Filimonau & Magklaropoulou, 2020).

The present case examines the opportunities as well as the challenges of implementing a carbon footprint calculator in a hospitality operation. Although the use of such tools is increasing in the hospitality industry, there are several potentially problematic issues for consideration pertaining to their accuracy, implementation and acceptance amongst both staff and guests (cf. Bottrill, 2007; Padgett, 2008). The key question that arises in this context is: How can one most effectively integrate a carbon footprint calculator that is effective and accurate into hotel operations? Perhaps the creation of a dedicated carbon footprint calculator, which is custom built for a specific hotel or company, might provide the answer in response to the challenges mentioned above. Such a tool might not only effectively raise awareness and improve organisational sustainability but also facilitate acceptance by staff, as well as satisfying the demand of an increasingly environmentally conscious customer base.

Climate Change and the Hospitality Industry

One of the most pressing societal challenges currently facing humanity is that of climate change. However, although there is an increasing urgency to lower our environmental footprint, greenhouse gas emissions are still increasing steadily (Lamquin, Stubenrauch, Gierens, Burkhardt, & Smit, 2012; United Nations, n.d.). Consequently, it cannot be understated how important it is to reduce emissions; however, the way to achieve this goal in practice is a challenge that is difficult to overcome (Verplanken & Whitmarsh, 2021). The reason is perceived to be because sustainability is a very complex topic, underpinned by several interconnected factors; crucially, it is often not clear where the responsibility of one individual or organisation ends, and another's begins (Boyd et al., 2021).

The tourism industry is by far the fastest growing industry in the world (Ibis World n.d.). It is a driver for Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth, employment, and human flourishing (Della Lucia, Dimanche, Giudici, Camargo & Winchenbach, 2021); however, it cannot be ignored that the industry is responsible for significant negative impacts on the environment through accommodation, transport, and resource usage (Gössling, & Scott, 2018). Nevertheless, despite growing awareness of this issue, the industry is currently less sustainable than ever before (Boluk & Rasoolimanesh, 2022). Hotels and other types of temporary accommodation providers contribute 2% of the 5% global CO_2 emissions by the tourism industry (Baxter, & Srisaeng, 2020). Due to the negative publicity resulting from this problem, many hotel businesses have increased their focus on corporate social responsibility. In fact, the increasing competition in the hospitality industry resulted in fighting climate change to no longer being an option, but a condition for survival and success (Yusof, Awang, Jusoff & Ibrahim, 2017); the most impactful strategy for achieving this end is perceived to be the adoption of green technologies (Songur et al., 2022).

Eco-feedback Technology

E-FT is becoming the most impactful green technology used currently in the hospitality industry; it has been defined as "technology that provides feedback on individual or group behaviours with a goal of reducing environmental impact" (Froehlich, Findlater & Landay, 2010, p. 1999). It is a technology that prompts the revaluation of non-sustainable behaviours by providing feedback on the impact that such behaviours have on the environment. For instance, through the measurement of data pertaining to a particular activity, such as energy use for example, E-FT can calculate the impact that this behaviour has in terms of CO_2 emissions, presenting this information to the user of the technology (Froehlich et al. 2010). The goal of such technology, therefore, is to create awareness of the environmental impacts of certain behaviours, so prompting users to engage in relatively sustainable and environmentally friendly behaviours. Fischer (2008) suggested that feedback on energy consumption, for example, could lead to emission reductions of up to 12%. As such, it is not surprising that there is a large body of literature dedicated to E-FTs, focusing on areas such as visualisation of energy consumption (Holmes, 2007), education on behaviours related to water and energy usage, waste disposal and transportation (Froehlich et al. 2010) and citizen participation in local climate change policies (Aichholzer, Allhutter & Strauß, 2012). Subsequently, the impacts of E-FT have been debated at length in the literature (Chalal, Medjdoub, Bezai, Bull & Zune, 2022).

Carbon Footprint Calculators

A well-established form of self-employed E-FT is the carbon footprint calculator. Such calculators allow their users to better understand their impact on the environment (Biørn-Hansen et al, 2022). Specifically, the extent of the impact is assessed by a user entering data into the calculator regarding the different activities in which s/he has engaged, allowing each individual to estimate the greenhouse gas emissions resulting from his/her activities (Biørn-Hansen et al, 2022).

Due to their pragmatic nature and ease of use, carbon footprint calculators are widely available and may be located easily online; however, finding the right one may be a challenge as they are generally focused on specific industries and developed by both the public and private sectors for different purposes. The scope of these calculators varies greatly from tools that focus on specific domains such as water or energy usage, to those which provide a more comprehensive overview, including not only consumption patterns but also travel behaviour and scope 3 emissions i.e., the indirect emissions that occur from sources that are not owned or controlled by the organisation, but are in its value chain (Bottrill, 2007). Furthermore, Bottrill (2007) points out that carbon footprint calculators are very diverse, ranging in their degree of complexity and the way in which users can interact with them. Examples include 'low tech' versions based on filling in spreadsheets such as HCMI (Sustainable Hospitality Alliance, n.d.), right through to cutting edge web-based platforms that prompt users to engage in a multi-step process to assess their carbon footprint such as Green Balance (Xterra Tech, n.d.). Moreover, it is pointed out that such calculators vary significantly in the final calculations, with some cases being typified by results that vary as much as several metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions on an annual basis, highlighting the lack of consistency among such technology (Biørn-Hansen et al, 2022; Padgett, 2008).

Finally, even if it is accurate and industry specific, the carbon footprint that is calculated is a merely estimated numeric representation of the effect that the behaviour of the user has had on the climate and the environment in terms of total greenhouse gases produced. It can be argued that such figures are meaningless for the general user if the resultant impacts are not contextualised and only some of the calculators have this function. For example, some of the more effective calculators convert the carbon load into the number of trees that it would take to offset the carbon emitted (Saving Nature n.d.), to give the user a more relatable concept to understand the consequences of certain behaviours. According to Holmes (2007), it takes approximately seven trees to be planted to absorb a pound of carbon dioxide, a notion that is more easily understood by users than pounds of carbon or kilowatts.

However, as outlined by Boulard, Castellani, Colombino & Grasso (2019), it is not necessarily a question of the effectiveness of such technology in general, but specifically the selection of the most appropriate option based on context. In short, while carbon footprint calculators are readily available, finding the right one for the purpose of accurate assessment and effective communication of the actual impact of consumer behaviours on the environment can be a challenge. This fact has led several researchers to contend, that while popular, the effectiveness of using such tools is negligible in making a real impact on fighting climate change (cf. Biørn-Hansen et al., 2022).

Case Study

Finian McLaren is the owner of a regional hotel group named Alpen Gruppe GmbH (Alpen), with properties in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. In total, Mr McLaren owns eight hotels in the 4* category, mostly alpine resort-style hotels. His flagship hotel, with several restaurants, is located in the Bavarian Alps of Germany. All the hotels in the group are de-centrally operated with some back-of-house functions dealt with at the corporate headquarters in Germany.

A few months ago, Mr McLaren began to consider placing more emphasis on sustainability. This issue had been on his mind for quite some time, as he had been reading in the newspapers on an almost daily basis, and on-line, about the importance of hotels becoming more sustainable. One further key factor that led him to act was the multiple requests from guests that he had received within the previous month, asking him about the sustainable practices in his hotels. In particular, Mr McLaren was asked to explain what measures were in place in his hotels, which attract guests mainly due to the scenic natural alpine environment in which they are located, to counteract the negative impacts they might have on the environment.

Mr McLaren was convinced that this trend of customer demands for sustainability was only going to increase. It was not just a matter of whether he would lose business to his competitors, but how soon it would happen. As with any hospitality organisation, Alpen operates on a very tight profit margin. As such, completely refitting his hotels with the latest resource efficient technology would be too large an investment for immediate implementation. Nevertheless, Mr McLaren knew that this refit would be his ultimate goal to ensure that Alpen would become a leading environmentally friendly brand; however, in the short term, he had to find a less expensive but effective and convincing solution.

After doing some research, Mr McLaren found that one of the most widely used tools to raise awareness of sustainability, which would communicate his commitment to moving gradually towards becoming more environmentally friendly, was to introduce a carbon footprint calculator initiative; this strategy would not only help his guests to estimate the greenhouse gas emissions of their stay but also raise the sustainability of his operation through promoting responsible consumer behaviour. However, although he managed to locate several carbon footprint calculators which were available online, the wide variety of these tools and the varying degree of their accuracy left him worried that the one he chose might not be a good fit for his specific purposes. Despondent and unsure of how to move forward, Mr McLaren decided to take the day off and take his children to the local zoo.

A family man at heart, Mr McLaren, often took his young children to the zoo. It was an opportunity for him to spend time with them and escape from the demanding role of running Alpen. On this visit, he noticed a new initiative - a custom-built carbon footprint calculator designed specifically for that zoo. He realised in that moment that the only way that he could implement a carbon footprint calculator that would add real value to Alpen and would show his commitment to gradually going green, would be to create his own dedicated software. The following morning, Mr. McLaren called his IT department and shared his idea with the IT team.

Mr. McLaren's IT team raised several initial concerns regarding the development of a carbon footprint calculator specifically for Alpen. After some heated and intense discussions however, especially centring on the methodological feasibility and the volume of the proposed data collection, consensus shifted in favour of its development. The deciding factor was that Mr. McLaren clarified all the opportunities for Alpen in developing such a tool: such as promoting the hotel's environmental consciousness; collecting valuable data that could be used for demand forecasting; and the potential to lower operational costs in the future. Substantial time was also spent on the consideration of incorporating scope 3 emissions, including discussions on the mode of transport used by hotel guests and other external factors, crucial when estimating Alpen's guests' total carbon footprints. All in all, Mr McLaren is now quite confident that the development of the carbon footprint calculator is a worthwhile endeavour that will assist him in improving his operations and move him on towards his goal of gradually going green.

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Questions and Activities

First read the questions then examine the issues raised using the pertinent recommended reading.

1. What are the main challenges for companies in the hospitality industry that plan to adopt environmental practices? Make suggestions for overcoming the challenges.
2. Outline, and critically reflect on, the stages needed to conduct sustainability efforts.
3. In pairs, consider then present and discuss with the group:
   i. practical recommendations for Finian regarding the different stages of informing and educating his guests regarding sustainable practice;
   ii. the possible implications of Finian's focusing excessively on sustainability, respectively using a carbon footprint calculator; and
   iii. ways in which Finian might be advised to approach his employees to optimise the implementation of the carbon footprint calculator.

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Food Poisoning: Employee Negligence or Unfair Competition?

by Bojana Kalenjuk Pivarski

Food safety is one of the main problems faced by the hospitality industry all over the world. Although adherence to the Hazard Analysis Critical and Control Points (HACCP) business system and guidelines may be considered as an operational obligation for all catering facilities, its implementation in practice varies on different levels according to national and regional laws and legal regulations (see https://www.gov.uk/food-safety-hazard-analysis#:~:text=If%20you%20run%20a%20food,be%20avoided%2C%20removed%20or%20reduced). The HACCP guidelines stipulate the documentation of all essential procedures, from food delivery and reception to its production and service, so that failures can be determined and rectified. Despite tightened policies and procedures, mistakes can occur even in the most disciplined systems. However, it is essential to ask what or who is the cause of a specific error, neglect or omission of a practice, especially in relation to food poisoning.

Food defence, food security, food safety, in addition to food hoaxes may all be addressed and alleviated by crisis management to minimise, alleviate or eliminate any mistakes or problems (Paster, 2011).

Activities

1. Explore then debate the terms food defence, food security, food safety and food hoaxes.
2. Research then report on examples of the experiences of catering facilities regarding food defence, food security, food safety and food hoaxes in the context of the application of HACCP guidelines. Discuss ways in which crisis management might alleviate problems in these contexts.

Part I

A local catering chain, Good Food Experiences, has existed for over 20 years in a city near you. It comprises 11 fast food establishments, each offering a national cuisine (Italian, Mexican or Chinese) and four a la carte restaurants offering high-level international cuisine. It is one of the largest local chains in the city. Good Food Experiences employs around 270 people in total in food production alone. Despite rigorous hygiene measures and controls, the chain has experienced recent lousy publicity with food poisoning symptoms being reported by 12 people who ate meals from one of its fast food outlets, located in a shopping centre, on the same evening. There are 15 other fast food restaurants from various international and local chains, with similar and completely different offers and price ranges in the shopping centre food court.

The local environmental health department closed the facility immediately and began a full inspection of the premises in addition to inspecting all the other food outlets in the chain in addition to all the outlets located in the food court. The bad news quickly spread among consumers via social media.

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Questions

1. What might be the cause of the food poisoning?
2. In what ways would you, as the manager of the offending food outlet, deal with this problem?
3. What might the management of the local food chain do to minimise and prevent the rapid spread of bad advertising and word-of-mouth?

Part II

After a certain period, the facility was allowed to reopen, although its reputation had been damaged. The cause of the food poisoning was never disclosed to the public. The incident threatened the business of the other food outlets in the chain.

Questions

1. How do you suggest the business owners might proceed in future in order to regain their reputation and to minimise any financial loss?
2. What do you think the management should do to regain customers' trust, bring back lost customers and encourage future business?

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Public Private Image

by Gabriela Potoczek-Kantor

The newly opened ROKO restaurant is a part of a hotel resort located in a charming and remote, yet very popular, part of Zakopane (a town located in the south of Poland, at the foot of the majestic Tatra mountains), surrounded by forests, lakes and mountains. The attractive local environment leaves visitors with fond long-term memories. The resort is a desirable destination not only for skiers and romantic couples but also for all holidaymakers who wish to escape the hustle and bustle of city life. The area offers an ideal retreat to de-stress and escape from the modern world. The resort is accessible only by cable car as the restaurant, as well as the other facilities, is hidden in the mountains; it is advertised as an eco-friendly hideaway because the whole area is car-free. The resort offers electric vehicles to drive the guests around the premises and from and to the cable car station. Its location offers jaw-dropping views and it is also home to rare species of fauna and flora. The style and décor are a combination of natural elements and local architecture.

The restaurant was due to open on December, 6th 2022 but the owners decided that the management should advertise and take bookings for events far in advance of the planned opening date. They were all aware of the fact that New Year's Eve and the carnival seasons were approaching and they wanted a full house for the New Year's Eve party. The tickets sold very quickly - within 2 weeks - which was surprising given the venue had no previous reputation or reviews; furthermore, the tickets were expensive. The restaurant manager was responsible for an effective marketing campaign, focused on social media, including Facebook, Instagram and TikTok, and emailing newsletters to private companies. Due to the fact that even though the restaurant was meant to be a part of the whole resort, it was designed and operated by a separate company; thus, it did not have its own customer data base.

The owners and the management were happy that the party plans seemed to be successful and that prospective customers had chosen their new venue. The agenda for the evening was very attractive, prepared with a great attention to detail and connected strongly with the traditions of the region; the menu included only top quality ingredients with slow food cooking methods. The dishes were very sophisticated and delicious, prepared by one of the national top chefs. One of the attractions for the night was participation in a torch lit horse sleigh ride which ended up with a bonfire, mulled wine and roasting sausages as well as a highlander feast and live music. During the entire event the catering staff served local food as well as alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks in unlimited quantities. A laser lights show was the chosen alternative to a fireworks display in order not to scare wildlife with the sound of explosions. The organisers also hired a professional photographer and a cameraman to offer the guests a professional photo session and create long lasting memories in the form of an e-photo postcard, which each guest could receive via e-mail after the event. The management wished to build their own customer data base so that was the reason why they tempted the participants to share their e-mail addresses and details for sending the e-postcards and the link to the photo session.

The New Year's Eve party was a great success. Satisfied guests gladly wrote their positive reviews and posted them on social media. Each guest was given a voucher for a 20% discount on a future visit. The restaurant was very busy on a daily basis, particularly at the weekends and for private banquets and other family/group/team/business events.

The management came up with an idea for a promotional clip to advertise the ROKO restaurant. They thought the videos from the New Year's Eve party would provide an ideal basis as they showed the many attractions and various forms of entertainment on offer. The owners commissioned the promotional video from the cameraman who had been recording during the New Year's Eve party. The man gladly accepted the task and started to compile the video. The finished clip was impressive, lively and professional; it was a great advertisement for the variety of options the venue could offer. The video was released on the restaurant's website and on various social media platforms where it had numerous views, especially on TikTok and Instagram; it received many likes and it was promptly shared. The video was also sent as an attachment to the newsletter.

Quite soon after the release of the video into the public domain, the restaurant's managers received a number of threatening letters, a few of which were from legal representatives. It appeared that some of the guests who had been present at the New Year's Eve party were complaining about their images having been used for promotional purposes without prior notice nor with their agreement. Most of the complainants demanded high compensatory payments in return for their inconvenience and they requested the video be deleted from the Internet immediately.

Questions and Activities

1. What is your opinion regarding the use of the same video material for two different purposes?
2. Whose responsibility was it to take care of the guests' permission to use their private image for promotional purposes? The management's or the cameraman's? Why?
3. To what extent should the hotels be responsible for protecting their guests' privacy?
4. What measures should hoteliers and restaurateurs put in place to protect the identity and privacy of their guests?
5. In the above case, what is the legal position of (i) the guests and (ii) the owners?
6. Is it a common phenomenon in your country that guests are trying to get compensation from a hotel or restaurant? Share your knowledge, experience or research examples and/or statistics.
7. Use role play to enact a conversation with a customer who complains about his/her image being used without permission or knowledge. Try to be as professional as possible in dealing with this situation without making it public.
8. What is your opinion of location themed hospitality businesses that follow local culture in terms of décor, support local produce and recipes, menu items etc? For example a seaside restaurant with themed décor, serving fish and chips. Locate and examine a website advertising a themed hotel or restaurant and critique it from a potential consumer's perspective.

Gamify your Hotel Service!

by Klára Karakasné Morvay

Fabula Hotel*** reopened its doors after being closed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The rooms were renovated during the last year and every public space was modernised. The historical guest profile was predominantly young adults who had travelled with friends and/or relatives. The main purpose of their visits was to experience the city and discover its sights in addition to having a break away from the tiring world of work. The average length of stay was 2.5 days and demand was high at the weekends, the busiest period.

Just prior to the reopening, Martin, The General Manager (GM) decided to refresh the services and bring a little fun into the guests' lives to offset the sad times. He informed the managers of his idea and then Martin called a management planning meeting the following week at which his colleagues were asked to put forward their proposals. Let's take a look at their discussion!

Bob, the Director of Finance spoke first, he was a bit irritated: *"I don't understand why these gamification ideas are needed! I don't think anyone cares about games! If you want to play, go to the casino!"*

Martin (GM) said: *"The hospitality industry is among the most competitive in the world. You can see a cluster of direct competitors together in a specific region, while their offerings can look similar. Often, hotels are forced to compete on price—a race that goes to the bottom. Many hotels use gamification."*

"Actually, we can introduce gamification elements very easily", muttered Fred, the Sales Manager (SM).

"All right, you guys just play around, but we don't have the coverage for that. The renovation took away our financial reserve", said Bob impatiently.

Kathy (Front Office Manager - FOM) took out her notes: *"For booking purposes, hotels can use different plug-ins on their websites, such as Gravity Booking. With this [system] we can encourage guests to reserve rooms directly on our website, inviting them to play a game during the booking process. By booking directly with us, we skip the 3rd party, so we don't have to pay commissions. We can entice them with a highly desirable grand prize, such as a discounted stay in our best room. Most people can't win that grand prize;*

however, everyone who plays the game is guaranteed to win a prize such as a late checkout, free breakfast, discounted city tour, room upgrade, free parking, or whatever is acceptable to the company at that point in time."

"The probability of 'winning big' attracts people, and the guaranteed prize would keep the guests satisfied and engaged. Also, the game itself is a good way to create an initial positive experience with the brand", added Liz (Director of Marketing - DOM). *"We surveyed some guests and they would like to join other games as well."*

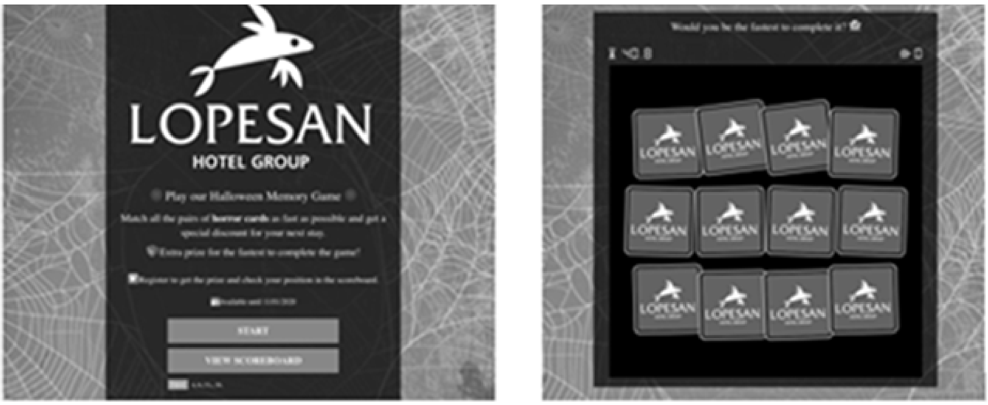
"Who else has an idea?" asked Martin (GM).

"During check-in process let's ask guests to play quick online games on their phone or in the kiosks while they are waiting", said Kathy (FOM). She continued: *"We can display leader boards with the guests' names and the highest scores, adding some spice to the competition. These online games are a quick and easy way to give out coupons, so they add a social element to a guest's stay."*

"I heard about an app called MyCred. With this [app], we can send 'We Miss You' emails to regular guests. Clients, who haven't stayed at the hotel in a while, can be lured back and we could also surprise them with a special badge to honour their loyalty", continued Fred (DoS) enthusiastically.

Figure 1

Example of Memory Game



Note: This figure was taken from https://blog.thehotelsnetwork.com/hotel-gamification

"I collected some ideas from the net", remarked Tim, the intern. "*Lopesan Hotel Group launched an astoundingly addictive Halloween-themed memory game. Guests had to match all the relevant card pairs in a limited time frame of 50 seconds. Those who successfully passed the challenge receive a 10% discount for future stays."*

"Or La Quinta Inns & Suites presented guests with "Play & Stay", a tremendously addictive game where users were able to potentially win collectibles or points of the brand with a digital slot machine and wheel of fortune".

Figure 2

Example of Bonus Wheel and Slot Machine

Note: This figure was taken from https://blog.thehotelsnetwork.com/hotel-gamification

"*Hotels have been leveraging gamification into all aspects of the employee experience: from recruitment and professional development to incentivised performance",* said Hanna (Human Resources Manager - HRM). *"Everything from the onboarding process to checking off individual and team responsibilities, to learning the table layout of our restaurant, can all be turned into a game. Gamification makes the workplace experience more enjoyable for everyone. It's not just more fun – it's actually more effective. People who learn through games are more likely to retain information and remember an experience more positively than when non-gamified teaching methods are used. In 'gamified' HR our colleagues can 'level up' based on certain achievements and gain bonus points if they go above and beyond their responsibilities.".*

Martin (GM): *"Enjoyability is now a vital KPI (Key Performance Indicator) for any hospitality company. It's what sets apart the ordinary from the unforgettable. With this new focus on enjoyability, we can find new* *approaches to differentiate our hotel in a crowded field and discover new ways to surprise and delight guests and staff."*

Questions and Activities

1. In your opinion, which guest market segments will be open to gamification? Justify your response.

2. What aspects should Martin consider before deciding how to gamify the hotel? Taking account of the contributions to the meeting, in small groups (perhaps taking on the roles of the meeting participants) discuss this issue and come to a reasoned conclusion.

3. Which part of hotel operation and services do you consider can be gamified? Search on the Internet for gamification options and make your recommendations.

4. In small groups, research and collate those factors that might be expressed or measured by creating a hotel guest "enjoyability" index. Present your findings to the other groups for comparative purposes.

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World Tourism Day

by Liběna Jarolímková

Introduction

Global tourism contributes significantly to residents' consumption; 455 million international arrivals took place in 2021 according to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) statistics (UNWTO, 2023a) with expenses for these tours reaching $637 billion (UNWTO, 2023a). The highest ever indicators were reached in 2019 with 1466 million international arrivals (UNWTO, 2023b) and expenditure of $1494 billion (UNWTO, 2023b). Due to the impact of COVID-19, tourism contributed only 1.8% of the global GDP in 2020 (latest available data) in comparison with the highest ever rate of 4.1% in 2019 (UNWTO, 2023b).

The overall contribution of the tourism industry for the society is however significantly higher due to the multiplier effect, i.e. the linkage of tourism enterprises to benefit 'fringe' industries, such as transportation, communication, culture, financial services or construction among others, as well as on non-economic effects in education and personal development, health, social policy etc. The vast majority of tourism's contribution therefore remains unaccounted for; its overall far-reaching benefits are not perceived by society in general; therefore, their perceptions of the importance of tourism are usually strongly underestimated. In the Czech Republic, for example, the direct share of tourism in GDP has long been close to 3%, but including its multiplier effects, it accounts for almost 8% of the Czech Republic's GDP (MMR ČR, 2021). It would appear that the media have recently focused heavily on negative unintended consequences linked to tourism, such as over tourism, while the positive contributions are not discussed. To support tourism development, it is crucial to increase public awareness of the benefits of the industry. One of the tools available for awareness raising initiatives is the World Tourism Day.

World Tourism Day

World Tourism Day was declared by the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organisation in 1979. It is celebrated annually on September 27th the date which commemorates the anniversary of the adoption of the statutes for the establishment of UNWTO (UNWTO, 2023c). The goal of the celebration is to raise public awareness about the importance of tourism and its social, cultural, and economic significance. Each year, the UNWTO establishes the main theme of the celebrations and selects a host country, which cooperates with the UNWTO to organise the central celebration with the presence of UNWTO representatives. For the host country, it is an honour and an opportunity to make itself visible in the tourism market, as it will receive the attention of tourism professionals from all over the world. Since 2006, when selecting a host country, the geographic order of world regions (Europe; South Asia; Americas; Africa, East Asia and the Pacific; and Middle East) has been observed (UNWTO, 2020). The purpose of selecting a theme for World Tourism Day is to focus attention on current needs and prospects for the development of tourism. In recent years, themes have emphasised sustainable development strategies and recognised tourism as one of the pillars of society. A historical overview of the themes and host countries of World Tourism Day can be found on the UNWTO website (See https://www.unwto.org/world-tourism-day). In 2023, the host of World Tourism Day is Riyadh in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the theme is "Tourism and Green Investments" (UNWTO, 2021).

World Tourism Day Activities

The main celebrations, including the ceremonial opening of World Tourism Day with the participation of important representatives of the field, festivals and often a conference on the declared theme, are held in the host country. In 1998, UNWTO developed an inspiring list of recommended activities (see https://www.gdrc.org/doyourbit/tourism-activities.pdf). As digital technologies and social networks became increasingly commonplace, the campaign has also moved predominantly to the digital space. UNWTO now uses media and social networks for the World Tourism Day campaign. Inspiration can be found for example on social networks such as Pinterest.

Everyone, regardless of their geographic location, can participate in the celebrations of World Tourism Day. State institutions, representatives of destination agencies, entrepreneurs, schools, etc. can create their own activities to raise awareness of the benefits of tourism. In some countries, representatives of tourism management institutions appear and speak in the media, issue press releases and participate in panel discussions, etc. National tourism agencies and ministries announce their own campaigns, organise discussion forums and initiate attractive events for the public, such as open-door days for monuments, travel festivals and shows. On the occasion of World Tourism Day 2022, the Czech Tourism Agency honoured personalities who significantly defended the interests of tourism during the difficult COVID-19 period (CzechTourism, 2022).

Competitions and challenges with a theme of sustainable development are often announced such as, for example, a challenge to reduce the environmental impact of tourism or a competition for the best sustainable tourism project. A challenge - "Offset your CO_2 emissions" - was initiated to offset greenhouse gas emissions linked to travel through apps such as "Tree-Nation", through which individuals or groups are invited to sponsor the planting of a specific number of trees needed to offset emissions arising from a particular trip (SCOOCS, 2023a). Another example is a challenge for tourism providers called "Responsible World Tourism Day Challenge". This initiative is meant to recognise employees who contribute to sustainable initiatives at the company (SCOOCS, 2023b).

Conclusion

The activities within World Tourism Day are involving increasing numbers of individuals, communities, governments and enterprises. As tourism recovers following the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to spread positive perceptions and messages. World Tourism Day not only gives an impulse and space for education about the importance of tourism; it also offers great opportunities to consider and influence its current and potential local, regional, national and global impacts.

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Questions and Activities

1. Why is tourism important for society? What is its economic, social, cultural and political significance? Note your responses then discuss these questions.
2. Draw a diagram to illustrate the position and relationships of tourism in the national economy.
3. Write a speech (max. 300 words) on the occasion of World Tourism Day.
4. Develop a proposal for a programme of celebrations for World Tourism Day this year for a selected business, tourist destination or your educational institution.

Websites for Recommended and/or Further Reading

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Life Cycle Assessment: A Tool for the Design of Sustainable Projects in Touristic Territories

by Lázuli Fernández-Lobato, Yaiza López-Sánchez and Juan Ignacio Pulido-Fernández

There is a scientific consensus concerning how climate change is currently an undeniable and urgent environmental challenge worldwide, forcing governments and businesses to explore mitigation strategies to avoid future catastrophes (Fawzy, Osman, Doran & Rooney, 2020). Climate change is caused mainly by anthropogenic activities, including a complex cause-effect relationship with tourism activity (Trenberth, 2018).

It is acknowledged that the growth of tourism activity since the end of the last century has been extremely rapid and that this growth has impacted on a model of intensive energy consumption. The emission of substantial amounts of carbon has increased since the late 1990s, mainly attributed to the liberalisation of air travel and the arrival of low-cost airlines, huge water consumption and intense artificialisation of the land attributed to areas characterised by an artificial and often impermeable covering of buildings, roads and paved surfaces. The tourism sector faces a major challenge in reducing greenhouse gas emissions due to the insatiable demand for travelling and the industry's desire to stimulate that demand. In response, researchers, organisations, and policymakers are striving to develop concepts and metrics to measure the environmental sustainability of human actions over the territory (cf. Becken, 2019; Dogru, Marchio, Bulut & Suess, 2019).

In this scenario, life cycle approaches would appear to be a useful tool as they consider a product or activity over its entire life cycle. More specifically, Life Cycle Assessment (henceforth LCA) is one of the most promising tools that can solve some of the drawbacks of existing environmental approaches and it has become a key target for tourism, as shown by the growing number of studies on tourism in recent years (Herrero et al., 2022). The authors concur that LCA can offer an ideal methodological framework for estimating and evaluating the environmental impacts attributable to the life cycle of a product, service or process.

Soratana, Landis, Jung and Suto (2021) agree that that the life cycle of any product or service consists of four phases, which are raw material acquisition, use, manufacturing and end-of-life. LCA approaches have been used widely to quantify life-cycle environmental impacts, costs (Life cycle costing -LCC), and even social life cycle assessment (S-LCA). The latter is a tool used to evaluate potential positive or negative effects of a product in its whole life cycle from a social perspective, including the processing of raw material mining, production, distribution, application, reuse, maintenance, recycling, and final disposal. There are three major benefits of evaluating a product or service from a life cycle perspective: to improve products' or services' performance; to avoid unintended consequences; and to aid in the decision-making process (Soratana et al., 2021).

The historical background that led to LCA began in 1960 when the first global oil crisis occurred (Shi, Liu, Zhang, Jiang, & Li, 2015); however, it was much later, in the 1970s and 1980s, that different methods ("proto-LCAs") started to be used in North America and several European countries. The Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC) started to employ several "proto-LCAs" and, in 1993, this process culminated with the publication of the *"Life Cycle Assessments: A code of Practice*" (Klöpffer, 2006; Klöpffer & Grahl, 2014). During the same year, standardisation by the International Organization for Standardisation (ISO) was instigated; it involved 40 nations and resulted in the specification of the ISO standards LC 14040/44-2006 (ISO, 2006a, 2006b). In the 1980s and 1990s, full life cycle impact assessment (LCA), life cycle costing (LCC), and social life cycle analysis (S-LCA) models were introduced and gained ground in the first decade of the 21st century. The importance and use of LCA approaches have increased in the last decades in different fields of study, including sustainable tourism (Toniolo, Tosato, Gambaro & Ren, 2020).

Tourism may be perceived as a human activity that involves the economy, the environment, and society. In this instance, one objective could be to find the optimal compromise between environmental, economic and social variables in a defined time and space. Based on the three major LCA benefits cited above, the approach could be used to manage issues in the tourism sector in all three pillars of sustainability (social, economic and environmental) (Purvis, Mao, & Robinson, 2019). To date, LCA has been applied to, for example, package holidays, the accommodation sector, impacts generated by individual tourists and short-haul tourism (Herrero et al., 2022).

The following is a brief introduction to the steps in conducting LCA. LCA according to ISO (2006a; 2000b) comprises four main steps:

1. Goal and scope definition - this step establishes and identifies the objective(s), system boundary and functional unit of the LCA. The analysis can be a process LCA (only one product or service is evaluated) or a comparative LCA (more than one product or service are compared). The system boundary defines processes, inputs (resources required/consumed), and outputs (emissions and wastes generated) included in the study. A functional unit is used to quantitatively measure and fairly compare the performance of products or services to their inputs and outputs (examples of the functional unit for tourism services are per one tourist per night, per one trip, or one meal)

2. Life cycle inventory analysis (LCI) - it is generally a time-consuming step, particularly if the process you are investigating is new and/or unconventional, and there is no existing data/database available for the process. Inventory data can be collected from various sources, either primary (for example, experiments and questionnaires) or secondary (for example, literature, government and corporate reports, patents and life-cycle databases). Examples of life-cycle databases are: *ecoinvent (*ecoinvent, n.d.), *ETH-ESU (*ETH-ESU, 1996), and *IdeMat (Industrial Design & Engineering Materials Database)* a database developed by Delft University of Technology, the Netherlands (cf. Frischknecht & Jungbluth, 2004). Inventories are collected according to the processes specified in the system boundary to achieve the defined objective in the goal and scope definition step. Numerous life-cycle databases are provided by, for example, academic institutes, government sectors and consulting companies. Managers of tourism services or enterprises, such as accommodation, restaurants or transportation, may construct an inventory table by themselves. Inventories such as water and energy (gasoline, diesel or electricity) could be monitored and collected from the water meter and electric meter of a hotel room, or via the odometer and fuel efficiency of a vehicle. Other information and data required to calculate total resource consumption over its life cycle are included. Some LCA studies end the analytical process at this step and obtain a footprint of water, energy, or carbon. Over the life cycle of a tourism service under consideration, the major resource consumption process is revealed; hence enterprises can act subsequently on resource consumption reduction.

3. Life cycle impact assessment (LCIA) - it is where the LCI data are converted and presented in terms of understandable and quantifiable environmental impacts, for example, global warming, eutrophication, acidification, ozone depletion, and smog formation potentials (see Table 1). Three steps in conducting the LCIA include impact category definition, classification and characterisation. Examples of LCIA tools are, for example, CML 2001, Eco-Indicator 99, EDIP 2003, IMPACT 2002+ and TRACI (Tool for Reduction and Assessment of Chemical and other environmental Impacts).

Table 1

Example of Quantifiable Environmental Impact

For example, based on an assumption that a hotel room consumes 14 kWh of electricity and each room is occupied for maximum of 22 h, CO2 emission from the production of electricity is 0.448 kg CO2 eq per kWh. *Therefore, global warming potential from the electricity consumed during a stay in a hotel room is 14 kWh × 22 h × 0.448 CO2 eq/kWh equals 138 kg CO2 eq*

Source: Soratana et al. (2021, p.18).

LCA software, such as *SimaPro (wwwsimapro.com)* or *OpenLCA (www.openlca.org)*, is available to aid in LCI and LCIA steps. *SimaPro* contains databases of inventories for materials and processes in several industries and LCIA tools.

4. Interpretation of the results - the LCI and LCIA results are correlated, interpreted and improved to present meaningful information and enable decision-making consistent with the defined goal and scope (see Table 2). Interpretation should deliver results and explain limitations to inform industries and decision-makers (ISO, 2006b). In this step, emission hotspots and the impacts of a product that can be easily mitigated should be identified to provide a reduction of the life cycle impacts of the product.

Designing an LCA for tourism activities or a tourism project is not an easy task. Existing LCA tools and databases typically have data for unit processes, for example, a plate, a towel, a boiler used in a hotel, a bus used to transport people, etc. However, there are no datasets of bigger entities, such as entire hotel or restaurant operations. The data required to evaluate a model through LCA for an entire tourism project, including all hotel operations, tours, and travel would be extensive.

Table 2

The Communication Elements of LCA: Tourism Examples

The unit of global warming potential, i.e. kg CO_2 eq is not commonly known by general audiences. Therefore, when reporting global warming potential impact, it should be compared to more familiar resources, e.g. the number of trees needed to be planted or the distance of automobile travelling. For example, rather than reporting a global warming potential from occupying a hotel room for a day as 138 kg CO_2 eq, global warming potential should be reported as the number of trees required to sequester, the amount of CO_2. Assuming a mature tree can consume approximately 22 kg CO_2 eq per year or 0.05965 kg CO_2 per day, therefore, 2313 trees would need to be planted in order to mitigate 138 kg CO_2 eq. Another interpretation can be calculated based on inventory result. Tc charges of a cell phone (which consumes approximately 2–6 Watts when charging).

Source: Soratana et al. (2021, p.19).

It should be noted that LCA is not a solution to improve environmental performance directly or to reduce costs by itself, but a tool to identify hotspots and trade-offs, to minimise their weight in the environmental impacts through more sustainable alternatives. The use of LCA in different tourism projects and territories could drive tourism towards sustainability; in other words, it could help to keep the three pillars of sustainability in balance.

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Questions and Activities

1. Is the framework of LCC and SLCA the same as LCA? Investigate the commonalities and illustrate the relationships with a diagram.
2. What difficulties might be encountered when applying an LCA analysis to the tourism sector?
3. LCA, according to ISO, comprises four main steps. What do you consider to be the relative importance of these steps? Justify your answer.
4. What are the similarities between the concept of sustainability and LCA?
5. Research the Internet to find an example of LCC or S-LCA applications to tourism. Share your findings with your group.

Understanding the Intricacy and Usefulness of Branding Tourism Destinations

by Jairo Casado-Montilla and Juan Ignacio Pulido-Fernández

Branding tourism destinations has been recognised as a more complex process than other consumer goods due to their intrinsic characteristics (Zenker, Braun & Petersen, 2017). Destination branding has drawn the attention of researchers and practitioners since late in the 20th century and, in fact, it is the result of the evolution from the tourism destination image concept which had previously emerged in the 1970s. A brief and concise definition of destination branding was brought by Cai (2002) as the procedure of selecting the right mix of brand elements that allow tourists to identify and distinguish the destination through the image formation. Such elements can shape the definition of destination brand as a combination of a name, logo or symbol that both identifies and differentiates the destination.

That being said, planning and developing a brand has been gaining significance since it "incites beliefs, evokes emotions and prompts behaviours" (Kotler & Gertner, 2002, p. 249). In this case, a brand must accurately convey the true characteristics of a tourist destination, avoiding creating false expectations. It should also involve the stakeholders from the region, including the local inhabitants, to ensure a brand personality that is rooted in the local culture and heritage (Bowen & Sotomayor, 2022; Giannopoulos, Piha & Skourtis, 2021).

As the image of tourism destination can play a fundamental role when designing a brand, it is essential to understand the concept. Tourism destination image is the perception or mental picture that potential tourists have of a particular destination (Hunt, 1975). Echtner and Ritchie (2003) found that a destination's image is a crucial factor in attracting tourists, as a positive image can lead to increased tourism while a negative image can deter potential visitors. This image is influenced by a variety of factors, including personal experiences, media portrayals, and marketing efforts. It has been stated that tourism destination images affect the buying process (Agapito, Valle & Mendes, 2013). According to a study by Leković, Tomić, Marić and Ćurčić (2020), destination image is a key factor in the tourists' decision-making processes, as it influences their expectations and ultimately affects their satisfaction with the destination. Overall, the image of a tourism destination can play a crucial role in the success of its tourism industry and so it needs to be managed carefully by destination marketers.

Considering tourism destination image is a mentally formed element by tourists, there are several aspects that may affect it depending on each individual's perceptions. Hence, three dimensions have been identified by Afshardoosta and Sadegh (2020) to elucidate the process of destination image formation: cognitive image, affective image and conative image (See Table 1). The first two elements are recognised widely while the third one, according to the aforementioned authors, has been debated less since it has yet to be confirmed as a two-dimensional or three-dimensional construct. Nonetheless, it has been proved that managers who focus on affective image get better results as this element has a larger impact on the visitors' decision-making process when choosing a destination. The main reason put forward is that people are moved by feelings and emotions rather than objective information (Afshardoosta & Sadegh, 2020).

Table 1

Tourism Destination Image Dimensions

Concept	Definition
Tourism destination cognitive image	Tourism destination cognitive image refers to the knowledge and mental representations that tourists have of a particular destination, including its physical, social, cultural, and economic characteristics (Gartner, 1994). This image is based on past experiences, information from various sources, and personal expectations and beliefs.
Tourism destination affective image	Tourism destination affective image refers to the emotions and feelings that tourists associate with a particular destination (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997). This image is based on tourists' subjective experiences and personal evaluations of the destination.
Tourism destination conative image	Tourism destination conative image refers to the intentions and actions that tourists associate with a particular destination (Yang, Isa, Yao, Xia & Liu, 2022). This image encompasses the actions that tourists take or intend to take in relation to the destination, such as visiting, recommending or boycotting.

Note: Authors' own elaboration from the cited authors within the table.

At this point, once the tourism destination brand, the branding process and tourism destination image have been determined, the interest shifts to the measurement of brand effectiveness.

Aaker (1991) defined Customer-Based Brand Equity (C-BBE) as the value that consumers award to a brand. Traditionally, brands have been analysed by using the C-BBE method (Tasci, 2018). In this sense, the main objective is to figure out the brand impact on consumer perceptions by eliciting their opinions and valuation of different dimensions related to the brand and the product itself.

To achieve the aforementioned goal, the C-BBE method has been adapted and applied to analyse tourist destination brands, leading to the development of the Customer-Based Destination Brand Equity (hereinafter C-BDBE). As a marketing tool to enhance promotion strategies, C-BDBE refers to the impact that brand recognition has on a consumer's response to a tourist destination's marketing. It represents the additional value that a well-established brand name gives to a destination and reflects the destination's overall reputation and image in the minds of tourists (Tran et al., 2019). Therefore, C-BDBE can be used either to understand how actual tourists perceive a destination (Cristóvão, Gomes, Jardim & Borges, 2017), or to evaluate

Table 2

Customer-Based Destination Brand Equity Dimensions

Dimension	Definition
Destination brand awareness	It refers to the extent to which tourists are able to recall and recognize a brand. It is a measure of how familiar tourists are with a brand and how easily it comes to mind. A high level of tourism destination brand awareness can influence destination choice and increase the likelihood of repeat visits.
Destination brand image	It refers to the overall perception and attitudes that tourists hold about a specific tourist destination. It encompasses a set of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that influence the destination's reputation and appeal to potential tourists.
Destination perceived quality	It refers to the tourists' assessment of the overall quality of a specific tourist destination. It encompasses the tourists' perceptions of the destination's tangible and intangible attributes, including service quality, product quality, and the destination's unique offerings and experiences.
Destination brand loyalty	It refers to the tourists' attachment to and repeated choice of a specific tourist destination. It is driven by factors such as destination awareness, image, perceived quality, and satisfaction, and results in repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth recommendations. A strong sense of loyalty among tourists can increase the destination's competitiveness and contribute to its long-term success in the tourism market.

Note: Authors' own elaboration from Tran et al. (2019).

the potential of tourists from specific markets (Kotsi, Pike & Gottlieb, 2018). C-BDBE has been developed using four dimensions, measured by collating actual or potential tourists' opinions regarding: destination brand awareness; destination brand image; destination perceived quality; and destination brand loyalty (See Table 2 for further details).

Once the dimensions have been portrayed, it is important to point out how Customer-Based Destination Brand Equity is assessed. Managers and planners can create a questionnaire by supplying each dimension with items related to the destination characteristics. The following items may be included in the survey or questionnaire (cf. Boo, Busser & Baloglu, 2009; Cristóvão et al., 2017; Kashif, Samsi & Sarifuddin, 2015):

i. Brand Loyalty: questions about repeat visit behaviour and intention to return to the destination.
ii. Brand Awareness: measures of recognition and recall of the destination.
iii. Image: evaluations of the destination's reputation, identity, and characteristics.
iv. Perceived Quality: assessments of the destination's tangible and intangible attributes, such as service quality, product quality, and unique offerings and experiences.

The survey or questionnaire should be administered to a representative and sufficient sample of target consumers (actual tourists and/or potential tourists) to ensure valid and reliable results. The results of the survey can then be analysed to determine the strength of the destination's C-BDBE and to identify areas for improvement. Clearly, the implications of C-BDBE assessment are significant for destination managers, practitioners and marketers. Awareness of the strength and composition of a destination's C-BDBE can inform them to enable the development of strategies for improving destination competitiveness and attracting more visitors. In turn, by improving the destination's brand loyalty, brand awareness, image and perceived quality, destination managers can increase destination choice and encourage repeat visits. Furthermore, by enhancing a destination's reputation, its overall success in the tourism market should be promoted. In order to effectively leverage C-BDBE, destination managers need to continually monitor and assess each dimension and make data-driven decisions to improve its overall performance.

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Questions and Activities

1. In your own words, can you explain the difference between cognitive and affective image?
2. What is the definition of tourism destination conative image, and how does it relate to tourists' behaviour towards a destination?
3. What are the four dimensions that make up Customer-Based Destination Brand Equity (C-BDBE)? Put your response into context by explaining the role/purpose of each dimension.
4. How can destination managers use the results of measuring C-BDBE to inform their marketing strategies and improve the destination's competitiveness?
5. Choose a tourist destination with which you are familiar and design an online survey to assess C-BDBE. Note: Maximum time for a tourist to complete the survey is 10 mins.

Towards Creating a Culture of Ethical and Constructive Feedback on Hospitality Services and Online Reviews: An Exploration of Ethical Considerations

by Eszter Benke and Andrea Szőke

Introduction

The current case study addresses the question of ethics pertaining to online reviews both from the perspective of the service provider and the customer. Online travel reviews have become an increasingly important factor for travellers when choosing a hotel or another accommodation facility. Travellers rely on these reviews to get a sense of the quality of the accommodation and the level of service they can expect. Their booking decisions are influenced significantly by online reviews (De Pelsmacker, van Tilburg & Holthof, 2018). Research has shown that positive online reviews can lead to increased bookings and revenue for hotels and other accommodations (Viglia, Minazzi & Buhalis, 2016). While a significant number of studies examine online travel reviews, a growing body of research appears to focus on service providers' responses (Guo, Ye, Law, Liang & Zhang, 2022). Through the example of a complaint-response exchange, the present case study aims to explore some ethical considerations related to an online hotel review and the response it elicited.

The Evolution of Electronic Complaints

The evolution of electronic complaints in the tourism and hospitality industry has been shaped and influenced by the growth of the internet and social media. In the early days of the internet, customers primarily filed complaints through email or by filling in online forms on the website of a company or a service provider. An example of an early electronic complaint is a frequently cited viral message: 'Yours is a very bad hotel', a Power Point presentation, which was created by two business travellers who were booked into the Hilton Doubletree Hotel in Houston, Texas. The 17-page slide show was originally published online in 2001 and described the various issues the two travellers encountered on arrival at the hotel in which they had a guaranteed reservation (see https://www.slideshare.net/politicsjunkie/yours-is-a-very-bad-hotel). It was widely circulated on the internet, and it is considered to be one of the first examples of a viral graphic complaint. The complaint covered various topics such as poor customer service, cleanliness and lack of amenities and it generated a substantial number of responses. Shea and Kullar (2004) aimed to examine the diffusion and impact of the complaint through the internet and the responses it generated. They also revealed that the majority of the unsolicited responses were supportive of the complaint and that there were several calls for boycotting the hotel. Additionally, their analysis showed that the complaint had a significant impact on the reputation of the hotel; it was a good example of how powerful the internet can be in terms of amplifying customer voices and how a single complaint can impact a brand reputation.

Electronic word-of-mouth and social media-based user-generated content have come a long way since the appearance of this early electronic complaint (Litvin, Goldsmith & Pan, 2018). As web-based platforms continued to evolve, customers began using review portals such as TripAdvisor to post their complaints. With the increasing popularity of social media platforms, travellers began to share their positive experiences and complaints there as well. Also, complaints are often posted on commonly used social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. This shift to easily accessible review portals allowed customers to post their complaints publicly where they could be seen by potential customers, making them a powerful tool for influencing a company's reputation (Luca, 2016; Luca & Zervas, 2016).

Research on Online Reviews

The growing body of research on online reviews has covered a wide range of areas (Chen & Law, 2016; Sann, Lai & Chen, 2020). One of the most widely researched areas is the impact of online reviews on booking behaviour (El-Said, 2020; Zhang, Liang, Li & Zhang, 2019). Online reviews can significantly influence booking decisions as they help travellers decide where to stay, and research has shown that these reviews can have a significant impact on booking behaviour. Studies have generally found that positive reviews are more influential than negative reviews (Hilbrink, 2017; Phillips, Barnes, Zigan & Schegg, 2017), particularly for hotels and other accommodations that already have a high overall rating. The impact of online reviews can vary by the profile of the traveller. Li and Liang (2022) have shown that the influence of online reviews can vary depending on the characteristics of the reviewer, such as their age, income level, and experience. Furthermore, Hu and Kim (2018) have found that the tone of a review can affect the impact of the review on booking decisions. Research has shown that the number of reviews a hotel or other accommodation has received can affect its overall rating and the impact of individual reviews. A research area strongly related to customers booking behaviour is the impact of online reviews on hotel revenue (Anagnostopoulou, Buhalis, Kountouri, Manousakis

& Tsekrekos, 2020). Sotiriadis (2017), in his review article, highlights the importance of the use of social media in sharing tourism experiences and concludes that online reviews are a crucial source of information for both customers and service providers. From the service provider's perspective, the feedback and insights gained from social media platforms and online reviews can be utilised to better understand and meet the needs of their customers.

While the areas reviewed thus far tend to be directly related to business and operational performance and the impact of online reviews, a significant amount of research focuses on more subjective factors. The influence of positive and negative reviews and the role emotions play in the content and influence of online reviews have been studied widely (Chen & Farn, 2020; Guo, Wang & Wu, 2020). Sentiment analysis is a technique for identifying and extracting subjective information from online reviews (Luo, Huang & Wang, 2021). Analysing online reviews can help identify which aspects of a hotel or accommodation are rated highest and which are most criticized. In general, online reviews of hotels tend to be more positive than negative. It has been shown that the overall sentiment of a review (for example, positive or negative) can be more important in impacting the booking decision than the specific content of the review.

Defamation, Fake Reviews and the Regulatory Perspective

With the influence of online user-generated content, it is becoming increasingly important to receive positive reviews and avoid negative ones. Given the easy accessibility of reviews on TripAdvisor, in addition to other booking, review and social media sites, the influence of reviews has become increasingly important for hospitality and tourism businesses. Although reviews can be helpful to both hoteliers and guests, these reviews are often not credible. Manipulating reviews can be an effective way to attract more guests or defame a competitor. Companies have been known to incentivise people to write positive reviews about their company or negative reviews about their competitors (Luca & Zervas, 2016). These are fake reviews: "deceptive reviews provided with an intention to mislead consumers in their purchase decision making, often by reviewers with little or no actual experience with the products or services being reviewed" (Zhang, Zhou, Kehoe & Kilic, 2016, p. 465). Nowadays, there is a large number of unethical online reviews because anyone can easily post reviews on websites (Abedin, Mendoza & Karunasekera, 2020). The most effective way for companies to outperform their competitors in terms of visibility on online platforms may be to employ a mixed strategy of fake positive reviews about themselves and fake negative reviews about their competitors. While positive reviews can be very effective when users focus only on the first few companies in the top ranks, fake reviews can have a stronger effect when users examine a larger number of items (Lappas, Sabnis & Valkanas, 2016). Users do not always post fake reviews on purpose. Mellinas and Reino (2019) investigated eight online review websites by examining the classification of hotels in four international destinations. They studied the practice of adding a one-word summary description summarising the reviews received by hotels on these websites to see if this was consistent with legitimate practice. They concluded that the ratings and descriptions could mislead tourists because the process of creating descriptions on different websites is not standardised. The use of words such as 'average' to describe hotels with ratings above or below the middle of the scale might be misleading to readers, so these one-word expressions could be considered unreliable (Mellinas & Reino, 2019).

Li, Meng and Pan (2020) studied online review manipulation and fake reviews in the hospitality industry, as well as review deception, which is the difference between a customer's own opinion and the expectation established by the previous average review of other customers. They found that review disconfirmation influences customers' online review writing behaviour and suggest "that the fictitious online review manipulation might be detrimental to the business" (Li et al., 2020, p. 3685). Unfortunately, in many cases, companies manipulate users with paid fake reviews. In June 2018, the owner of the PromoSalento agency was found guilty of falsifying reviews on TripAdvisor. He was sentenced in Italy to nine months in prison and fined 8,000 euros in damages because his agency offered the creation of fake reviews as a commercial service. The investigation found about 1,000 fake reviews from the agency. TripAdvisor stated that businesses that had received reviews from PromoSalento would be downgraded in the homepage ranking as compensation. An important fact that led to the condemnation of the owner of PromoSalento was that his employees worked with fake profiles of fictitious people when creating the reviews (Tripadvisor, 2018).

According to the legislation of the European Union (EU), the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America (USA), fake reviews are classified as illegal advertising and violate the ethical principles of the International Code of Advertising and Marketing Communications. To combat fake reviews effectively, a joint effort between internet platforms and public authorities should be considered. Consumers and companies can also join the fight against fake reviews. On the one hand, reviews that are considered to be false can be reported to the platform or authorities; on the other hand, consumers can write truthful, balanced, and reliable reviews and punish companies with unethical practices through their consumer behaviour (Martínez Otero, 2021).

Subjectivity and Unethical Behaviour in Online Reviews and Responses

Subjective and Unethical reviews

Online travel reviews can be subjective in nature, as they are often based on personal experiences and opinions of the reviewers. Such reviews may not provide a completely accurate or objective representation of a particular travel destination, experience or service. Additionally, some reviews may be faked or biased, which can further complicate the issue of subjectivity. Fake reviews are sometimes written by travellers who have not used the services of the service provider, or they are sometimes written by paid reviewers. These fake reviews can be misleading and can give an inaccurate representation of the service, which can impact negatively potential customers, in addition to the ethical concerns that they raise. Subjectivity in a negative hotel review can turn into an unethical review if the individual writing the review exaggerates or fabricates certain aspects of their experience. Additionally, if the reviewer uses hate speech or makes personal attacks on the staff, the review would be considered unethical. It is important for reviews to be honest and based on actual experiences, rather than being motivated by a personal revenge or a desire to damage the reputation of the hotel.

Subjective and Unethical Responses

Service providers themselves may also be the source of unethical reviews and activities related to unfavourable reviews. The responses to negative online reviews from the hospitality service provider can also be subjective, as they are often written by hotel or restaurant staff or management who have a vested interest in presenting the establishment in the best possible light. In addition, responses may be written to appease the customer and mitigate potential damage to the reputation of the business, rather than to address the issues raised in the negative review. Such activity can make the response seem insincere or not address the issue fully, which in turn can be perceived as subjective by readers. Furthermore, responses to negative reviews can also be subjective, as they are based on staff's or managements' views and interpretations of events, which may differ from the customers' experiences. This situation may lead to inconsistencies and further subjectivity in responses. Lastly, the way in which the responses are written can also impact the subjectivity, as the tone and language used can affect how the response is perceived by the reader.

Subjectivity in service providers' responses to negative hotel reviews may also be perceived as unethical if the response is not based on fact but rather on feelings, emotions or personal opinions. If the service provider responds to a negative review with personal attacks or insults directed at the reviewer, the response will be perceived as highly unethical. Additionally, if the response includes false or misleading information in order to defend the reputation of a business, it will also be perceived as unethical. Some companies or managers may try to manipulate online reviews by selectively choosing which reviews to display or by filtering out unfavourable reviews which might damage the reputation of the service provider. A further instance when the question of ethics may arise is when the service provider tries to silence or censor negative reviews by threatening or intimidating the reviewers or offering them incentives to take down the review. Such action would be considered unethical as it undermines the authenticity of the review system and could potentially be illegal. It is important for service providers to respond to negative reviews in a professional and constructive manner by addressing any valid complaints then using the feedback to improve their service. The protection of the reputation of the hotel and the service should not be done with the help of unethical practices. Instead of various forms of manipulations (Gössling et al., 2018), businesses should have a clear policy on how to manage negative reviews and ensure that they are not in violation of any personal information or defamation laws (Xu, Zhang, Law & Zhang, 2019). Reputation management is an important activity to manage information about a hotel or any other business and to ensure that the overall perceptions of the service or the product are favourable. The reputation management strategy of a hotel should also include guidelines on how to deal with negative reviews.

In summary, while travellers' reviews will always be subjective to some degree, the service providers' responses may not be. An objective and factual response that addresses the issues raised in the negative review can help build trust with potential customers who read the reviews. A well-worded, objective response that takes responsibility for the issues that occurred and identifies specific steps that have been, or will be, taken to address them can show that the hotel takes customer feedback seriously. It can also help mitigate damage to the company's reputation by showing that the hotel is willing to take responsibility for any issues that have arisen and is committed to improving the customer experience.

The Case of an Unethical Review and an Unethical Response

The authentic complaint-response exchange below was retrieved from a review site in 2015 and has been used for teaching purposes for several years. The text is currently inaccessible as it was most likely removed from the hotel's review site due to reputation management and/or review manipulation.

It was a disaster

Living at this hotel was a disaster and with respect I really doubt the reviews here! Living in this hotel was the worst experience I had in Budapest. Service is bad plus it stops at about 11 pm. The staff are not friendly rooms are dirty. At this hotel the minimum time u have to wait to get whatever u asked for is an hour even if it's a cup of tea and when u complain their answer would be (sorry we don't have enough staff). We even were threatened by the manager there when we complained about the service and he started making up stories to get us afraid so we won't complain any more, it was like dealing with a gang member not a manager, where we decided to leave immediately the next day. Don't get surprised when u r charged extra for asking the housekeeping to clean ur room at night even though u had paid a lot for the rooms. The bar they have there has a very beautiful view, but make sure u can tolerate the service and wait for at least an hour whenever u order. If u r planning to visit Budapest make sure u avoid xxx hotel, because it will ruin ur experience in Budapest.

Date of stay: September 2015

Response of the Director of Operations

Peter,

Our beautiful and culturally inspired hotel attracts the nicest, most refined and dignified guests from all around the world including families who rely on us to ensure that their environment is both peaceful and protected. We strived to meet your disregard for property and deliberate and abusive treatment of our staff as well. Under the circumstance you placed us, there was not much else we could do.

Indeed, you are correct, this is not the right hotel for those who wish to smoke and party in their rooms with a group of unregistered, visiting ladies. While we have daily housekeeping and evening turndown, calling for a team for housekeepers in the middle of the night to clean up the unspeakable condition of your suites after your parties which decency does not allow me to detail here on this forum was a demeaning indignity that will haunt us forever. We are proud to be a *smoke free hotel for the health and wellbeing of our guests as well as our staff, and we post information in multiple places that housekeeping will indeed charge you if you continuously ignore our repeated requests not to smoke in our guestrooms. It took several days for the smoke and stench to abate, leaving valuable suites vacant when they could have been sold to other guests. It is for this reason why we charged you a nominal housekeeping fee, as stipulated in advance on our registration card as well as on our website for smoking.*

If any of the TripAdvisor members reading this has any questions or concerns regarding this, please feel free to contact me personally at xxxx@xxxxxhotel.com

This case clearly presents a scenario where both parties involved have their own subjective perception and interpretation of the situation. The traveller has filed the complaint with details of the problems encountered during his stay. The expected service recovery through the manager's response raises questions about the hotel's reputation management strategies and intentions. While the credibility of the original submission should not be questioned, the response can be discussed in terms of Sparks and Bradley's (2014) "Triple A typology of responding" (see Table 1).

Table 1

Triple A Typology of Responding

Acknowledge	Account	Action
Thank	Excuse	Investigate
Appreciate	Justify	Referral
Apologise	Reframe	Rectify
Recognise	Penitential	Policy
Admit	Denial	Training
Accept		Direct contact
Dismiss		Compensate

Note: Table adopted from Sparks & Bradley (2014. p 724).

The Triple A typology subdivides the elements of managerial response to the content of customer complaints into three main categories: Acknowledgment; Account; and Action. The 'Acknowledgment' category encompasses elements such as apology, admittance and recognition, and expressions of gratitude, which serve as a demonstration of empathy towards the customer's situation and acknowledgement of the complaint. The 'Account' category includes elements such as justification, explanation in addition to excuse, which serve to provide an understanding of the situation and the reason for the problem. The 'Action' category comprises elements such as compensation, solutions and preventive measures, which serve to demonstrate the service provider's commitment to service recovery by rectifying the problem and preventing it from happening in the future. This framework should help managers to consider, and appreciate the consequences of, the different types of responses they can use when dealing with customer complaints then to choose the most appropriate response based on the situation.

Conclusion

With the influence of online reviews, it is becoming increasingly important to receive positive user-generated content and avoid negative ones. Given the easy accessibility of reviews on TripAdvisor, other booking and review sites and also social media platforms, the influence of reviews has also become more important for hospitality and tourism businesses. Not only do complaints have negative effects, but such reviews can help hotels and restaurants learn about customers' needs and their own weaknesses. Therefore, responding to negative reviews should be integrated into complaint management training (cf. Maurer & Schaich, 2011). Responding promptly, correctly and efficiently to online reviews is an effective way for hotels to improve their online reputation (Proserpio & Zervas, 2017). Furthermore, research also confirms that when hotels provide apologetic responses to customer reviews, it results in an increase in future review volume (Guo et al., 2022).

This case study addressed issues of compliance and ethics through a discussion of online hotel reviews and service providers' subsequent possible responses. The empirical research examined in the first part of the study highlights the importance of online reviews in the hospitality industry and confirms the important role they play in a hotel's or company's reputation. In terms of compliance, both hoteliers and reviewers should comply with existing laws and regulations. It is important that hotel businesses and companies have compliance policies that address responses to online reviews and other issues such as defamation, invasion of privacy, and consumer protection. Similarly, reviewers should also comply with defamation and invasion of privacy regulations. In the context of writing and responding to hotel reviews, compliance means adhering to consumer protection, privacy and advertising laws and regulations; ethics involves providing an honest and accurate representation of the experience and responding to reviews in a fair and respectful manner. While compliance is necessary, it is not sufficient to ensure ethical behaviour. Businesses and individuals should strive to align their actions with ethical principles to ensure that they follow not only the letter of the law but also its spirit. In addition to meeting legal requirements, ethics requires going beyond codified standards and acting in accordance with moral and societal expectation by being fair, transparent, honest and responsible both as a hotel reviewer and a recipient of a review.

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Questions and Activities

1. How would you respond to the online review in the case study?
2. Identify the elements of Sparks & Bradley's Triple A typology in the manager's response.
3. What are the general characteristics of a response to a customer's negative review that would really help to restore service and protect the reputation of the service provider?
4. Search the literature for studies that examine customer preferences in the form and content of management responses to online reviews.
5. Prepare a guide on how to write positive responses to online hospitality reviews.
6. Go to a review site and try to identify fake reviews. What features of the review indicate that it is not authentic? Share your findings with the group and discuss.
7. Go to a review site and try to spot AI-generated responses to reviews. What features of the text indicate that it is AI-generated?
8. Go to the site https://www.tripadvisor.com/TripAdvisorInsights/abouttripadvisorreviews and read

the posts about unfair, fake, and biased reviews. Write a summary of how TripAdvisor moderates reviews.

9. Research and present a defamation case in the hospitality industry that led to legal action. Discuss and analyse the responsibilities of the parties involved.
10. Draft a code of ethics for responding to unfavourable online reviews.

Recommended and/or Further Reading

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Part 3

Points for Discussion

Part 1 Non-revealed Case Studies

The Role of the Tourist Guide – Exceeding Expectations
by Michael Risteski and Mirjana Sekulovska

Points for Discussion

- Roles and activities of a tour guide before, during and after a tour
- Problem solving by tour guides
- Managerial duties for tour organisers
- Meeting and exceeding tourists' expectations

Professor Freeborn's Travel Experience
by Michael Evans, Sean Chung and Neil Robinson

Points for Discussion

- Have you ever experienced an unsatisfactory service delivery from an airline? Did you complain? If so, were you satisfied with the response received? If you did not complain, please explain why not?
- Discuss the concept of service recovery paradox and its relevance in the service industry.

Together in Electric Dreams: Hospitality Management, Education and Training post COVID-19 - the Challenges and Opportunities offered by Technology
by Crispin Dale, Neil Robinson, Nicholas Catahan, Chris Doran, Stuart Marsh and Michael Evans

Points for Discussion

- Impact of COVID-19 on hospitality related education
- Future role of educational technology in hospitality education

Measuring Tourism Competitiveness
by José Luis Durán-Román and Juan Ignacio Pulido-Fernández

Points for Discussion

- In a globalised tourism market, region-specific tourism competitiveness models better capture the uniqueness of the destination, but this makes it difficult to compare destinations in different countries.
- The reliability and validity of quantitative indicators (numerical values) versus qualitative indicators (description of the result), primary data sources (containing original and new

information obtained for a specific purpose) versus secondary data sources (organised information compiled through third-party analysis).

- Comparative advantages (referring to factors or resources that the territory possesses, and which have enabled it to be configured as a tourist destination, whether natural or as a result of human action) versus competitive advantages (strategies implemented by the destination to manage its resources efficiently and sustainably over time).
- Changes in the methodology for calculating the index and the consequent damage to the historical series, so that the evolution of the index cannot be analysed over the whole period using a time series.

Virtual Service-Learning (V-SL): An Opportunity to Advance Education in Sustainability for Tourism Studies
by Yaiza López-Sánchez and Juan Ignacio Pulido-Fernández

Points for Discussion

- Service-learning is a teaching methodology that combines community service with curricular learning.
- Virtual Service-Learning is a particular modality of Service-Learning that engages students through technology in civic inquiry, service, reflection and action.
- Education in tourism should have sustainability at its core; methodologies, such as V-SL, facilitate sustainability education in tourism

Part 2 Revealed Case Studies

Integrating Sustainability in Hospitality Operations: The Case of Carbon Footprint Calculators
by Detlev Remy and Michael Kruesi

Points for Discussion

- Application of sustainability efforts in the hospitality industry
- Application of requirements for using a carbon footprint calculator.
- Impact of sustainability on business performance

Food Poisoning: Employee Negligence or Unfair Competition?
by Bojana Kalenjuk Pivarski

Points for Discussion

- Similar cases of food poisoning
- Possible causes of food poisoning
- Marketing and promotion of a reopening business after compulsory closure

Public Private Image
by Gabriela Potoczek-Kantor

Points for Discussion

- For promotional purposes, only professional actors should appear in clips, videos or on leaflets and banners. To what extent do you agree with this statement?
- Do you think that a business employee should respond to/comment on every review (positive or negative) received on social media or booking sites? If not, which reviews should the focus be on? Why? Who should take responsibility for the comments?
- Do you think the complaints were caused by the owners' unintentional actions or deliberate intentions to save money on resetting the stage, actors and recording new videos?

Gamify your Hotel Service!
by Klára Karakasné Morvay

Points for Discussion

- Use of gamification in hotels
- Cases pertaining to gamification in hotels
- Ideas for innovative online and offline games in hotels
- Emotional factors relating to game playing
- Cost/benefit analysis of introducing gamification elements in hotels

World Tourism Day
by Liběna Jarolímková

Points for Discussion

- What, if any, activities have been held on the occasion of World Tourism Day in recent years in your country and/or city?

- What activities would be attractive to you on the occasion of World Tourism Day?

Life Cycle Assessment: A Tool for the Design of Sustainable Projects in Touristic Territories
by Lázuli Fernández-Lobato, Yaiza López-Sánchez and Juan Ignacio Pulido-Fernández

Points for Discussion

- The use of LCA in different tourism sectors could drive tourism toward sustainability
- LCA steps and good practices in using LCA to promote sustainable development in tourism can be used as guidance on how to conduct an LCA in the tourism sector
- LCA results can be used to improve the performance of tourism activities and to inform policy or decision-makers

Understanding the Intricacy and Usefulness of Branding Tourism Destinations
by Jairo Casado-Montilla and Juan Ignacio Pulido-Fernández

Points for Discussion

- The utility of C-BDBE when analysing potential markets.
- C-BDBE can be used to evoke feelings and emotions towards a destination.
- The measurement and management of Customer-Based Destination Brand Equity (C-BDBE) is essential for the success of a tourist destination in today's competitive market.

Towards Creating a Culture of Ethical and Constructive Feedback on Hospitality Services and Online Reviews: An Exploration of Ethical Considerations
by Eszter Benke and Andrea Szőke

Points for Discussion

- The difference between review manipulation and reputation management.
- The role of reviewer anonymity in online reviews.
- The role of AI in managing customer feedback in the hospitality industry.