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The aim of the journal is to promote and enhance research development and innovation in the field of hospitality and tourism. The journal seeks to provide an international platform for hospitality and tourism educators, postgraduate students and researchers, to debate and disseminate research findings, facilitate the discussion of new research areas and techniques, and highlight best practices for industry practitioners. The articles published in the journal take a multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary approach to study the marketing, finance, economics and social aspects of hospitality and tourism. Papers dealing with theoretical, conceptual and empirical aspects of the subject matter will be considered for publication.

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Great Expectations: Building Research Capacity in Vocational Tourism and Hospitality Institutes
Alana Harris & Paul Kloppenborg
William Angliss Institute, Australia

The Australian Tourists’ Travel Motivation and Pre- and Post-Images of The Philippines as their Destination
Allan B. de Guzman, Belinda V. de Castro, Josephine Fatima V. Calanog, Apple Joanne R. Taguinin, Jay Rhyan S. Afalla, Anna Lorraine R. Aldover & Marie Toni C. Gotangco
University of Santo Tomas, Philippines

Email as a Customer Service Tool: An Investigation into Email Reply Quality of Malaysian Hotels
Noor Hazarina Hashim
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Malaysia

Factors Determining Choice of Full Service Airlines and Low Cost Carriers: The Case of Malaysia
Tuck Sai Boey
Taylor’s University, Malaysia
Erdogan H. Ekiz
Al-Faisal University, Saudi Arabia
Yusniza Kamarulzaman
University of Malaya, Malaysia
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Impact of Internships on Students Undertaking Tourism and Hospitality Programs</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott Richardson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Queensland University, Australia &amp; University of Johannesburg, South Africa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gareth Butler</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Johannesburg, South Africa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowering Women through Tourism: A Study of Kullu Valley</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sushma Rewal Chugh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Himachal Pradesh University, India</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Review</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by John T. Mgonja</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clemson University, USA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Paper

Great Expectations: Building Research Capacity in Vocational Tourism and Hospitality Institutes

Alana Harris & Paul Kloppenborg
William Angliss Institute, Australia

Abstract: Significant changes are taking place in post-secondary tourism and hospitality education in Australia. Along with an expansion of degree offerings by universities, vocationally focused degrees are also emerging from Vocational Education and Training (VET) organisations also registered as Higher Education Providers (HEP). Among the many implications of this emergence is building research capacity in the HEPs. This exploratory study reviews experiences in other countries to identify considerations for building research capacity in the emergent VET environment in Australia where hospitality and tourism degrees are offered. Using William Angliss Institute as a case study, these considerations are drawn together to develop a model to drive the research capacity for VET HEPs delivering tourism and hospitality degrees in Australia. Applications and implications for the direction of research capacity development among other like institutions are discussed.

Keywords: Research capacity, hospitality and tourism, Higher Education Providers (HEP), Vocational Education and Training (VET)


Introduction

While training in hospitality and tourism has traditionally been the domain of Vocational Education and Training (VET) institutions, the growth of hospitality and tourism degree programs in Australian universities has been rapid and extensive (Paul, 2010, Breakey & Craig-Smith, 2008), Educational sectors are now distinguished by an institution’s research role rather than orientation (vocational or higher education) or

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student enrolment (Moodie, 2008). In Australia, *Transforming Australia’s Higher Education*, was a major catalyst towards de-commissioning Australia’s education divide (Vocational and Higher Education) away from institutional structures and towards educational relationships (Bradley, 2008).

Academia in higher education institutes pursue ‘learning as empowerment’ (White, 1997) embedding teaching, scholarship, subject development and research as an expectation. The role of teachers in VET institutions has traditionally been aligned to interpreters of curricula, broad and flexible teaching practices and assessment requirements rather than researchers and originators of knowledge. As a result, offering degree courses beyond universities highlights a need for the advancement of research capacity in VET HEPs. VET providers are faced with a number of challenges as they broaden their scope beyond vocational, skills-based training into the academic arena. These include teacher identity and professional status, curriculum and assessment issues and changing learning environments.

One specific challenge for building VET HEPs’ research capacity in hospitality and tourism is to identity and define the research discipline itself. In the Australian context, many current hospitality and tourism university programs developed from colleges into the university space during the 1980s and 1990s and have moved to “differentiate themselves from the delivery of ‘vocationalism’” (Robinson, Breakey & Craig-Smith, 2008). It raises the questions of how VET HEP institutes, in the current environment, can carve a research space and how they can develop capacity that creates purposeful and applicable research outputs. The aim of this study is to draw on theories of research capacity building and overseas experiences to develop a model within which research capacity and a research culture can be developed in Australian VET HEP institutes.

This paper thus forms part of a deepening discussion on developing research capacity in Australian VET institutes and is organised as follows. First, a review of literature, including overseas experiences, identifies considerations for building research capacity in the emergent VET environment in Australia where hospitality and tourism degrees are offered. In the second part of the paper, the exploratory case study reviews William Angliss Institute in order to further refine these considerations. The discussion for this section proposes a model to drive the research capacity for VET providers delivering tourism and hospitality degrees in Australia. The final part of the paper discusses applications and implications for the model in the development of research capacity among VET HEP institutes.

**Background**

In Australian post-secondary education, there are two opposing trends which are having a significant impact on studies of tourism and hospitality. On one hand VET
providers, who have traditionally offered more lower-level, practical and applied vocational qualifications, have been expanding their qualification offerings upwards to include associate degree and bachelor degree courses. At the same time, there is a growing trend of universities pushing downwards to include qualifications at the lower end of the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF), such as diplomas. In 2011, there were 96 institutions in Australia which were accredited to offer both vocational and higher education qualifications (Moodie, 2010). In the state of Victoria, there were 18 publicly funded TAFE institutions, including six VET HEPs. The ambiguity of educational sector divisions is indicative of a merging single tertiary education sector that remains highly stratified and ill defined. It equates to VET providers offering advanced qualifications and the universities increasingly competing in vocational education, for example Monash College as the vocational arm of Monash University.

The broadening of scope for vocational institutes to include degree programs is not a new trend. Over recent decades, similar changes have taken place in many countries including the United Kingdom, Hong Kong, South Africa and New Zealand. Each of these offers lessons for the emerging Australian experience. A key commonality has been the emphasis on research in what have been traditionally vocationally orientated institutions.

**Literature Review**

Research, in the traditional university context, describes the process of systematic inquiry which results in the discovery of new facts or relationships (Veal, 2005). It encompasses knowledge transfer, innovation, dissemination of findings as well as underpinning teaching and quality graduate attributes. A review of the literature provides some insights into the research capacity in those institutes that do not share the same research tradition as universities.

**Research Capacity Building Models**

Research, as an activity, is not the exclusive domain of universities. Government and private institutions also establish research centres which require development of capacity in order to achieve outcomes. The literature offers a number of models which, in essence, consider environmental (external), organisational (internal) and individual factors. The following section highlights developmental or structural models offered by different research areas. Commonality is highlighted and then the development of research capacity specifically in education is discussed. There are various models that apply in the emerging VET HEP landscape.

The area of health research offers a number of structural models of building research capacity, such as Birdsell et al. (2005) who offered the ‘box’ model. This
model attempted to identify internal, external and moderating factors which could be tested for their contribution to health research use. The authors also outlined the ‘circle’ model suggesting five interdependent groups (structure, culture, people, political dynamics and external environment) by which research factors could be categorised. Crisp, Swerissen & Duckett (2000) suggested that there were four domains of intervention: top down, bottom up, building partnerships and community organisation. In the agricultural research environment, Horton (2003) offered a structural framework which focussed on organisational capacity (organisational performance, organisational capacity, external operating environment and internal environment). Focus on the organisation and the extent to which the organisation interacts with the external environment is a common theme among these models.

In family medicine research, Del Mar & Askew (2004) proposed different levels of research engagement, categorising users, participants and leaders and suggested that research capacity can be a temporal development over the three stages. Heinemann (2005) described contributing factors (such as research training, infrastructure, funding) and outlined metrics for measuring outputs. Stineman & Kennedy (2005) responded to Heinemann with a broader ‘panoramic’ view of research capacity development. Their dynamic cycle model was aimed at building strong and sustainable research capacity. These temporal or developmental models reflect the issues of growth and sustainability which are, arguably, not evident in the structural models.

Building Research Capacity in Education

Puryear (2005, p. 94) defined education research capacity as, “a productive, modern, internationally connected, diverse and self-producing community of professionals conducting research at quality levels comparable with peers elsewhere in the world.” The ideas of sustainability and growth from some health sciences developmental models are also important in education research capacity.

The review of educational literature suggests that the factors influencing the development of research capacity are linked to over-arching forces such as government structures and perceived prestige and credibility. Shamai & Kfir (2002, p. 398) noted that “any higher education institution worthy of its name must promulgate research and a research culture.” Research is seen as a key criterion for scholarly recognition and promotion (Harman & Harman, 2003) as well as central to academic practice and informed teaching in higher education (Turner, McKenzie, McDermott & Stone, 2009b). An understanding of how the Australian university sector develops research culture and capacity may inform the way in which VET HEPs can fit within this mould.

Brennan (1995) identified two elements of a research culture in the Australian context. At one level the research agenda is determined, operationalised and funded
at a national level, largely undertaken by the Australian Research Council (ARC). Then there is the activity undertaken at institute level. There are many examples which tie funding from national bodies with university research outputs. Geuna & Martin (2003) offer a detailed discussion of different models used across Europe, United Kingdom, Asia and the Pacific (including Australia). The literature discusses how international reforms to higher education have impacted research capacity, culture and outputs. In the UK, for example, the introduction of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) in 1986 linked the quality of research outputs with government funding. The environment became more competitive when British polytechnics were granted university status (in 1992) and joined the competition for unregulated research money (Li, Millwater & Hudson, 2008). Although these so-called ‘new universities’ have not benefited greatly from a funding perspective in this system and, as Geuna & Martin (2003) noted, this has resulted in more institutions applying for the same source of research funding.

New Zealand has also experienced a similar situation when its tertiary sector underwent reform in the 1990s which resulted in an openly competitive environment in higher education. In a competitive system for research funds, the polytechnics were effectively ‘forced’ into developing a research culture. Middleton (2005, p. 7) noted of New Zealand’s research scheme that “vocational education institutions faced the dilemma of joining this scheme in order to contest for relatively small amounts of funding and risk reputational damage of the inevitable low rankings when the results were published.” He went on to note that 20 of the 22 institutes and polytechnics opted not to participate and, that the rankings in 2004 revealed that the bottom nine institutions were all vocational education institutions. This suggests a reluctance to have research imposed and a lack of success in those instances where it has been.

Research outputs and funding have been linked with prestige. In his evaluation of research performance in the 2002 UK Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), Page (2003) noted that tourism research outputs can enhance the public image of an institute and Law & Chon (2007) stated of hospitality and tourism research that, “good performance in research... tends to help them receive more funding from their government and/or related industry.” Linking outputs and funding with prestige presents two challenges for VET HEPs offering degree courses in tourism and hospitality. Firstly, the institutes offering these courses do not, in the Australian context, qualify for funding under the Excellence in Research Australia (ERA) Initiative. Secondly, they are not viewed by the broader or academic communities as prestigious. These VET HEPs are private colleges (with a tradition of fee for service education) or TAFE (Technical and Further Education) which are government supported vocational institutes but in both cases there is disconnect between research outputs and the broader community.

Hazelkorn (2005) argued that institutes need to connect their own research activity with commercialisation, national benefit and competitiveness. This reflects the ‘bottom-
up’ approach and connecting with the community featured in some of the research building capacity models. Rather than VET HEPs having a research culture imposed by a national framework of funding, the research indicates that an organic, individual institute-based model provides the opportunity to connect with other institutions and the national system.

Further examples in the literature include Middleton (2005) who discussed research as a second career for teachers in the VET sector, focusing on Auckland College of Education. Hornblow (2002) attributed direction and leadership at the Executive Director level as the key to the gradual development of research capacity at the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand. Mercer (2002) identified that ‘support and mentoring’ and attendance at research meetings foster research practice at Eastern Institute of Technology (NZ). Research meetings, or communities of practice, have also been discussed in the Australian context. Renwick & Burrows (2008) used Box Hill Institute, a TAFE provider which has been delivering accredited degrees since 2004, to discuss the use of an Applied Research Community of Practice. They noted that they used a wiki (a type of internet site) to facilitate four meetings a year and that the membership was ‘organic’. Issues identified by Renwick & Burrows (2008) including organisational and professional identity of teachers, and the capacity of this cohort to move beyond pedagogical expertise into shaping their work towards scholarly collectives, informs much of the current Australian debate on VET HEPs and research.

Commonality among the examples in the literature is the gradual pace and organic nature of building research capability within these VET HEPs. This is partly due to the professional role of teaching, and the requirements for accountability and productivity within vocational education (Lorrimar, 2006). Organisational structures are geared towards teaching rather than research (including but not limited to, teaching loads, availability of study leave, industry focus of professional development activities and lack of financial and non-financial incentives).

These examples reflect the nuances surrounding the changes to vocational and higher education and the inter-related nature of the culture, environment, institutional direction, resources, community perception, individual interests, skills and constraints. In this environment there is no one single, simple research capacity model (structural or developmental) that can be applied in the Australian situation.

The Study

The literature highlights the difficulties in applying any one model of research building capacity. The aim of this study is to reflect on and propose an alternative model for the development of research capacity for VET HEP institutes offering tourism and hospitality degree courses. It should be noted that Australia has a two tiered system of post-secondary education; higher education (HE) and vocational education and
training (VET). There are also universities which have both a HE and VET division. Such institutions are referred to as dual sector. These were not considered in this study for a number of reasons including this observation: the HE divisions of these institutes qualify for federal funding and have a tradition of research activity (these institutions self-accredit their degrees) and the VET divisions can utilise existing research infrastructure (such as library resources) and expertise (such as researchers on campus). As such these institutions develop research capacity differently from those which are VET HEPs. However it is important to acknowledge these institutions, their structures and how they contribute to the system of education and research being studied.

William Angliss Institute was used as a case study (Yin, 1999) in this research. A case study approach was deemed suitable because the relevant context is paramount and unclear boundaries pre-dominate the investigation. William Angliss Institute is a government recognised ‘Specialist Centre’ in foods, hospitality and tourism and has a 70-year history of training in these areas. The institute is a VET HEP provider based in Victoria, offering a Bachelor of Tourism and Hospitality Management and Bachelor of Culinary Management. Like other VET HEPs, William Angliss Institute is required under the conditions of its HE registration to demonstrate scholarly activity and research. William Angliss has approached the development of research capacity by nurturing existing interest, skills and talent. Broadly, the institute has a focus on applied research linked to its area of specialisation.

Methods

Data were collected in three stages: first, a review of the literature with a focus on the role of research development among VET HEPs offering degree courses and, where possible, in the tourism and hospitality fields. Second, qualitative data was collected via observation and semi-structured interviews (Carruthers, 1990; Veal, 2005). The researcher commenced the role at William Angliss Institute in August 2010 with one responsibility of the role being to review and develop a research strategy. For the period of August 2010 to September 2011, the researcher has been involved in discussions regarding research issues and considerations both inside and outside the organisation. A schedule of questions was designed in April 2011 for the purposes of semi-structured interviews with individuals from other Victorian VET HEPs. These interviews took place with the Higher Education Manager of William Angliss Institute and representatives of two Victorian TAFEs offering tourism and hospitality degrees. Others were reluctant to speak ‘on the record’. It was suggested that the competitive nature of the current tourism and hospitality education market coupled with sensitivities around the degree accreditation process were contributing factors. Instead, the researcher engaged in non-transcribed ‘conversations’ with key themes, concerns and considerations being noted. These conversations were, in effect, overt
participant observation, with respondents having the nature and purpose of the research disclosed at the commencement of the conversation.

Thirdly, a series of William Angliss Institute internal documents were sourced and analysed (Veal, 2005; Yin, 2009). These included strategic planning documents, previous research strategies, plans and activities, minutes from Research Committee meetings and other relevant governance boards and committees and a review of policies and procedures. Consistent with the case study approach (Yin, 2009), the data were analysed and themes drawn from the data were categorised and contextualised within the parameters of the Australian education landscape to develop a model of research capacity.

Developing an Alternative Model

Findings

The literature review suggests that attempts by VET HEPs to develop research capacity in tourism and hospitality in Australia will be faced by a number of external challenges. On one hand, VET HEPs do not fit into the national structure of research funding (ERA), nor do they have the prestige associated with the history and contribution of research by universities. The organisational cultural differences of the sectors slowing the emerging VET HEPs from any over-arching scholarly framework is reiterated (Wheelahan, Moodie, Billett & Kelly, 2009b). The semi-structured interviews reflected this with all participants noting an absence of a research culture in their respective institutes. Some of the terms used by participants to describe their institute’s attempts at building research activity included; ‘piecemeal’, ‘ad-hoc’ and ‘sporadic’; another common theme was the lack of a consolidated approach and commitment to developing research.

This suggests limitations of the ‘top-down’ approach for developing research capacity at such institutes. On the other hand, the ‘bottom-up’ approach appears to offer a means of developing research capacity at a pace and within the resource constraints of these institutions. A number of participants noted financial support at their institute for staff to undertake higher degrees. However, the absence of time-release was also noted. It reinforces a view that the motivation to undertake scholarly activity and research rested primarily on the individual teacher especially to meet the demands of a course or maintain current subject knowledge in their own time (Turner, McKenzie & Stone, 2009a). In the case study institute, the ineffectiveness of the top-down approach was also highlighted. For example a Research Strategy had been prepared but was two years out of date at the commencement of this study (2010), during which time both internal structures and external factors had changed.
considerably. Moreover, the outdated strategy did not specify roles or responsibilities and only discussed research in broad, non-specific terms.

The interview data reflected a lack of research collaboration activities with other institutes, other universities or like-institutes. Several respondents acknowledged that collaboration and relationship building was an important start as “we are all in the same boat”, but a tradition of competition coupled with an increasingly unstable external environment and a lack of leadership by any single institute meant that this did not eventuate. In the case study institute, the outdated Research Strategy notes as an objective to “establish research partnerships with government bodies, industry, universities and other providers in the VET sector”, although a review of the Institute’s Research Committee minutes 2008-2010 did not detail how this objective would be met.

Detailed analysis of documentation of the case study institute and semi-structured interviews and observations in the other institutes in the study support the contention that attempts in VET HEPs to develop research have been largely window dressing. Boyer's (1997) theory of scholarship was used as a guiding framework in one institution. Beyond this, there did not appear to be a theoretical underpinning from which research capacity itself could be built. Arguably, any research strategy or plan which does not take into consideration the issues of capacity or culture is unlikely to be successful.

A Proposed Model for Building Research Capacity

The first step in developing a model in the case study was the identification of those factors specific to the wider research landscape. The literature points to a number of factors which influence the development of research capacity in VET HEPs offering degrees in Australia.

1. National research agenda.
   
   In Australia, the ERA is the national structure for research funding in tertiary institutions. The ERA, however, disallows research funding to be linked to VET HEP research outputs, effectively limiting resourcing and the prestige traditionally connected with the research activity and funding.

2. Industry relationships and engagement
   
   Given the historically strong relationships between VET providers and the hospitality and tourism industries, there is a need to maintain the connection between the two. Moreover, industry may provide an audience for research outputs. VET institutions, by their nature, have strong links with industry and VET HEPs could direct research outputs towards industry applicability. An applied research focus could strengthen this relationship, create value (if not prestige) for research outputs and possibly provide a funding source from industry (Law & Chon, 2007).
3. **Individual researchers**

Those who are conducting research in VET HEPs are, effectively, the ‘building blocks’ of research capacity and the motivation, capability and interest of these individuals is critical. Many currently in this sector come from a vocational background and hence lack the skills, experience and (in many cases) the initiative to embark on research activity. Considerations of recruitment (future composition of the VET HEP research workforce), ‘importing’ research skills and development of existing staff are all important issues.

The organisational structures and factors necessary for developing capacity at an institutional level were identified. Salazar-Clemeña & Almonte-Acosta (2003) took a similar approach in their operational construct of research culture in Filipino Higher Educational Institutions.

The model (see Figure 1) proposes an institute specific approach to developing research capacity in VET HEPs of degrees in tourism and hospitality. This model uses the considerations outlined in the section above as ‘Environmental Considerations’, then ‘Institutional Factors’ required for building research capacity are outlined. Finally,
the model suggests that the operationalisation of these factors, ‘Research activity’, is nested within the two.

The model acknowledges the shortcomings of the ‘top-down’ approach from the overseas vocational education experiences and the limitations of the ‘bottom-up’ approach in the current environment of rapid change. Moreover it builds the external factors (environment) and internal factors (organisational structures) from the models in the literature. The end result is a structural model of building research capacity that is integrated with research activity and focused on research outcomes.

Effectively, the model supports a concurrent development of building research capacity. One where the environment (current and predicted) sets the parameters for institutional factors to develop which, in turn, builds research capacity and drives activity. At the same time, individual and collaborative research activity contributes to institutional factors and ‘organically’ develops research capacity. Arguably, research activity will carve out a ‘natural path’ of research from existing skills, interest and demands. At the same time, research capacity building at an institutional level will be directed (to varying degrees) by that path.

Implementing the Model

Figure 2 reflects how William Angliss Institute defines and operationalises the ‘Institutional Factors’ from the model for the purposes of building research capacity. This model is currently being used by the research unit of the institute to drive the development of the institute’s research strategy. While the list below is represented linearly, in reality these institutional factors are inter-related and co-dependent. Further, they are being developed and directed by both environmental considerations (present and some future) and the current research activity.

Practical Implications for Development of Vocational Research Capacity in Hospitality and Tourism

The Institute has an important role in shaping the direction of research and contributing to the development of research capacity. In practical terms, however, few VET HEPs have the resources to tackle all these factors concurrently. Instead a review of existing resources and priorities at an institute level may provide the starting point. For example, an institute may ‘import’ research expertise by recruiting staff who are PhD qualified. This necessitates an academic promotion policy and articulation of working conditions (such as study leave). Another approach may be the development of a ‘visiting scholar’ program, which would require adequate research resources (e.g. databases, library facilities) to result in research outputs. Along with raising the profile of the institute, such a strategy would foster collaboration and present staff mentoring.
opportunities. A further strategy may cultivate research capacity of existing staff through professional development, time release for research activity, financial support towards staff higher research degrees and enabling staff collaboration (through both academic networks and internal groups). Some institutes may be in a position to use funds to stimulate research capacity, such as financial incentives for staff to generate research outputs or development of internal competitive grants.

These approaches show how the model allows flexibility and a degree of innovation to be applied in the development of research capacity at an institute level.
Sectoral reform prescribes some of the parameters for the development of research capacity (top-down) but an innovative approach (at institute level) can foster the development of research that is both staff-driven and appropriate for the institute.

**Outcomes of the Model in the Case Study**

One outcome of the implementation of the model has been embedding in institutional key performance indicators (KPI), a defined set of peer review publications or presentations to encourage research responsibility and commitments on the part of teachers and other staff. For example, at William Angliss Institute an expected 30% increase in this KPI since 2011 offers a qualitative indicator illustrating partnerships between teachers, the research office and the broader teaching and learning community. Staff initiated research, especially in defined areas of the Institute’s expertise, furthers not only discipline strength and integrity, but also consolidates a research profile and the possibility of external collaboration and funding opportunities. Fowler et al. (2009) noted that capacity is built most effectively when provision responds to the needs of the workforce and builds upon the foundations already in place. At William Angliss Institute, the encouragement of research output can be facilitated through both financial and time support policies. A proposed study time release policy provides the potential for staff to engage more fully in research capacity building activities. Recruiting more senior academics with research experience into the Higher Education department will provide support for research mentoring amongst staff, as well as building an academic culture. Three ‘academic disciplines’ – tourism, hospitality and events, gastronomy and management have been established. Not only do these groups meet to discuss pertinent research issues collaboratively but are beginning to drive the emerging research agenda. There is also a commitment that senior academics will be appointed to each of these streams in the near future to provide academic leadership.

**Contribution of the Model**

The model developed through the case study draws elements from a number of research capacity building models offered in the literature. This is a structural model, which is flexible enough to adapt with the changing external forces over time. The integrated nature of the model has been reflected in the outcomes outlined in the previous section. These preliminary findings suggest that an approach which considers top-down, bottom-up, internal and external factors in an integrated manner may offer a way forward for the development of hospitality and tourism research development in the VET HEPs in Australia.

A limitation of the research is that the proposed model is specific to a single institution in its implementation. However, the section above outlines possible application in other VET HEPs, which could then be further refined and developed.
Also, the model does not explicitly detail VET employment conditions (study leave, lessening teaching loads and so on) although, arguably, this could come under ‘Government structures’, ‘regulatory bodies’ and/or ‘education system’. This issue has been discussed widely in the literature and examples of how existing VET structures and working conditions have challenged the development of research capacity overseas are plentiful.

There is a pressing need for a discussion around the approach of VET HEP research building capacity in Australia. This study suggests that existing research capacity building models cannot successfully position research in vocational institutes in terms of building capacity, delivering outputs or attracting the prestige of their university counterparts. An alternative is offered to develop research capacity necessary for both the evolution of tourism and hospitality studies in Australia and broader scholarly discussions. First, this study acknowledges the research presence and emerging contribution of VET HEPs to tourism and hospitality degrees. In doing so, it identifies a potentially wider application for research outputs and acknowledges ‘new players’. Additionally, it contributes to the debate around whether tourism (Tribe, 1997) or hospitality (Ottenbacher, Harrington & Parsa, 2009) are discrete academic disciplines and what implications this has for research. While the value of scholarly pursuit and research in these areas is supported by the academe, it raises the question of flexibility, openness and alternative research applications within the discipline. Finally, much discussion has been focused on the changes to tourism and hospitality degree programs in Australia over recent years (Breakey & Craig-Smith, 2008, Robinson et al., 2008) and the growth of VET HEPs offering degrees in this discipline cannot be overlooked, and their capacity to build research should be included in this discussion.

**Conclusion**

The approaches to building research capacity drawn from the literature appear limited when applied in a dynamic environment such as the one faced in Australia. For example, changes at a government agenda level (like the introduction of ERA in Australia) may significantly shift the landscape of research activity when the foundations for research may have been laid under a prior research agenda. This study acts as a starting point for weaving VET HEPs’ research capacity into some wider philosophical discussions. By identifying considerations, the proposed model lays the foundations for how VET HEPs can approach the development of research capacity.

It also opens the door to research outputs and the role VET HEPs can play. The discussion of cross-institutional collaboration and industry engagement are worthy of further exploration. VET HEP institutions are not eligible to develop their research capacity within the confines of the ERA, but are in a position to be responsive to industry research needs. This suggests that there may be a place for VET providers,
offering vocational tourism and hospitality degrees to provide applied research for industry. Potentially, this could be a source of funding which, along with the development of an approach to building research capacity, could advance the disciplines in Australia.

**References**


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Research Paper

The Australian Tourists’ Travel Motivation and Pre- and Post-Images of The Philippines as their Destination

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Abstract: This quantitative study aims to identify the travel motivation and the pre- and post-images of 205 Australian tourists of the Philippines as their destination. Data were gathered, using the multi-aspect researcher-made instrument (Cronbach Alpha Test = 0.97). Respondents were first made to fill in a ‘robotfoto’ for purposes of profiling their baseline characteristics. They were later asked to rate the listed indicators, using a 8-point Likert Scale. Using statistical tools such as Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient, Chi-square test of independence, ANOVA, paired t-test, mean and standard deviation, data were treated to an indepth analysis. Factor analysis of the respondents’ travel motivation yielded five significant dimensions, namely: ‘Globetrotter Tourist’, ‘Gee Tourist’, ‘Gild Tourist’, ‘Go Tourist’ and ‘Geo-gala Tourist’. On the whole, ‘Humdinger Image’, ‘Hangdog Image’, ‘Hypsi-flown Image’, ‘Handy Image’, ‘Hospice Image’, ‘Hazard Image’, ‘Hand and Glove Image’, ‘Have Image’, ‘Hodge-Podge Image’, ‘High-life Image’, and ‘Hyaloid Image’ categorise the pre- and post-images of Australian tourists. Results indicate that length of stay and accommodation influence respondents’ travel motivation. Interestingly, only ‘Hazard Image’ was found to have no significant relationship with travel motivation. In promoting the Philippines as a tourist destination, this study could be an important variable for tourism market segmentation.

Keywords: Australian tourists, travel motivation, pre- and post-images, Philippines

Introduction

The Department of Tourism (DOT) in the Philippines reported remarkable growth in visitors’ arrivals (18.5%) from July 2010 to July 2011 (DOT, 2011). The increase in tourist arrivals can be attributed to the influx of inter-regional travelers from Asia such as Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, China and Malaysia. Visitors from North America, Western Europe, Australia and the Pacific Regions also showed positive growth (DOT, 2011). The Philippines is fourth of the six countries in Asia and the Pacific, along with Vietnam, Singapore, Cambodia, Thailand and Indonesia, which posted a double-digit growth (+16.7%) in international tourist arrivals in 2010, thus garnering USD2,783 million in international tourism receipts (UNWTO, 2010). Australia has been one of the top ten biggest visitors to the Philippines since 1993 (DOT, 2011). Australians are keen travelers and each year make more than four million trips to international destinations. Many Australians also live abroad. Every year, approximately 20,000 Australians approach the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) in Canberra and other overseas missions for consular assistance (DFAT, 2011).

Understanding why Australian people travel and the factors that influence their visitation to specific destinations such as the Philippines are of significant interest. Researchers have long studied factors affecting travel-related decisions. They suggest that travel motivation is a theoretical concept that accounts for people’s choice of engaging in particular behaviours at certain times (Jang & Zhao, 2005). Individual traveler motives start the decision making process (de Guzman et al., 2005) and vary from one person to another. Prior studies on the destination selection process have attempted to explore a bundle of travel determinants that are significant during the destination selection process. Numerous tourism researchers have conceptualised or defined travel motivation, as well as demonstrated destination images, which are both valuable concepts in the destination selection process and in destination positioning strategies.

People travel because they are motivated to fulfill a particular need (Kim & Jogaratnam, 2002). Jang & Cai (2002) posit that motivation means a state of need or a condition that drives an individual toward certain actions that are seen as likely to bring satisfaction. Many tourism scholars based their theoretical background on Maslow’s five-stage hierarchy of needs theory (Pearce & Lee, 2005; Jang & Cai, 2002).

One travel motivation theory was developed based on Maslow’s hierarchy of needs and was labeled Travel Career Ladder or TCL. TCL describes tourist motivation as consisting of five different levels namely: relaxation needs, safety/security needs, relationship needs, self-esteem and development needs, and self-actualisation needs.
From this approach, people may be said to have a travel career, a pattern of travel motives that changes along within their life span and/or various travel experiences. Travelers differ with respect to their travel career level due to their motives for traveling. It is natural for a traveler to ascend the ladder over time but it is also recognised that the same traveler may vary in his/her TCL depending on the travel situation (Jang & Cai, 2002; Pearce & Lee, 2005).

Perusal of the literature proposed two factors as travel motives: anomie and ego-enhancement (Jang & Cai, 2002; Poria, Reichel & Brian, 2006). There is a need to highlight these motives in order to understand tourist behaviour. Anomie stands for the desire to transcend the feeling of isolation obtained in daily life where the traveler simply desires to get away from it all. Ego-enhancement means the need for recognition, which is obtained through the status conferred by travel.

During the past several decades, growing interest in travel motivation has been noted. The push and pull theory (Nicholson & Pearce, 2001; Kim & Joga Ratnam, 2002; Rittichainuwat, Qu & Leong, 2002; Jang & Cai, 2002; Cohen, 2003; Poria et al., 2006) affects reasons for traveling and influence destination decisions of tourists. Push factors refer to internal drivers which motivate people to travel. Pull factors mean the attractiveness of the destination that motivates people to travel. These concepts build travel motivation and the very image of the destinations. According to Jang & Cai (2002), although a complex of motives was identified in previous research, the push and pull typology is an appropriate approach to the study of travel motivation.

In world travel literature, understanding the characteristics of international tourist behaviour and attitudes with its effects on the total attractiveness of overseas destination has been addressed (Jang & Cai, 2002; Qu & Im, 2002; Cohen, 2003). Several articles were written to identify different motivational determinants of travelers of different nationalities (Qu & Im, 2002). Korean visitors are mainly attracted to overseas destinations that can provide adventurous atmosphere, scenery, environment, friendliness and architectural styles (Qu & Im, 2002). Jang & Cai (2002) conducted a qualitative research study of the British outbound market and found that ‘knowledge seeking’, ‘escape’ and ‘family togetherness’ are the topmost factors that motivate the British to travel overseas. An exploratory study of the growing number of Singapore vacationers visiting internationally was a reflection of affluence among the new generation who are no longer, like their forefathers who worked hard but refrained from leisurely pursuits (Qu & Im, 2002).

Of significant interest is also the concept of image (Giannone, 2002; Kim & Yoon, 2003; Naoi, 2003; Cohen, 2003; Son & Pearce, 2005), playing a vital role in tourists travel decisions and motivations. Destination image is usually defined as the sum of the mental constructs of ideas, impressions and beliefs which people have of a place or destination (Cohen, 2003; Kim & Yoon, 2003). Image implies the ideas or
concepts held individually or collectively about a tourism destination (Kim & Yoon, 2003; Cohen, 2003) and are influential and integral part of the travelers’ decision process (Giannone, 2002; Naoi, 2003).

Destination image is considered a critical concept in examining tourists’ perception and behaviour, thus it has been given much space and attention in tourism literature. As current destinations have become more competitive with other destination markets, a clearer and better understanding of destination image is essential to the enhancement of destination attractiveness and market competitiveness (Kim & Yoon, 2003).

Due to the importance of destination image in tourism research, there have been several studies conducted in the past two decades (Kim & Yoon, 2003; Cohen, 2003; Naoi, 2003; Rittichainuwat & Qu, 2003; Son & Pearce, 2005). Destination image has been conceptualised in various ways. Image has been said to have two distinct but interrelated components – affective (feelings) and cognitive (beliefs) (Naoi, 2003; Kim & Yoon, 2003; Cohen, 2003). Affective components dwell on the emotional response of individuals to a place or product (Kim & Yoon, 2003), and thus relate to tourist values and motives (Naoi, 2003). Cognitive components refer to knowledge of a place or product feature (Kim & Yoon, 2003), and therefore the physical features of the destination environment (Naoi, 2003). Other tourism scholars delineated three components of images: (1) affective – internal sources or stimuli, (2) cognitive – external sources or stimuli and (3) connotative image, which are distinguished on the basis of its sources of stimuli and motives (Kim & Yoon, 2003).

The concept of image has then received substantial attention of tourism scholars, industry practitioners and destination marketers (Son & Pearce, 2005). Nicholson & Pearce (2001) also noted that understanding tourists’ perceived images should help researchers comprehend tourist motivation better.

**Problem and Research Objectives**

In tourism literature, a strong link between travel motivations and destination choices is well documented (Jang & Cai, 2002). Development of a destination as well as its marketing activities should be well planned as factors that uniquely motivate travelers to specific destinations. Today, tourism marketers need to consider where the destinations are located in terms of travel motivations. Effective marketing and promotional programs would be of much help in establishing a strong fit between destination attributes and motivations of target markets. The perceived image of a destination influences deeply the idea of a destination which organises the tourist’s vision of the place (Giannone, 2002). Preconceived images have a significant role in tourists’ decisions and motivations and much impact on travel itself (Cohen, 2003). It is widely believed that the more favourable the image of a destination, the greater the likelihood of choice of that destination.
Thus this study was conceptualised to look into the perceived images and travel motives of Australian tourists and how these images relate to their motivation in coming to the Philippines (Figure 1). An attempt was made to elaborate on the following elements: first, to determine the profile of the Australian tourists as to age, gender, marital status, occupation, primary purpose of visit, length of stay, frequency of visit to the Philippines, accommodation, and travel arrangement; second, to identify the group of factors that determine the Australian travel motivation to visit the Philippines; third, to ascertain the pre- and post-conceived images of Australian visitors about the Philippines as a destination; fourth, to establish significant relationships between Australian travel motivation and their demographic characteristics; and fifth, to determine if the Australians’ pre- and post-conceived images of the Philippines as a travel destination affect their travel motivation. In sum, the results of this study will not only contribute to a better understanding of Australian travel motivation and their pre- and post-conceived images about the Philippines, but also have implications for the development and improvement of the Philippine destination image and marketing strategies in order that more competitive destination products are delivered to current and potential tourists.

Methods

Study Site and Subjects of the Study

On-site surveys were conducted at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 1 using Boarding gate 2 of Qantas Airways flights, the flag carrier of Australia. From the computer-generated flight schedule of the said carrier, a random sample of 20% of the scheduled flights for two weeks was randomly selected, which resulted in a total of 20 flights. Taking each flight as one group of respondents, a stratified random
selection of the participants was done. Since the researchers do not have access to the flight manifesto indicating the exact number of Australian passengers in a flight, around 10 to 15 Australian tourists were requested to answer the questionnaire per flight while waiting for boarding for a month. On the average, 3 to 4 flights from Manila to different airports in Australia leave in a day. To avoid response biases, only one in each Australian group of passengers/families was asked to answer the survey. A total of 250 Australian tourists took part in the survey. Of these, 205 (89%) questionnaires were considered usable.

Research Instrument and Data Collection Procedure

A three-part research-made instrument was used to gather data and information needed in the study. It was assessed by a research expert to enhance item clarity and content validity. Part I called the ‘robotfoto’ (a Dutch term meaning a cartographic sketch of the respondents) (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2001 cited by Caña et al., 2005) sought the baseline characteristics of the respondents. Part 2 consisted of 61 items dwelling on Australian travel motivations toward the Philippines as a tourist destination, while Part 3, a 39-item instrument, described the pre- and post-images of Australians. Respondents rated the items, using a 8-point Likert scale. Results of the Cronbach Alpha Test of 0.97 showed that the developed instrument had a high reliability index indicating its usability and administrability to other settings.

Prior to data gathering, a letter of request, along with a sample questionnaire was sent to the Airport Manager of the Qantas Airways Ltd., the flag carrier of Australia, for approval and scheduling. With the permission of the Airport Manager and the approval of the Pass Control Office of the NAIA, Terminal 1, the three-part questionnaire was distributed to the natural-born Australian passengers present during the scheduled flights. Briefing was observed by the researchers during the questionnaire fielding. The secured permission from Qantas Airways and the purpose of the study were presented to the respondents before they were asked to answer the survey questions.

Data Analysis

All data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 17). Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were computed on the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Factor analysis was conducted to determine underlying factors that describe Australian tourists’ travel motivation and pre- and post-images of the Philippines. Finally, Pearson correlation, chi-square, ANOVA, paired t-test, mean and standard deviation were used to assess the significant relationships and differences among Australian tourist motivations and images.
Results

Socio-economic Profile of Respondents

From the 205 Australian respondents, 68.6% were males and 29%, females. As indicated, most respondents (42.9%) belong to the 41-60 age bracket and 38.6% 20-40 age group (see Table 1). The majority of the subjects were single (172), comprising 58.1% and were professionals (70 or 33.3%). Further, 89 (42.4%) of the respondents’ primary purpose was visiting friends and relatives, 147 (70%) of whom have been staying in the Philippines for more than a week.

The largest group of Australian tourists, 78 (37.1%), were first time visitors in the Philippines. Most preferred to stay in a hotel (41.9%) and their friends or relatives’ house (33.8%). Interestingly, 134 (63.8%) opted to travel alone.

Travel Motivations

Table 2 illustrates the top 5 and least 5 factors that determine Australian travel motivation to visit the Philippines. Among the top motivators, ‘to have fun’ ranked the highest, followed by ‘to see different attractions and destinations’ and ‘to go to places not yet visited before’. ‘To experience Filipino hospitality’ and ‘to visit friends and relatives residing in the Philippines’ came as fourth and fifth tourist motivation indicators.

Least 5 factors indicate that ‘to gamble or visit casino’ ranked first as the least motivation factor. ‘To visit Philippine universities’, ‘to avail low-cost airfare’ and ‘to participate in sports events’ come after and lastly, ‘to purchase Filipino made handicrafts’ was the fifth least motivation indicator.

Factor Analysis of Travel Motivation Items

Table 3 presents the results of the factor analysis of the travel motivations of Australian tourists. Principal component factor analysis, using varimax rotation with Kaiser normalisation, was employed to assess the number of underlying factors in the data and identify the items associated with each factor. Sixty-one motivation indicators were analysed. All factor loadings above 0.4 were retained for subsequent analyses. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy indicated that the 56 remaining indicators were adequate for factor analysis to proceed (KMO measure = 0.91). Five factors with eigenvalues greater than one were extracted. In addition to delineating factor structure, factor analysis served to consolidate and simplify data pertaining to travel motivations.

Scales were labeled according to the common theme of the attributes loading on each factor in the order of decreasing explained variance. These were labeled as follows: ‘Globetrotter Tourist’, ‘Gee Tourist’, ‘Gild Tourist’, ‘Go Tourist’ and ‘Geo-
Table 1.
*Demographic profile of respondents*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profile</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Profile</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-19</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>Less than 3 nights</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-40</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>3-5 nights</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-60</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>6-7 nights</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-above</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>more than 1 week</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>68.6</td>
<td>Once</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>37.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>Twice</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Three times</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>More than three times</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>29.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marital Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>58.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married with children</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>Hotel</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>41.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married without children</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>Friends/relatives’ house</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>33.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow/Widower</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Occupation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management/Administration</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>Traveling alone</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>63.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>Traveling in group</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue collar worker</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired/Not in work force</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Purpose of Visit</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasure vacation</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting friends and relatives</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>En route</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business meeting/Convention</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Events</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2.
*Top and least factors that determine the Australian travel motivation to visit the Philippines*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top Motivators</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Least Motivators</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To have fun</td>
<td>5.72</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>To gamble or visit casino</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To see different attractions and destinations</td>
<td>5.57</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>To visit Philippine Universities</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To go to places not yet visited before</td>
<td>5.48</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>To avail low-cost airfare</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To experience Filipino hospitality</td>
<td>5.40</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>To participate in sports events</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To visit friends and relatives residing in the Philippines</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>To purchase Filipino made handicrafts</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.
*Results of factor analysis of Australian tourists’ travel motivation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image Factor</th>
<th>Factor Loading</th>
<th>Eigenvalue</th>
<th>Variance (%)</th>
<th>Reliability Coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Globetrotter Tourist</td>
<td>10.47</td>
<td>23.37</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To see different attractions & destinations 0.82
To go to places not yet visited before 0.79
To experience new and different lifestyle 0.77
To gain new friends/to meet new people 0.76
To experience Filipino hospitality 0.76
To enrich knowledge about the Philippines 0.75
To discover interesting countryside 0.73
To experience different cultures 0.72
To explore the unknown 0.71
To have unpredictable experience 0.70
To learn its historic background 0.69
To develop personal interest 0.68
To have fun 0.67
To see outstanding scenery 0.64
To gain new perspectives in life 0.61
To have some entertainment 0.61
To try exotic Filipino cuisine 0.60
To shop in flea markets 0.58
To experience recreational activities 0.57

Continued next page
Table 3.  
*Continued from previous page*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Gee Tourist</th>
<th>10.61</th>
<th>0.91</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To visit natural ecological sites</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To experience tropical weather</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To share skills and knowledge with others</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To feel a sense of belonging</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To find thrills or excitement</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gee Tourist</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>10.61</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To escape from city stress/ experience peace and calm</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To do nothing at all</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To experience ultimate relaxation</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be close with nature</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To escape from the demands at home</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To strengthen relationship with companion</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To experience world class service</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To immerse myself to unique or different aboriginal or indigenous people</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To escape pressures from work</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gild Tourist</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>10.56</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To work on personal and spiritual values</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To understand oneself more</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To enjoy isolation</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To feel inner harmony/peace</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To rediscover oneself</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To better appreciate nature</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To see exotic and endangered animals</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To experience a simple lifestyle</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To avail of great package of activities</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geo-gala Tourist</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>5.44</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To explore different adventure sites</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To visit historical places</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be part of traditional feasts celebrated</td>
<td>0.53</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy = 0.913
gala Tourist’. Factor 1: ‘Globetrotter Tourist’, consists of 24 indicators categorised as tourists who are extensively traveled. They are motivated by the usual activities of a typical traveler. Factor 2: ‘Gee Tourist’, includes 9 indicators, which regarded tourists looking for an escape from daily routines. They are motivated for purposes of relaxation. Factor 3: ‘Gild Tourist’, are primarily motivated by their personal well-being and a better perspective of giving a fair external appearance of things around. It is composed of 9 indicators. Factor 4: ‘Go Tourist’, categorised as being motivated by their immediate and specific reason for travel includes 6 indicators, which signal on the go to a journey. Finally, Factor 5: ‘Geo-gala Tourist’, includes 3 indicators motivated by the attractions of a region. This type of tourist is characterised by their appreciation of the grandeur attributes of a destination. The alpha coefficient for each of the five factors ranged from 0.97 to 0.79, suggesting acceptable reliability.

**Australian Pre- and Post-Images of the Philippines**

The top five Australian pre- and post-images of the Philippines as a destination are indicated in Table 4. Top pre-images indicate that Filipinos are ‘friendly people’, ‘hospitable people’, and that ‘traffic and pollution’, ‘good shopping’ and ‘good value cuisines and hotels’ can be found in the Philippines. Notably, 4 out of 5 of these pre-images remain as part of their top 5 post images of the country with the inclusion of being perceived as a texting capital.

Table 5 shows the least five Australian pre- and post-images of the Philippines as a destination. These attributes were ‘drugs haven’, ‘sex tourism industry’, ‘affordable and quality medical treatment’, ‘healing paradise’ and ‘sports enthusiasm’. Noticeably, two indicators were replaced after their stay in the country. Indicators such as affordable and quality medical treatment and sports enthusiasm were perceived better after coming to the country. Although the Australian tourists perceive the country as a source of high quality export products, they perceived terrorism as the third least image after coming to the country.

**Factor Analysis of Australian Pre-Images**

Thirty-nine indicators for both pre- and post-images were factor analysed, using the principal component with varimax rotation to delineate the underlying factors of Australians image perception of the Philippines as reflected in Tables 6 and 7. Kaiser-Meyer Olkin measure of 0.82 (pre-images) and 0.88 (post-images) indicate that the sample is adequate for factor analysis to proceed. The same inclusion criteria for the indicators were used as in the motivation patterns. No indicators were discarded from the lists.

The scale labeled in decreasing order explained variance produced by the following pre-images: ‘Humdinger Image’, ‘Hangdog Image’, ‘Hypsi-flown Image’, ‘Handy

*Factor 1*: ‘Humdinger Image’ involves ten indicators categorised as an image conferring the natural beauty of the Philippines, which makes a deep impression on tourists. 

*Factor 2*: ‘Hangdog Image’ reflects degrading appearance, concludes seven variables associated with the socio-economic problems of the Philippines. 

*Factor 3*: ‘Hypsi-flown Image’ entails six indicators referring to territorial competencies; distinct characteristics in which a destination can offer and be proud of. 

*Factor 4*: ‘Handy Image’ describes the attributes of the Philippines as a tourist destination highlighting convenience and manageability consisting of six indicators. 

*Factor 5*: ‘Hospice Image’ revealed 3 indicators providing tourists a picture of leisure and entertainment destination. 

*Factor 6*: ‘Hazard Image’ gives a negative and alarming impression among tourists such as 3 indicators pertaining to the risks and uncertainties of the destination. 

*Factor 7*: ‘Hand and Glove Image’, includes two indicators referring to the nature of the Filipinos. It portrays intimate relationship among Filipinos. Finally, 

*Factor 8*: ‘Have Image’, involving two variables, signifies the gnostics and skills which the Filipino people possess.
Table 6.
Results of factor analysis of Australian pre-images of the Philippines as a destination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image Factor</th>
<th>Factor loading</th>
<th>Eigenvalue</th>
<th>Variance (%)</th>
<th>Reliability coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Humdinger Image</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>13.81</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenic natural beauty</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealth of wonders</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich culture</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beautiful beaches</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventurous activities</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical site</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventure site</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good value cuisines and hotels</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healing paradise</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Island paradise</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hangdog Image</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>12.13</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High crime rate</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic and pollution</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand imitation</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third world country</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and environmental problems</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graft and corruption</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superstitious beliefs</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hypsi-flown Image</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>11.80</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melting pot of various cultures</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World class talents</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High quality export products</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural attraction</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good nightlife</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendly people</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Handy Image</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>10.67</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy access tourist destination</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe travel destination</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tropical paradise</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfect sunset</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordable and quality medical treatment</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports enthusiasm</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Continued next page
Table 6.  
Continued from previous page

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Loadings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hospice Image</td>
<td>1.36 8.27 0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitable people</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good shopping</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxed and joyful living</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazard Image</td>
<td>1.40 5.88 0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs haven</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrorism</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex tourism industry</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand and Glove Image</td>
<td>1.06 5.79 0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texting Capital</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romantic Filipinos</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Have’ Image</td>
<td>1.11 5.23 0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluency in English</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High literacy level</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy = 0.821

**Factor Analysis of Australian Post-Images**

Table 7 shows seven post-image factor dimensions identified from the 36-item indicators, labeled in the order of decreasing variance. **Factor 1**: ‘Hodge-Podge Image’, consisting of 15 indicators, is a mixture of ingredients (‘Humdinger’, ‘Hospice’, ‘Hypsi-flown’) pertaining to the total characteristics of a grandiose destination. Since four other post-image factors resulted and constituted the same variables as that of the pre-image factors, these were retained as **Factor 2**: ‘Hangdog Image’; **Factor 3**: ‘Handy Image’; **Factor 4**: ‘Hand and Glove Image’; **Factor 5**: ‘Have Image’ (Table 3). **Factor 6**: ‘High-life Image’ pertains to the ways of living of the Filipino society which consists of three indicators. **Factor 7**: ‘Hyaloid Image’ is composed of three indicators namely: ‘social and environmental problems’, ‘safe travel destination’ and ‘good value cuisine and hotels’ transparent to tourists. This type of image signifies realities of what they have seen and experienced in the Philippines.

**Australian Travel Motivation and Demographic Profile**

Significant relationships between Australian travel motivation factors to demographic profile of respondents appear in Table 8. No significant relationships between the motivational factors and the respondents’ age, gender, marital status and occupation
Table 7.
Results of factor analysis of Australian post-images of the Philippines as a destination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image Factor</th>
<th>Factor loading</th>
<th>Eigenvalue</th>
<th>Variance (%)</th>
<th>Reliability coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hodge-Podge Image</td>
<td>6.77</td>
<td>23.05</td>
<td>0.95</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adventure site</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural attraction</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenic natural beauty</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventurous activities</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical site</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealth of wonders</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World class talents</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melting pot of various cultures</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High quality export products</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beautiful beaches</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Island paradise</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healing paradise</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich culture</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxed and joyful living</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good shopping</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Hangdog Image</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>12.86</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graft and corruption</td>
<td>0.75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brand imitation</td>
<td>0.75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Terrorism</td>
<td>0.73</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drugs haven</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sex tourism industry</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High crime rate</td>
<td>0.63</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third world country</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superstitious beliefs</td>
<td>0.58</td>
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<td>Handy Image</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tropical paradise</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfect sunset</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy access tourist destination</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand and Glove Image</td>
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<td>7.02</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texting capital</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Romantic Filipinos</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Continued next page
Table 7.
Continued from previous page

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘Have’ Image</th>
<th>1.13</th>
<th>6.72</th>
<th>0.69</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fluency in English</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitable people</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-life Image</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>6.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendly people</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good nightlife</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic and pollution</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyaloid Image</td>
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<td>1.37</td>
<td>5.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and environmental problems</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe travel destination</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good value cuisines and hotels</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy = 0.887

Table 8.
Significant relationships between Australian travel motivation and their demographic profile

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<tr>
<th>Demographic Profile</th>
<th>Travel motivation</th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Globetrotter Tourist</td>
<td>Gee Tourist</td>
<td>Gild Tourist</td>
<td>Go Tourist</td>
<td>Geo-gala Tourist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>r-value</td>
<td>chi-square value</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>117.42</td>
<td>71.47</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of stay</td>
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<td>321.61</td>
<td>175.77</td>
<td>193.76</td>
<td>107.47</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of visit</td>
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<td>416.36</td>
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<td>334.98</td>
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<td>86.51*</td>
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<td>Marital status</td>
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<td>313.99</td>
<td>131.84</td>
<td>178.90*</td>
<td>84.55</td>
<td>46.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
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<td>313.99</td>
<td>131.84</td>
<td>178.90*</td>
<td>84.55</td>
<td>46.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>313.99*</td>
<td>313.99</td>
<td>131.84</td>
<td>178.90*</td>
<td>84.55</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel arrangement</td>
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<td>313.99</td>
<td>131.84</td>
<td>178.90*</td>
<td>84.55</td>
<td>46.10</td>
</tr>
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</table>

* Significant at 0.05 level
** Significant at 0.01 level
were noted. All motivational factors were significantly related to length of stay. The longer the length of stay, the more tourists are motivated to travel. Only ‘Go Tourists’ significantly relates to frequency of visit. The more a tourist visits a place, the more they are being motivated by their immediate and specific reason to travel. ‘Gild Tourists’ and ‘Geo-gala Tourists’ are significantly influenced by choice of accommodation. Being motivated by their personal well-being and by the attractions of a region, tourist tends to stay in their friends or relatives’ house. The respondents’ travel arrangement is significantly associated with ‘Globetrotter Tourists’ and ‘Gild Tourists’. Traveling in groups is mostly preferred by tourists who are extensively traveled and tourists who are motivated by their personal well-being.

**Analysis of Australian Pre- and Post-Images**

The mean scores of pre- and post-Australian images of the Philippines are listed in Table 9. The paired mean t-test was conducted to examine the significant mean differences (gaps) of Australian images upon arrival and departure. As indicated, the image factors ‘safe travel destination’, ‘easy access tourist destination’ and ‘sex tourism industry’ were found to have statistically significant difference at 0.05 level. Australian pre-images (‘safe travel destination’, ‘easy access tourist destination’ and ‘sex tourism industry’) indicated a high perception mean score after they had visited the Philippines.

**Australian Travel Motivation and Images**

Table 10a indicates the significant relationship between Australian motivations and their pre-images of the Philippines as a destination. On the whole, significant relationships at 0.05 and 0.01 level exist in the respondents’ pre-image and their travel motivation. Interestingly, among the Australian pre-images, it was only in ‘Hazard Image’ where no significant relationship was noted.

Significant relationship between Australian post-images and travel motivation is presented in Table 10b. As illustrated, ‘Hodge-Podge Image’, ‘Hangdog Image’, ‘Handy

Table 9.  
*Significant difference in the Australian images of the Philippines between upon arrival and departure*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image Factor</th>
<th>Pre-image</th>
<th>Post-image</th>
<th>T-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe travel destination</td>
<td>5.28</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>5.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy access tourist destination</td>
<td>5.24</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>5.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex tourism industry</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>4.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Significant at 0.05 level
Table 10a.  
*Significant relationships between Australian travel motivation and their pre-images of the Philippines as a destination*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Travel motivation</th>
<th>Australian Pre-image</th>
<th>Globetrotter Tourist</th>
<th>Gee Tourist</th>
<th>Gild Tourist</th>
<th>‘Go’ Tourist</th>
<th>Geo-gala Tourist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humdinger Image</td>
<td>0.52**</td>
<td>0.51**</td>
<td>0.59**</td>
<td>0.51**</td>
<td>0.44**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hangdog Image</td>
<td>0.25**</td>
<td>0.21*</td>
<td>0.19*</td>
<td>0.20*</td>
<td>0.20*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypsi-flown Image</td>
<td>0.52**</td>
<td>0.52**</td>
<td>0.51**</td>
<td>0.48**</td>
<td>0.42**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handy Image</td>
<td>0.41**</td>
<td>0.56**</td>
<td>0.48**</td>
<td>0.52**</td>
<td>0.38**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospice Image</td>
<td>0.46**</td>
<td>0.48**</td>
<td>0.43**</td>
<td>0.41**</td>
<td>0.23**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazard Image</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand and glove Image</td>
<td>0.33**</td>
<td>0.36**</td>
<td>0.30**</td>
<td>0.40**</td>
<td>0.23**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Have’ Image</td>
<td>0.23*</td>
<td>0.23*</td>
<td>0.62**</td>
<td>0.26**</td>
<td>0.24**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Significant at 0.05 level  
** Significant at 0.01 level

Interestingly, no significant relationship was noted in three of the five motivation factors in ‘Hand and Glove Image’ namely ‘Globetrotter Tourist’, ‘Gild Tourist’ and ‘Geo-gala Tourist’.

Table 10b.  
*Significant relationships between Australian travel motivation and their post-images of the Philippines as a destination*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Travel motivation</th>
<th>Australian Post-image</th>
<th>Globetrotter Tourist</th>
<th>Gee Tourist</th>
<th>Gild Tourist</th>
<th>‘Go’ Tourist</th>
<th>Geo-gala Tourist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hodge-Podge Image</td>
<td>0.54**</td>
<td>0.50**</td>
<td>0.53**</td>
<td>0.43**</td>
<td>0.41**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hangdog Image</td>
<td>0.22*</td>
<td>0.23**</td>
<td>0.27**</td>
<td>0.23**</td>
<td>0.18*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handy Image</td>
<td>0.39**</td>
<td>0.44**</td>
<td>0.41**</td>
<td>0.37**</td>
<td>0.30**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand and Glove Image</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.18*</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.26**</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Have’ Image</td>
<td>0.27**</td>
<td>0.20*</td>
<td>0.18*</td>
<td>0.18*</td>
<td>0.18*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-life Image</td>
<td>0.30**</td>
<td>0.26**</td>
<td>0.18*</td>
<td>0.22*</td>
<td>0.18*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyaloid Image</td>
<td>0.27**</td>
<td>0.22*</td>
<td>0.24**</td>
<td>0.18*</td>
<td>0.24**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Significant at 0.05 level  
** Significant at 0.01 level

‘Image’ and ‘Hyaloid Image’ were found to have a significant relationship with all the motivation factors both at 0.05 and 0.01 level.
Discussion

Results of this quantitative study yielded marked significant relationships and differences in Australian travel motivation and the pre- and post-images of the Philippines as their destination.

Significantly, the leading and least Australian travel motivation to visit the Philippines supports Kim & Jogaratnam (2002) earlier findings. ‘To have fun’, ‘to see different attractions and destinations’, ‘to go to places not yet visited before’ ‘to experience Filipino hospitality’ and to visit friends and relatives’ are all leading in travel motivation. Intercultural interaction and travel motivations were observed to have critical association. ‘To have fun’ was found to be the vital motive of Australian tourists in coming to the Philippines. Pearce & Lee (2005) also identified that the main reason for visiting Asian countries were to know their cultures and engage in different experiences. While the least important Australian travel motivations are ‘to gamble or visit the casino’, ‘to visit Philippine universities’, ‘to avail of low-cost airfare’, ‘to participate in sports events’ and ‘to purchase Filipino-made handicrafts’. Essentially, results indicate that Australians are not adequately satisfied in these areas and might not be interested in these segments. The Philippines, as a destination is not a place for gambling unlike Macao and Las Vegas. It is also noted that most respondents were professionals (33.3%), which signifies no interest in visiting Philippine universities (Table 1). Further, this study identified five main motives, which categorised Australians as ‘Globetrotter Tourists’, ‘Gee Tourists’, ‘Gild Tourists’, ‘Go Tourists’ and ‘Geo-gala Tourists’. In regard to these five key motivations, a number of studies have endorsed and reinforced these results (Poria et al., 2006; Pearce & Lee, 2005; Jang & Cai, 2002). According to the Travel Career Ladder theory, the most important factors in identifying travel reasons are novelty, escape/relax, relationship and self-development. These motivational dimensions show notable similarity with the results of the study: ‘Globetrotter Tourist’ (novelty seeking motive), ‘Gee Tourist’ (escape/relax seeking motive), ‘Gild Tourist’ (self-development seeking motive), ‘Go’ and ‘Geo-gala Tourist’ (relationship seeking motive).

Interestingly, all motivational factors were identified to have a significant relationship with respect to the respondent's length of stay. This implies that the longer an individual stays in the Philippines, the more they are motivated to travel here. It is evident that the Australian tourists were able to appreciate their stay here in the country.

Australians’ pre- and post-images were also found to be associated with the Filipinos such as their products and services and the local environment. Similarities between top and least images upon departure and arrival of Australian tourists were identified in the study. ‘Friendly people’, ‘hospitable people’, ‘traffic and pollution’ and ‘good value cuisine and hotels’ were among the top Australian pre- and post-images of the Philippines. Least-liked images included ‘drugs haven’, ‘sex tourism...
industry’ and ‘healing paradise’. Perceptions of an idea, product or service play an important role in an individual choice (preference or non-choice) of that particular idea, product, or service. Notably, findings of Australian images upon arrival and departure support the approach that tourist perception should not be neglected in tourism research as a factor relevant to understanding tourist behaviour. This also sustains the ideas that preferences for tourist destinations are enhanced by favourable perceptions which travelers have about those destinations (Giannone, 2002; Rittichainuwat, Qu & Leong, 2002). This also confirms Fishbein's theory that, “favorable impressions or perceptions of a tourist area increases the probability of choice of (preferences for) that area as a destination.”

‘Safe travel destination’, ‘easy access tourist destination’ and ‘sex tourism industry’ were image factors found to have significant differences upon arrival and departure. Seemingly, these Australian images of the Philippines were good examples of the two dimensions of tourist destination images conceptualised by Gunn. C (1972). Organic image, deals with tourists’ impression of a destination without physically visiting the place, and induced image, which is forged through actual visitation. The Philippines, as perceived and visited by Australians, is said to be a safe and easy to access travel destination. However, an increase in the awareness of sex tourism was also concluded.

Among the eight Australian pre-image indicators, only ‘Hazard Image’ was found to have no significant relationship with travel motivation. During the destination selection process, potential travelers compare perceived benefits and situational constraints associated with destinations and select the destinations that best serve their needs (Rittichainuwat, Qu & Leong, 2002). ‘Hodge-podge Image’, ‘Hangdog Image’, ‘Handy Image’ and ‘Hyaloid Image’ were found to influence Australian travel motivation to a certain extent. Apparently, destination image does not only affect the pre-purchase destination selection process. It is also anticipated to be important during the post-purchase destination selection process (Rittichainuwat et al., 2002). ‘Hodge-podge Image’, ‘Handy Image’ and ‘Hyaloid Image’ were constructive while ‘Hangdog Image’ was unfavourable to a destination.

**Conclusion**

This study attempted to identify Australian tourists’ travel motivation and the image of the Philippines as a destination. Interestingly, findings of the study showed insights regarding the respondents’ traveling motives and their positive and negative images of the Philippines. On the whole, Australians perceived the Philippines as a favorable tourist destination. The Philippines’ scenic natural beauty, Filipino culture and hospitality have a great impact on attracting tourists. By way of contrast, traffic and pollution were perceived as disappointing experiences.
In view of tourism literature scantiness on the Philippines as a tourist destination, this study could be an important variable for tourism market segmentation. Since destination image is a central concept in tourism studies, these findings have implications for the field of tourism as a whole. Tourism and education marketers might be able to use this valuable information to target tourists more successfully. A destination can enhance the probability of target selection by identifying and marketing its ability to meet the needs which their chosen travel segments consider important. Diagnosis of destination strengths and weaknesses on relevant tourism attributes will make a contribution in making specific changes, additions and/or modification in the tourism destination. Results of the study could help bring about positive images of the Philippines against unfavorable impressions. However, given the dynamism of travel motives and destination images, continuing research efforts and investigation is vital for attaining quality and improvement.

Though this study was confined only to the identification of Australian tourists’ images and travel motivations in the Philippines as a destination from a positivist viewpoint, future investigations may dwell on capturing the same delineated factors, using qualitative techniques.

References


Research Paper

Email as a Customer Service Tool: An Investigation into Email Reply Quality of Malaysian Hotels

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Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Malaysia

Abstract: This exploratory research applied the Diffusion of Innovations theory to investigate email presence and examine the quality of email reply by 530 Malaysian hotels. Of the 530 hotels, only 359 hotels provided email information on their website and 167 replied to the mock email. This study used content analysis technique to measure the quality of email response based on 5P features: Prompt, Polite, Personal, Professional and Promotional. Findings of this study found poor email reply quality, reflecting poor customer service by Malaysian hotels. Malaysian hotels performed best in providing a polite opening in their email and answering the questions and weakest on using email as a promotional tool. Academically, this study helps generalise email diffusion study and the influence of organisational characteristics with technology implementation. Suggestions to improve hotel email use for customer service and marketing are also offered.

Keywords: Email, customer service, service quality, hotels, diffusion of innovations, Malaysia


Introduction

As the most widely used and popular Internet technology, email is an important customer service and relationship tool for businesses (Coussement & Van den Poel, 2008; Murphy, Schegg & Olaru, 2007). A survey by Econsultancy.com on UK consumer market found 44% of consumers preferred using email to communicate but frustratingly, only 33% found it being used effectively by business (Charlton, 2011). Likewise, as a business correspondence, a customer email should be replied promptly,
politely, using proper salutations and more importantly answering the enquiries (Murphy, Olaru, Schegg & Frey, 2003). While a company could use automation, email management software or other self-service technologies to increase responsiveness, it is frustrating for a consumer to receive a general auto-generated reply with their questions left unanswered. A manual reply to customer enquiries could be time consuming for business; however, it provides a personal touch to fulfill customer needs. In the hotel industry where personal touch and hospitality is essential, an email could be a critical selling point with customers. In just a click, customers could move to another hotel if they experience a frustrating reply.

Based on Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) theory and hotel email studies, this study investigates the adoption and implementation of email by Malaysian hoteliers. Adoption refers to email presence while implementation relates to the presence of email reply features. This study adds to the existing literature on email as a customer service tool. Despite the proliferation of hotel Internet studies, most studies focus on developed countries, with only limited research on developing countries such as Malaysia (Hashim, Murphy, Purchase & O’Connor, 2010). Given the important role played by the hotel sector within the Malaysian tourism industry and based on a number of Internet studies on hotels in Malaysia, this study extends hotel Internet diffusion research to Malaysian hotels.

This paper begins with a review on DOI theory followed by a review on previous email studies on hotels. Next, this paper describes the methodology and discusses the findings followed by the conclusion and implications of the study on the hospitality industry.

**Literature Review**

**Diffusion of Innovations**

The Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) theory is well known for explaining innovation adoption and implementation (Fichman, 2000; Rogers, 2003). Although different terms could be in use, in most DOI literature, adoption generally refers to acquisition while implementation refers to the assimilation of an innovation in an organisation (Fichman, 2000; Jeyaraj, Rottman & Lacity, 2006). Non-domain specific studies applied and tested this theory across fields such as education, agriculture, anthropology, sociology, medicine and marketing (Rogers, 2003). The rise of the Internet in the past decade has broadened the application of DOI into the e-commerce field (Dinlersoz & Pereira, 2007; Zhu, Kraemer & Xu, 2006)

DOI has two research streams, adoption and diffusion modelling (Fichman, 2000; Rogers, 2003). For over half a century, the two research streams of the diffusion of innovations (DOI) – adoption and diffusion modelling – have explained factors
related to individual and organisational technology adoption and use (Fichman, 2000). Adoption studies examine the presence of a technology in an organisation and diffusion modelling investigates how organisations implement the technology in their work processes. For instance, diffusion research in e-commerce found organisational and environmental factors such as management support and industry pressure relates to e-commerce adoption (Premkumar, 2003; Zhu et al., 2006) while compatibility with the existing systems and technology affects the implementation rate of an innovation within an organisation (Cooper & Zmud, 1990; Fichman, 1992).

Similarly, hotel Internet studies use the DOI to explain the relationships between hotel characteristics such as size, rating and affiliation with Internet adoption and implementation (Baloglu & Pekcan, 2006; Matzler, Pechlaner, Abfalter & Wolf, 2005; Murphy et al., 2003; Siguaw, Enz & Namiasivayam, 2000). These studies measure adoption based on email presence while implementation includes following basic email reply guidelines. The results show strong support for relationships between hotel characteristics with Internet adoption but are weak with Internet implementation. Large, high rated and affiliated hotels lead in Internet adoption but hotels face difficulties to provide quality email replies. For instance, a study of international upscale hotels found only one out of two hotels replied their customer’s email within a day (Schegg, Murphy & Leuenberger, 2003). Similarly, a study of Tunisian hotels found less than 50% of the hotels replied to customer emails (Gherissi Labben, Schegg & Murphy, 2003).

Email Use in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry

Email is an example of technology that meets Rogers’ (2003) criteria for rapid adoption, e.g. relative advantage, compatibility, simplicity, trialability and observability. It is easy to use and highly compatible with most software and hardware. Despite wide email adoption, findings reflect poor email implementation in the hospitality industry (Gardini, 2007; Schegg et al., 2003). For instance, studies on Swiss (Frey, Schegg & Murphy, 2003), Tunisian (Gherissi Labben et al., 2003) and luxury chain hotels (Schegg et al., 2003) found most hotels gave sloppy and inadequate replies. Similarly, Gardini’s (2007) investigation on 111 German, Swiss and Austrian four- and five-star hotels found non-chain hotels appeared more attentive and customer oriented whereas chain hotels were more technical and formal in their email reply.

Studies assessed the quality of hotels’ email replies based on five Ps - Prompt, Polite, Personal, Professional and Promotional - to profile proper email responses (Murphy et al., 2003). Prompt means answering an email quickly (within 24 hours). Polite includes using courteous openings such as ‘Dear’, thanking the person for their interest, using please and a formal closing such as ‘Sincerely’ or ‘Best Regards’. Personal
refers to addressing the sender by name, giving personalised answers and closing with the sender’s name and title. Professional replies use proper grammar. Promotional replies use a branded email address and signature file. The signature file may include the sender’s name and title, company name, website and email address, physical address, fax, phone and company slogan.

Several studies investigated hotel responsiveness and quality of email reply. Studies found that hotels struggle to provide quality response to guests. Schegg et al. (2003) investigated 491 hotels from 13 international hotel chains and found five-star hotels had difficulty providing prompt, accurate and timely email response to their customers. An investigation on 1643 Austrian hotels found significant differences in response rate, response time and reply quality across hotel size, rating, location and between off and high season (Matzler et al., 2005). In addition, the study found response behaviour to be better during off-season than during high season. In contrast, Gardini (2007) found non-chain hotels appeared more attentive and customer oriented whereas chain hotels were more technical and formal in their email reply.

Guests sending emails to Swiss and Tunisian hotels have less than a one in ten chance of receiving a prompt, polite and personal reply (Frey et al., 2003; Fux, Noti, & Myrach, 2006; Gherissi Labben et al., 2003). Murphy & Tan (2003) who investigated email management by Singapore travel agents discovered poor email customer service with a seemingly high number of bounced emails. The study found one in four chance of receiving a reply and three in 100 of receiving a proper email reply. Finally, a study on 12 ASEAN National Tourism Organisations (NTOs) found poor email management by the ASEAN NTOs. Less than one quarter, only 12 of the 46 emails were replied to (Hashim, Murphy, & Kassim, 2007). Having completed the literature review, the following section discusses the hypotheses.

**Hypothesis Development**

Studies found size as the variable most often related to technology adoption in organisations (Jeyaraj et al., 2006; Rogers, 2003). Strong financial resources and the pressure to maintain and support their market position accelerate technology adoption in large organisations (Frambach & Schillewaert, 2002; Premkumar & Roberts, 1999). For instance, large US hotels adopted more technology than small hotels did (Siguaw, Enz et al., 2000). Similarly, a study of global hotels found that large hotels hired external expertise to build their websites (Wei, Ruys, van Hoof & Combrink, 2001).

Studies on technology adoption in the hospitality industry support that hotels’ affiliation status (chain or independent) and star rating relate positively to technology adoption (Murphy, Olaru, & Schegg, 2006; Murphy et al., 2003). For instance, US luxury and chain hotels were early adopters of technology (Siguaw et al., 2000). A Malaysian study on domain name branding found that high rated and affiliated hotels
showed advanced Internet use by matching their website names and email addresses (Hashim & Murphy, 2007). Thus:

**Hypothesis 1**: Malaysian hotels’ email adoption relates positively with hotel (i) size, (ii) rating and (iii) affiliation.

Technology implementation rates differ among organisations. For instance, despite wide adoption of Computer Aided Design technologies in the 1980s, after 12 years the usage is still limited (Liker, Fleischer, & Arnsdorf, 1992). A review of studies on hotels’ email use found that high rated, affiliated and large hotels used email better in their internal and external communication than low rated, non-affiliated and small hotels did (Jogaratnam & Tse, 2004; Wei et al., 2001). Similarly, previous hotel studies found large, high rated and affiliated hotels had a higher response rate than the small, low rated and non-affiliated hotels (Gherissi Labben et al., 2003; Matzler et al., 2005). Extending the findings to Malaysian hotels, this study proposes:

**Hypothesis 2**: Malaysian hotels’ email response rate relates positively with hotel (i) size, (ii) rating and (iii) affiliation.

Results from the studies help illustrate the two stages of organisational technology adoption, initiation followed by implementation (Rogers, 2003; Zaltman et al., 1973). Though the overall response quality was poor, previous hotel email studies found quality of email replies differed across organisation size, category, location and linguistic regions (Frey et al., 2003; Matzler et al., 2005; Schegg et al., 2006). Large, high rated and affiliated hotels may have passed the initiation stage, demonstrated by their higher response rates and email reply quality. Extending the findings to Malaysia hotels, this study proposes;

**Hypothesis 3**: Malaysian hotels’ email response quality relates positively with hotel (i) size, (ii) rating and (iii) affiliation.

**Methods**

The population was a census of 540 hotels registered with the Ministry of Tourism Malaysia in 2009. A mail survey identified eight hotels to be no longer operating and two hotels declined to participate, leaving the sample at 530 hotels. A search through Google and Yahoo search identified 359 out of 530 or 67% hotels with an email presence. Fourteen hotels used the same third party email, a company that managed the hotels’ websites and email. Because this did not reflect genuine email use by the hotels, this study excluded the fourteen hotels from the mystery email study, reducing the sample to 345 hotels.

Similar to mystery shopping where a company sends mystery shoppers to evaluate their service, this study used a mystery email to hotels. Mystery shopping, used
extensively in retail and hospitality sectors, helps companies monitor their service quality and identify areas needing improvement (Beck & Li, 2003; Wilson, 1998). The mystery email asked the hotels to respond to a short message asking about special rates and availability of a non-smoking room for two adults and two children during the end-of-year holiday season.

A pre-test of 12 hotels in in other countries helped familiarise the researcher with the process. The 345 emails were sent individually to avoid information overload and spam filters (Murphy et al., 2003). Emails that failed to arrive due to server being down or spelling errors were sent again the following day. Further, to eliminate gender and country of origin biases, this study used a unisex English name and a Yahoo email address ending in a global domain.

This study used content analysis and measured the quality of email response based on 5Ps derived from hotels email studies - Prompt, Polite, Personal, Professional and Promotional - to profile proper email responses (Matzler et al., 2005; Murphy et al., 2003; Strauss & Hill, 2001). Table 1 describe the evaluation criteria of the 5Ps.

Copying the responses into a Microsoft Word document allowed the researcher to investigate the presence of each feature in the response. Using Microsoft Word’s search function, the researcher searched for words included in the 13 criteria such as ‘Thank you’, ‘Dear’ and any spelling or grammar errors in the reply. A coding sheet helped the researcher record the presence of each features.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prompt</td>
<td>Reply within 24 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Polite   | Open with ‘Dear’  
          | Thanked the recipient  
          | Used ‘Please’  
          | Closed politely such as with ‘Best regards’ |
| Personal | Greeted recipient by name  
          | Closed with sender’s name  
          | Included sender’s title |
| Professional | Answered question  
          | Used proper English – No grammar and spelling error  
          | Provided a provisional booking |
| Promotion | Signature file  
          | Slogan or other promotional messages |
Results

Email Adoption

A search of the 530 hotels from the Malaysian Accommodation Directory, Google and Yahoo and information from the mail survey identified 359 or 67% hotels with an email address. Three statistical tests - T-test for number of rooms, Kruskall Wallis for rating and Chi Square for affiliation - indicated significant differences in email across room size, rating and affiliation. Similar to other email studies, small, low rated and non-affiliated hotels, large, high-rated and affiliated Malaysian hotels led in email adoption, supporting Hypothesis 1. Table 2 shows the results on email adoption and mystery email response rate.

Out of 345 emails sent, only 48% of the hotels replied to the mystery email (167 out of 345). Emails to one out of ten hotels (34 out of 345) bounced. As shown in Table 1, the results failed to support Hypothesis 2(i) on the positive relationship between size and email replies. However, the results supported Hypothesis 2(ii) on the positive relationship between hotel rating with email replies. On average, large hotels responded more to the mystery email than the small hotels did. As for rating, high rated hotels responded significantly more to the mystery email than the low rated hotels did. Almost six of ten high rated hotels replied to the mystery email. The results failed to

Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Email adoption and mystery email response rate by Malaysian hotels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Size</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of rooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Affiliation (%)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non affiliated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
support Hypothesis 2(iii). The affiliated and non-affiliated hotels shared equal percentages of email reply.

**Email Reply Quality**

Investigation on the email reply quality found Malaysian hotels scored the highest in providing personal replies (77%) followed by politeness (72%). Most hotels (90%) opened their email politely with ‘Dear’. About two out of three hotels answered the email within 24 hours and thanked the recipient for the enquiry (64%). Over one in two used (57%) ‘Please’ in their reply and three out of four hotels (75%) closed their email politely, for example, with ‘Best regards’ or ‘Yours sincerely’. Almost three out of four hotels (74%) greeted the recipient by name. Almost nine out of ten hotels (87%) included the sender’s name, but only seven out of ten (70%) included their title or position in the response. Nearly eight of ten hotels answered the questions (75%) and over three out of five hotels (63%) answered with proper English. Sixty-five percent of the hotels included a provisional booking offer in their reply. The hotels performed the poorest in using email as a promotional tool with an average presence of 36%. Forty-one percent of the hotels included a signature file but only 30% of the hotels included a slogan or other promotional message in their email. Table 3 shows the percentage presence of each feature across the three categories of hotels.

Large hotels led significantly in implementation by providing quality email replies except on one feature, thanking the recipient, where the small hotels led. Results on star rating showed only five features with positive and significant relationship: using ‘please’, provisional booking, using signature file and promotional message. Two features, using ‘please’ and including the sender’s title, showed a significant result but in the opposite direction. The one- and two-star hotels led the three-star hotels on these features. Similarly, hotel affiliation status showed a positive and significant relationship on four email reply features, including the sender’s title, using proper English, using a signature file and promotional message. Based on the results, Hypothesis 3(i), (ii) and (iii) on the positive relationship between hotel size, rating and affiliation with email reply features was rejected.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

Using the two research streams from DOI theory (Rogers, 2003), adoption and diffusion modelling, this study investigated Internet adoption and implementation by Malaysian hotels. Adoption refers to email presence; implementation relates to the presence of 13 email reply features. The adopter study showed a significant relationship between hotel characteristics with email adoption. In line with the literature, large, high rated, affiliated hotels led in email adoption (Murphy et al., 2003; Siguaw et al., 2000; Wei et al., 2001).
### Table 3.
*Hotel profile and percentage of email reply quality features presence*

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Percentage Presence</th>
<th>64</th>
<th>90</th>
<th>64</th>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>With feature</td>
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<td>233</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>228</td>
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<td>266</td>
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<td>192</td>
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<td>46.9</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>37.0</td>
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<td>78</td>
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<td>0.04</td>
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<td>.043</td>
<td>.132</td>
<td>.553</td>
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<td>Affiliation (%)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>90</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>76</td>
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<td>88</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-affiliated</td>
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<td>90</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>87</td>
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<td>54</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi square</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>14.66</td>
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<td>p-value</td>
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<td>.492</td>
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<td>.686</td>
<td>.062</td>
<td>.487</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The diffusion modelling study, however, failed to support the hypotheses on a significant relationship between hotel characteristics with email reply quality. Despite a 50% email adoption rate, the results showed poor email and website implementation by the Malaysian hotels. This finding supports the arguments that widespread adoption does not necessarily lead to widespread implementation and this indicates assimilation gap problems (Fichman & Kemerer, 1999). Emails of about 10% (34 of 359 hotels, bounced, and almost half of the hotels (42%) failed to reply.

Similarly, this study found 24% of the 167 hotels that responded to the mystery email failed to reply within 24 hours. The last reply arrived two weeks later. Hotels that do not respond quickly to email enquiries neglect an opportunity to attract additional guests (Murphy et al., 2003). Customers might email several hotels simultaneously. Slow and incomplete replies might exclude a hotel from the set of alternatives in the final decision process.

The results showed email as a popular online medium by Malaysian hotels. Efficient email handling is a critical business success factor (Coussement & Van den Poel, 2008). As in the case of offline customer service in traditional media such as the telephone and surface mail, evaluating online customer services is important. Hotels should consider mystery emails to assess e-service features such as email correspondence for online complaints and enquiries. The assessment will provide hotels with details on the strengths and weaknesses of their e-services, such as the level of responsiveness and quality of reply based on the 5Ps – prompt, professional, personal, polite and promotional.

There are several recommendations that hoteliers could take for better email management. First, hotels should provide email addresses but must avoid problems such as bounced emails, low reply quality or worse, no reply to enquiries as these harm the hotel’s service quality. Second, hotels should train their staff on email policies (Hashim & Murphy, 2007) or use automatic email classification to improve their online customer services (Coussement & Van den Poel, 2008). Finally, hotels could analyse their email response and address common email questions through an FAQ section on their websites (Murphy et al., 2003; Schegg et al., 2003).

There are 2256 hotels in Malaysia (The Ninth Malaysia Plan, 2006-2010). However, given no valid hotel list, this study limited its population to a census of the 540 hotels registered with the Ministry of Tourism Malaysia. Future studies could include more hotels for a comprehensive view on Malaysian hotels’ Internet use. Similarly, extending and comparing the population to other locations, particularly developing countries, could improve the generalisability and relevance of the results. Similarly, future studies could use quality of email replies to investigate relationship with hotel performance metrics such as sales and online reservations. Do hotels with higher website features
and good email replies generate higher reservations than hotels with fewer website features and lower email reply quality? This could be an area for further research.

In closing, as email continues to be important for hotel sales and online customer services (O’Connor & Murphy, 2004), good quality email reply (Murphy et al., 2003) is essential to build and retain customer trust and confidence. This study found that Malaysian hotels provide poor email replies indicating poor customer relationship management. It is time for hoteliers to evaluate the returns from their email investment. If Malaysian hotels are to succeed in their online business, addressing these weaknesses is an essential priority.

References


The Ninth Malaysia Plan, 2006-2010. Economic Planning Unit, Office of The Prime Minister of Malaysia.


Factors Determining Choice of Full Service Airlines and Low Cost Carriers: The Case of Malaysia

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Yusniza Kamarulzaman
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Abstract: Air transport is a vital component of the overall travel and tourism industry, and air services have played a major role in the growth of tourism in many parts of the world. Particularly, increasing competition and technology advances have created a challenging environment for airline companies. Thus knowing passenger preferences has become more important than ever. Keeping this in mind, this study attempts to determine the factors that influence the choice of either full service airlines or low cost carriers by passengers in Malaysia. Results from a study indicate that ‘safety’ is the most important factor in choosing full service airlines. This paper presents a detailed discussion on the results obtained and the implications for the passenger airlines industry in Malaysia.

Keywords: Full service airlines, low cost carriers, choice, Malaysia


Introduction

Air transport is a vital component of the total travel and tourism industry, and air services have played a major role in the growth of tourism in many parts of the
world (Nadiri, Hussain, Ekiz & Erdogan, 2008). Particularly with increasing competition and technology advances, air transportation has become more affordable to a wider array of tourists (Sultan & Simpson, 2000). According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2010), in the year 2020 there will be 1.6 billion international tourist arrivals with a long-term annual forecasted growth rate of 4.1% through 2020. Of these 1.6 billion tourists, 1.2 billion will be intra-regional and 378 million will be long-haul travellers using air transportation including both full service airlines as well as low cost carriers.

This forecast suggests that the airline industry will play an increasingly important role in travel, especially for destinations like Malaysia and Hong Kong which are considered to be on the airline crossroads (Atalik, 2007). Keeping this in mind, this study attempts to determine the factors that influence the choice of full service airlines and low cost carriers in Malaysia. In recent years, full service airlines have been losing their market share to low cost carriers in some routes. Low cost carriers have proven to be a major competitor to full service airlines in Malaysia. Although there have been studies done on full service airlines and low cost carriers in many parts of the world, none have been done in the case of Malaysia, especially between Malaysia Airlines and Air Asia. This study attempts to highlight the underlying success factors of the airlines in Malaysia. By identifying these factors, it will assist airlines to identify their markets and cater towards their respective market segments more effectively. It will also provide useful suggestions to airlines in Malaysia to evaluate their position in the industry and develop an effective marketing strategy. In light of this, the present study attempts to look into factors that influence the choice of carriers between leisure and business travellers. Subsequent to knowing the factors influencing choice of airlines, that is, full service and low cost carriers (LCC), can the airlines come up with tailor-made strategies to attract and retain a pool of loyal passengers.

**Literature Review**

**The Case of the Malaysian Airline Industry**

The liberalisation of the airline industry in Malaysia has led to a competitive landscape between our legacy airline, Malaysia Airlines (MH) which is a full service airline and the entry of Air Asia (AK) in 2002 as a competitor to Malaysia Airlines in the domestic routes. Malaysia Airlines and Air Asia are chosen for this study because these two airlines are direct competitors in the domestic market and on some international routes. Both Malaysia Airlines and Air Asia fly to all the major domestic destinations in Malaysia and use the same airports in the destinations they serve.

Air Asia started its operations in Malaysia in 2002. The brand name, Air Asia, is associated with ‘low fares, quality service and dependability’ (Air Asia Annual Report, 2009). By 2010, Air Asia was flying to more than 60 destinations (on 130 routes)
across three continents: Asia, Europe and Australia. On the other hand, Malaysia Airlines which is classified as a full service airline or full fare airline (Thanasupsin, Chaichana & Phlankarom, 2010) recorded a net profit of RM598,683,000. Malaysia Airlines had a complete monopoly in the domestic air but with the entry of Air Asia in December 2001 as a low cost carrier, the nature of the Malaysian air travel industry has changed into one that is more competitive. There has been very little data available on consumer behaviour and factors influencing business and leisure travellers in their choice of airlines in this closed market. However, with the recent emergence of Air Asia, the domestic passenger air transport now operates in a duopoly market. There is now a choice of carriers for passengers in Malaysia travelling to domestic destinations, even if it is only to selected destinations.

**Study Dimensions and Tested Hypotheses**

When passengers purchase an airline seat, they are paying for more than just a seat in the aircraft. They also purchase the service besides the mode of transportation. Perception of benefits of consuming the product or service, attitudes towards it, and the resulting behaviour are often described as being closely linked to one another (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). When customers evaluate the benefits of either the full service airlines or low cost carriers, it is bound to have an effect on their attitude, which in turn affects their purchase behaviour. Purchase and usage, however, are two different dimensions and the key benefits derived from each situation are usually quite different. In order to attract a consumer's attention, benefits or attributes of using full service airlines and low cost carriers such as price, safety, availability of frequent flyer membership, the airports used, network connections, and service may be important. However, during consumption of the service, the information provided about how to use the service is a key benefit. Fishbein & Ajzen's (1981) well-established theory of reasoned action specifically models intentions as better predictors of behaviour than attitudes towards an object (in this case, an airline service). Researchers undertaking service studies have also used intention of future communications as a guide to measure quality and satisfaction performance (Cronin & Taylor, 1992).

Fishbein & Ajzen (1975, p.12) wrote, “Whereas attitude refers to a person’s favourable or unfavourable evaluation of an object, beliefs represent the information he has about the object.” They also postulated that “belief will lead to behavioural intentions.” It is the perceptions of price, safety, frequent flyer membership, promotions, network connections, service of either full service airlines or low cost carriers that lead to their purchase intentions. In the theory of reasoned action, Fishbein & Ajzen (1975) hypothesise that a person’s behaviour is strongly influenced by his beliefs, attitudes, and intentions towards performing that behaviour. So our purchase behaviour is influenced by our beliefs, attitudes and intentions. The conceptual model
that is used is consistent with traditional attitude theory, where performance beliefs
affect behavioural intentions through the attitudes they help devise (Fishbein &
Ajzen, 1975). This model postulates that customer loyalty intentions are the result of
customer satisfaction.

**Price**

The pricing of scheduled airline fares is a complex matter and most passengers have
little or no idea how this is done (Driver, 2001). The price charged by airlines per mile
is not standard for all passengers in a particular flight or when compared with miles
flown on other routes. This is because there are many types of fare. This enables the
airlines to practice price discrimination – by having different requirements or conditions
for each type of fare. This done by determining the amount of flexibility the type of
ticket has, the period of time advance purchase required and the types of passengers,
such as business or leisure travellers. When the type of ticket purchased has flexibility,
it enables passengers on a scheduled flight to make changes to switch to another
flight without notice or penalty. Ticket flexibility enables a passenger to book a flight
almost on demand. The desirability of having flexibility depends on the type of
traveller we are talking about and the availability of alternative flights. This type of
flexibility is meant for the business traveller whose transportation cost is borne by the
employer. The demand by business travellers is relatively inelastic and therefore it
enables airlines to charge business travellers higher prices (Driver, 1999).

**H1:** Price has a significant influence on the choice of flying with a full service airline
or a low cost carrier in Malaysia

**Safety**

Safety is one aspect of the airline’s product that should not be compromised. Marketing
with a true consumer orientation would be pre-eminently sensitive to this issue. Yet,
airlines are not homogeneous even in this vital aspect and there is discussion of the
publication of a ‘blacklist’ to inform consumer choice (Knorr, 1997). In 1997, the
International Civil Airline Organization (ICAO) began to seek increased authority to
supervise the implementation of aviation safety and security standards worldwide. It
is currently working with International Air Transport Association (IATA) in the
publication of the progress of airlines in implementing safety and security measures,
and “every link in the aviation chain” in meeting the potential hazard presented by the
millennium bug (Rendell, 1998). Safety record of the airline is ranked as the most
important variable for all respondents (Baisya & Sarkar, 2004). There is further concern
over the quality (service and safety) of new, low-cost start-up airlines (Rose & Justin,
2005) in the face of the competitive environment and cost cutting measures.
H2: Safety record of the airlines has a significant influence on the choice of flying with a full service airline or a low cost carrier in Malaysia

Frequent Flyer Programs

In the passenger airline market, customer loyalty programs are in the form of frequent flyer programs. It was first introduced by American Airlines in 1981, and since then it had been replicated by all major airlines (Long & Schiffman, 2000). Frequent flyer programs provide upgrades for passengers; enables passengers to collect points (air miles) in exchange for free trips, exchange for hotel room nights, or redeem gift items. The main motives for airlines to institute a frequent flyer program are to (i) generate brand loyalty, (ii) create product differentiation and/or, (iii) create a database of members’ demographic profile and travel patterns (Toh & Hu, 1988). After seeing the success of the American Airlines frequent flyer programs, other airlines quickly introduced their own versions with theirs being more generous than that of the competitors. However, frequent flyer programs have proven to be costly for airlines to sustain. The revenues lost from frequent flyer programs in 1988 was estimated at USD1.24 billion (Toh & Hu, 1988). Frequent flyer programs are basically financial rewards that are based on the passengers’ relationship with the airline. Low cost carriers do not have any form of frequent flyer programs where passengers can accumulate points to exchange for free flights, upgrades, hotel room nights, gifts etc.

H3: The availability of frequent flyer programs has a significant influence on the choice of either a full service airlines or a low cost carrier in Malaysia.

Promotion

All airlines have some form of promotional activities for their products. They need to promote their product to either the mass market or their target market. Promotion is one of the 4Ps of marketing (Kotler, 2003). “Sales promotion consists of a diverse collection of incentive tools, mostly short term, designed to stimulate quicker or greater purchase of particular products or services by consumers or the trade” (Sidney, 1971). The tools for sales promotion for consumer promotion include coupons, cash refund offers, prices-off, premiums, prizes, patronage rewards, etc. Much of the promotion carried out by Air Asia is consumer promotion because Air Asia targets the consumer directly through their online booking engine. Malaysia Airlines, as a full service airline, uses a network of travel agents to market their products. Trade promotion methods used by Malaysia Airlines include rebates for tickets sold, free tickets, annual target incentives, prices-off, advertising and display allowances and sponsorship of events. A company must first establish its objectives of carrying out sales promotion and then select the most appropriate tools of sales promotion that
most effectively, efficiently and economically carries out the task. The objective of sales promotion is to increase sales and market share in the short run, but it does have a limited effect in the long run. Marketers face a number of challenges in most forms of sales promotion, especially the high costs of carrying out such programs. Low cost carriers carry out online sales promotion either subtly or overtly. They have extremely low fares but the number is usually limited and on certain flights only. Full service airlines offer airfare promotion based on the length of travel and group size. From a promotional point of view, marketers for travel products like airline seats need to ensure that an Internet search for information about travel products will lead to a useful and positive image about their company’s product or destination’s image. Information that users come across should create awareness and arouse interest while creating a favourable image of the company’s offerings or destination’s perceptions (Wen, 2009).

H4: The use of promotional programmes by airlines has a significant influence on the choice of either a full service airlines or a low cost carrier in Malaysia.

Strategic Alliances

A major attraction of using full service airlines is the ability to interline with other carriers at its hub airport. A study done by O’Connell & Williams (2005) found that the ability of the carrier to leverage network connections enables it to attract a high percentage of passengers (36.7% for Malaysia Airlines, a full service airlines) particularly those who wish to connect seamlessly. Low cost carriers operate mostly from point-to-point destinations only. These carriers explicitly state that they will not be held responsible if passengers are unable to make their connections even if they are having a connecting flight with the same carrier. When the passenger fails to make a connecting flight, they will have to purchase another ticket. However, travellers are willing to take such a risk (O’Connell & Williams, 2005). The advantage of flying full service airlines especially one that belongs to one of the global alliances, such as Sky Team, OneWorld or Star Alliance, is the ability to have access to a wider network of destinations enabling the passenger to fly ‘seamlessly’. It was found that passengers like to have flights serving a large number of cities. This could be due to a preference for a one-stop shopping centre for their travel arrangements, without having to take a connecting flight or to transfer from one form of transport to another. (Oyewole, Sankaran & Choudhury, 2007).

H5: When the airlines have a strategic alliance with other airlines, it does have a significant influence on the choice of either a full service airlines or a low cost carrier in Malaysia.
Service Quality

Research into airline service quality has increased since the relationship with passenger satisfaction and profitability has been established (Heskett, Sasser & Schlesinger, 1997). The quality of airline service plays an important role in a business strategy of differentiation (Tiernan & Waguespack, 2008). According to Tierman et al. (2008), this has become more important not only recently but will also be in future as full service airlines and low cost carriers seek to differentiate themselves further. Whereas low cost carriers seek to differentiate their product in the market through price leadership, full service airlines seek to pursue a full service differentiation strategy emphasising hub and spoke network using primary airports, having frequent flyer programs and affiliation with global alliances.

H6: The services provided by the airlines have a significant influence on the choice of either a full service airline or a low cost carrier in Malaysia.

Based on the discussion in relevant literature, six hypotheses have been created and tested in the present study.

| Price | H1 |
| Safety | H2 |
| Frequent Flyer | H3 |
| Promotion | H4 |
| Alliances | H5 |
| Service Quality | H6 |

Carrier Choice

Methods

Based on the literature reviewed, the researcher developed the questionnaire, using scales that have already been validated in previous research, as can be seen from Table 1 which summarises the items used in each scale, as well as the authors as reference variable measures. All items are measured by using a five point Likert scale ranging from ‘Strongly Disagree’ (=1), ‘Disagree’ (=2), ‘Neutral’ (=3), ‘Agree’ (=4) to ‘Strongly Agree’ (=5). The data was computed using SPSS 15.0, to check for normality, significance and correlation.
Tuck Sai Boey, Erdogan H. Ekiz & Yusniza Kamarulzaman

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Source</th>
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<td>Independent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Customer loyalty</td>
<td>Whyte (2002)</td>
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<td>Independent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategic alliance</td>
<td>Rajasekar &amp; Fouts (2009)</td>
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<td>Service quality</td>
<td>US Department of Transportation (2002)</td>
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</table>

Table 1. Variables tested and their sources

The data for this study were collected by a structured questionnaire targeting 450 conveniently selected respondents. Convenience sampling was chosen because this is the cheapest and easiest method to get respondents. The questionnaire was distributed in Seremban, Nilai, and the Klang Valley. These areas were chosen because it is the most densely populated area in Malaysia, with a population exceeding 6.7 million in 2005, and is expected to exceed 8.5 million in 2020. More than 50% of the questionnaires were distributed to college students. Although college students are not representative of the exact population, they are often used for many cross-cultural studies (Roth & Romeo, 1992; Martin & Eroglu, 1993). The college student population is highly generalised due to its diversity (Ozsomer, Bodur & Cavusgil, 1991). Although a pre-planned 450 sets of questionnaire wereprinted, only 400 were distributed, and only 376 were returned with a response rate of 83.5%.

Findings

The demographic characteristics of the respondents of both full service airlines and low cost carriers of this study are tabulated and shown in Table 2. There were a total for 207 respondents for full service airlines and 143 for the low cost carrier.

There were altogether 207 respondents for full service airlines. Respondents were mostly female (59.4%), younger than 30 years old (65.2%), Chinese (43.5%), single (68.1%), had a diploma or bachelor degree (62.8%) and were full time students (55.1%). Demographic characteristics of the respondents for LCC were similar. Respondents were mostly female (50.3%), between 21-40 years old (58.4%), Chinese (45.5%), single (74.1%), had a diploma or bachelors degree (57.4%) and were full time students (50.3%). Churchill (1979) suggested that before testing any hypothesis in any quantitative study, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) through Cronbach’s alpha coefficient and item-to-total correlations should be performed to verify the factorial structure, reliability and consistency of the instrument used. Researchers are encouraged...
In the case of the present study, 39 items developed by previous researchers (Driver, 1999; Flannery, 2001; Whyte, 2002; Rajasekar & Fouts, 2009; De Pelsmacker et al., 2006) were found to be consistent, reliable and valid.

More specifically, the values of the coefficient alpha ranged from 0.68 to 0.96 for seven factors which are above the cut-off value (0.70) recommended by Nunnally &
Bernstein (1994). When all the items in the survey instrument were considered, the coefficient alpha value was found to be 0.83, well above the suggested figure of 0.70. As for the reliability coefficients for each variable in the study, coefficient alphas were found to be significant: price (0.68), safety (0.73), promotions (0.88), loyalty programs (0.72), strategic alliance (0.83), service quality (0.74) and choice decision (0.96).

Multiple regression analysis was carried out to test the hypothesised relationships. Price, safety, promotions, loyalty programs, strategic alliance and service quality were taken as independent variables and choice decision as the dependent variable. Multiple regression analyses were first confirmed by testing the assumptions of normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, and independence of residuals (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). In addition, there was no evidence of any multicollinearity problem, meaning that each conditioning index is lower than 30, and at least two variance proportions were lower than 0.50 (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 1995). The independent variables jointly explain 46% of the variance (R2) on ‘choice decision’ (Table 3).

The results demonstrate that safety and service quality exert significant positive effects on ‘choice decision’ in full service airlines ($\beta=0.16$, $t$-value=3.912) and ($\beta=0.14$, $t$-value=2.177) respectively. These results indicate that the hypotheses H2 (safety => choice decision) and H6 (service quality => choice decision) are supported in the case of full service airlines.

Table 3. 
*Multiple regression analysis results for full service airlines*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variables</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>T-value</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRI</td>
<td>0.057*</td>
<td>0.846</td>
<td>0.399b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAF</td>
<td>0.167</td>
<td>3.912</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRO</td>
<td>0.064</td>
<td>0.823</td>
<td>0.412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOY</td>
<td>0.033</td>
<td>0.476</td>
<td>0.634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALL</td>
<td>0.095</td>
<td>1.155</td>
<td>0.250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QUA</td>
<td>0.149</td>
<td>2.177</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Notes:* *Standardised coefficient; *p*<0.05
Factors Determining Choice of Full Service Airlines & Low Cost Carriers: The Case of Malaysia

Table 4.

Multiple regression analysis results for low cost carriers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multiple R</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>Adjusted R²</th>
<th>Standard error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F= 21.721</td>
<td></td>
<td>p&lt;0.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dependent variable: Choice decision (CHO)
Independent variables:
- Price (PRI)
- Safety (SAF)
- Promotions (PRO)
- Loyalty programs (LOY)
- Strategic alliance (ALL)
- Service quality (QUA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variables</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>T-value</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRI</td>
<td>0.153</td>
<td>3.842</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAF</td>
<td>0.045</td>
<td>0.491</td>
<td>0.624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRO</td>
<td>0.035</td>
<td>0.378</td>
<td>0.706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOY</td>
<td>0.175</td>
<td>2.718</td>
<td>0.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALL</td>
<td>0.161</td>
<td>2.317</td>
<td>0.022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QUA</td>
<td>0.039</td>
<td>0.369</td>
<td>0.713</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: aStandardised Coefficient, b p<0.05

Table 4 presents the results of the multiple regression analysis with LCC data. The results demonstrate that price, strategic alliances and loyalty exert significant positive effects on choice decision for low cost carriers (β=0.15, t-value=3.842), (β=0.17, t-value=2.718) and (β=0.16, t-value=2.317) respectively. These results indicate that the hypotheses H1 (price => choice decision), H4 (loyalty => choice decision) and H5 (strategic alliances => choice decision) are supported in the case of low cost carries. The independent variables jointly explain 37% of the variance (R²) on choice decision.

Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to determine the factors that influence the choice of airlines in Malaysia. This study therefore attempts to identify the factors that influence consumers’ choice of full service or low cost carriers in Malaysia. Knowing the factor or factors that influence consumers’ choice would be of interest to full service airlines and low cost carriers in their attempt to reach their target market. The research framework-hypothesised relationships were empirically tested using regression analysis techniques. A number of hypotheses were supported by the results of the research; quality was significant in in the choice of full service airlines. This finding highlights the importance of safety and service quality in choosing a full service airline. On the other
hand, price, strategic alliances and loyalty were found to be significant determinants in choosing a low cost carrier.

Both low cost carriers and full service airlines give top priority to safety as they are governed by both national and international air transport organisations (IATA and ICAO) which require compliance to minimum safety standards. In addition, aircraft manufacturers have continuously enhanced safety features in their equipment. Although air traffic accidents are rare in comparison with the number of flights taking off daily, when an accident occurs, it receives wide media coverage, because it usually results in fatalities.

Service quality provided both on board and on ground has a significant influence on the choice of a full service airline in Malaysia. As passengers pay more to full service airlines, they expect premium service. However, for the low cost carriers, passengers have a comparatively low expectation of high quality services. The low cost carrier’s core product is a seat on board the aircraft; however, it is the variety of services that correspond to a greater or lesser extent to passenger expectations that attracts passengers to a full service airline (Driver, 2001). Airline passengers therefore are also seeking an experience. On a long haul flight that exceeds 4 hours, passengers also expect meals to be offered on board the aircraft, either inclusive of the airfare or purchased separately. Airlines do not only transport the passenger but also their personal effects.

Price is the most important reason why passengers chose LCC. This result is consistent with previous research (Whyte, 2002; Rajasekar & Fouts, 2009). This is considered to be one of the strengths of LCC over full service airlines. However, given that more and more LCCs are entering the market and full service airlines are lowering their prices, competition for existing passengers is expected to be intense (Nadiri et al., 2008; Sultan & Simpson, 2000).

Customer loyalty programs have a significant influence on the choice of carriers. This is supported by a study done by IATA (1997), which showed that additional benefits offered by airlines do attract passenger attention. According to LCC passengers, existence of a loyalty programs is a significant reason why they choose LCC. Whilst flight comfort was perceived to be the most valued, other benefits were not noticeable. Although the survey did not specifically ask the class the passengers used while flying, most people fly on economy class although there is the choice of first, business or economy class. The additional benefits offered by full service airlines to its regular customers mostly include airport lounges, priority boarding, gourmet meals and others. Most of the respondents did not fly on either business or first class, and 48.8 % took less than two flights per year. There is a big price differential between economy, business and first class, due to the limited number of seats available.
Passengers on long haul international flights using airlines that have code sharing agreements and belong to an alliance, have the benefit of access to a wide network and connectivity to many destinations. However, the benefit of strategic alliance does not significantly influence the choice of full service airlines in Malaysia. This research indicates that passengers who chose low cost carriers place emphasis on price of the air fare. This study also reconfirms the popular perception that passengers choose low cost carriers only because of price. More than 70% of the respondents who opted for low cost carriers were below the age of 30. This indicates that among the younger age group, price was a major determinant of choice of the airline. More than 50% of the respondents who chose low cost carriers were full time students and therefore they tend also to be more budget conscious. Other than price, strategic alliance did have a significant influence on purchase intention of low cost carriers. Although low price is synonymous with low cost carriers, consumers are on the lookout for value added features. The research shows that low cost airlines having strategic alliances did influence choice of carriers.

The results of this research indicate that there are differences in the factors that influence the choice of carriers in Malaysia. It appears that although price of airfare and airline services both onboard the aircraft and on ground are important determinants of choice of carriers in Malaysia, there appears to be a gap in what consumers expect from airlines and what the passengers receive. It appears that Malaysian Airline travellers are seeking the best deals and want value for money. Basically they want the fares offered by low cost carriers but want the services provided by full service airlines. Travellers in Malaysia have now come to expect low fares as the norm but are reluctant to pay the price of air fares required for the full service airlines.

Managerial Implications

The results of this study will assist managers in highlighting the difference between low fares and service. Airline operators should be more prudent in providing the services that passengers seek. For most passengers in the economy class, airport lounges, wider seat pitch, gourmet meals etc. does not mean much to this segment of the market. Passengers should realise that low cost carriers provide only limited service and are not paying for service that they do not consume. If low cost carriers want to maintain and increase their market share of passengers, they must enhance the level of service. The services that are important to passengers are punctuality in arrival times, efficient check in, courteous staff, cabin crew who are attentive to their needs and efficient baggage handling. In order to fulfil passenger expectations, low cost carriers must improve their system and increase their productivity. The employees
need to be retrained for a more efficient system that emphasises an increase in productivity without a corresponding increase in cost.

For full service airlines, there is the need to enhance their existing level of service. In order to reduce cost, they should reduce or eliminate the service which passengers do not value. In order for full service airlines to be more price competitive, they should have more promotions to enhance their value from a consumer point of view. These promotions could be seasonal or day or time specific so that these promotions do not erode the revenue obtained from the full fare paying passengers who want flexibility.

Marketing managers should refocus on their target market and differentiate their product from that of either a full service airline or low cost carrier. Full service airlines should not compete on the same routes as low cost carriers, but on long haul routes where they have an inherent advantage in that they are better equipped to serve, and on such routes, service is important. On a long haul route with journey times as long as 12 hours or more (for example Kuala Lumpur to London) complimentary meals and in flight services are of paramount importance compared to a short haul route. On long haul routes, the revenue is higher therefore the profit margin is larger and full service airlines are in a better position to provide a better service.

The results of the present study have a number of practical implications for airline managers who are seeking to identify customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. According to these results, recommendations can be given to the full service airlines as well as LCCs. In order to attract more passengers, full service airlines should highlight their safety records and the high level of service quality they provide. Managers and marketers of LCCs should underline the affordable price and strategic alliances they have. Moreover, they should create (if they do not have so far), maintain and publicise their loyalty programs to attract more customers.

Findings of this study should be considered in the light of the following limitations. First, although the use of student respondents in empirical research is common and a well-supported phenomenon (Nadiri et al., 2008; Ekiz & Au, 2011), future research should collect data from the actual airline passengers right before or after their flights. Doing so will increase the generalisability of the findings to a greater extent. Additional studies are recommended to fill this gap. Including airlines from other countries of the South East Asia would provide for comparisons and hence add further insights. Finally, this study only investigated price, safety, loyalty, promotion, strategic alliances and service quality as possible factors in choice of carrier (which are well-supported by the airline industry); however, adding other possible factors may provide a wider perspective and understanding of the issue at hand.
Factors Determining Choice of Full Service Airlines & Low Cost Carriers: The Case of Malaysia

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Air Asia Annual Report (2009), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.


Research Paper

The Impact of Internships on Students Undertaking Tourism and Hospitality Programs

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**Abstract:** This paper investigates student’s perceptions of their internship within tourism or hospitality courses. The main purpose of this research is to gain a better understanding of what the current generation of students think about the internship process. Much has been written about the different learning models that are applicable to the education system, as well as the relevance of experiential or work-based learning to the education system. The paper will identify why experiential or work-based learning is considered a vital part of modern day university undergraduate degrees and how universities can best utilise workplace learning as a recognised part of the curriculum.

**Keywords:** Generation Y, hospitality, internship, Malaysia, perceptions, students, tourism


**Introduction**

The tourism and hospitality industry has been confronted with the global problem of attracting and retaining quality employees. This has led to a shortage of skilled personnel to staff the growing number of tourism and hospitality businesses (Deery & Shaw, 1999; Ferris, Berkson & Harris, 2002; Freeland, 2000; Hinkin & Tracey, 2000; Powell, 1999; Tourism Division, 2002). According to Lucas & Johnson (2003, p. 153) “attracting and retaining well-educated, skilled, enthusiastic and committed workers is a chronic...
problem for the hospitality and tourism industries in the developed world.” This issue is highlighted by studies indicating that the proportion of tertiary educated workers in the tourism and hospitality industry is much lower than most other industry sectors (ABS, 2006; Purcell & Quinn, 1996). There are also reports of many tourism and hospitality management graduates leaving the industry or even failing to enter the industry upon graduation due to a variety of reasons which include: low job satisfaction, poor employment conditions, and an absence of motivating factors. Such problems have resulted in high staff turnover and wastage of trained and experienced personnel (Doherty et al., 2001; Jenkins, 2001; Richardson, 2010b).

According to Domonte & Vaden (1987) the factor that had the greatest influence on career decisions of potential hospitality employees was the role of work experience. They argued that student work experiences in a particular industry significantly influenced their decision to pursue a career in that same employment sector in the future. For this reason it could be argued that work-based learning needs to play a significant role in the education of tourism and hospitality students. Work-based learning, whether structured or unstructured, should encourage the student to discover many different aspects of the business (Aggett & Busby, 2011; Baum, 2002; Boud, Solomon, & Symes, 2001; Mulcahy, 1999). However, it is suggested that if students are given menial or mundane tasks during their work placements, the experience may actually lead to the student not pursuing a career in the industry at all (Aggett & Busby, 2011; Baum, 2002; Boud et al., 2001).

Fraser, Mohd Zahari, Othman & Radzi (2007) claim that “one of the many challenges facing the Malaysian hospitality industry is the attraction and retention of young people in a highly competitive employment market. Beside other issues, the low numbers and poor transfer rate of graduates into the industry were found to be the most critical problems in the country”. One of the key ways in which industry can attract these graduates is to offer them the chance to pursue an internship in the organisation whilst studying and then offer the student a full-time position upon graduation. However, for this strategy to work, students must have a meaningful and enjoyable experience during their internship. This research identifies the factors that are crucial to the success of the internship program to allow both students and industry to achieve maximum benefits of such programs.

Work-based or experiential learning, commonly referred to as an internship, is the term used to describe placements that involve students being placed temporarily in the workforce. Internships are designed to facilitate opportunities for students to experience new learning outcomes (Boud et al., 2001; Chang & Hsu, 2010; Singh & Dutta, 2010). Boud et al. (2001) claim that if these experiences meet the needs of the student, they can additionally contribute to the host organisation’s long term development. For purposes of this study, the term internship will be used to describe students’ experiential or work-based learning programs.
This research was undertaken in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and observed students studying in a School of Hospitality, Tourism and Culinary Arts. All students studying in this School must undertake several work-based training periods as a formal requirement for their program. Typically, students participate in one internship during their diploma studies (2-year program), another internship during their higher diploma studies (1-2 year program), and a third at the end of their degree year (1-year program), if they choose to continue their study to this level. The internships play a significant part in the academic program for every student and the university has a full-time career centre which plays an integral role in securing work placements for more than 1,000 hospitality, tourism and culinary arts students every year. The career centre which supports the School has developed a close working relationship with major hotel chains, tourism organisations, food and beverage outlets, government agencies, event management companies and convention service companies both locally and internationally. Students are therefore able to take advantage of these relationships to seek industry experience and potential career opportunities with these prestigious potential employers.

**Literature Review**

Jan Figel, the European Commissioner for Education, Training and Youth, cited in Gibbs & Armsby (2010, p. 185), stated that practice-orientated and work based learning are among the key priorities in European Union education and training policies. Mr Figel highlighted that work-based learning is integral to the future of European educational architecture. Recent research (Aksu & Koksal, 2005; Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000; Kusluvan, Kusluvan & Eren, 2003; Richardson, 2008; 2009; 2010a) has highlighted the fact that poor experiences in the tourism and hospitality industry is one of the main reasons why graduates leave or even fail to enter the industry. A growing number of educators have also identified experiential learning as the way to revitalise the university curriculum and meet the new challenges facing higher education with increased pressure being placed on institutions to be accountable in other parts of the world as well (Brodie & Irving, 2007; Dunn, 1999; Karia, Bathula & Abbott, 2011; McDaniel et al., 2000). A study by Hicks (2004, p. 3) found that the majority of educators surveyed claimed that experiential learning could effectively boost academic achievement. This was supported by the finding that nine out of ten survey respondents agree with the notion that experiential learning was either ‘somewhat effective’ or ‘very effective’ at raising student achievement. Sweitzer & King (2004) suggest that whilst some undergraduate courses have several internships, for most students, the internship will occur near the end of their studies. In theory, this should provide the student with the chance to link together the theoretical knowledge they have gained through their studies with the actual skills that are required to perform
adequately in a working environment. Raelin (2010, p. 10) agrees with this notion stating “work-based learning epistemology has demonstrated that knowledge may be equally, if not even more effectively, acquired through reflective discourse within the very activity of practice.”

There have been a number of theories espoused to explain the learning process. This study focuses on experiential theory which offers a substantially different view of the learning process than behavioural theories of learning or traditional educational theories on the conduct of education, the interactions of learning, work and other life activities and in the creation of knowledge itself (Kolb, 1984). Kolb (1984) argues there are two reasons this form of learning is described as experiential; firstly to link it with the intellectual origins of Dewey, Lewin & Piaget; and secondly to emphasise the role that experience plays in this type of learning. Karia, Bathula & Abbott (2011) claim that experiential learning has many features that distinguish it from other forms of learning with the most common features being that it is task focused, collaborative, occurs in a social, political and economic context and is cognitively different to class based learning as it is of a practical rather than theoretical nature.

There are many benefits that have been found to support the inclusion of work-based learning programs in university degrees. Canter (2000) implies that employers require graduates to possess a set of key skills which enhance their employability. While some of these skills, both applied and generic, can be developed in traditional academic courses of study, a great number of competencies can only be acquired in the workplace. Coll, Taylor & Nathan (2003) and Ruhanen, Breakey & Robinson (2012) agree that internship programs provide graduates and the potential leaders of tomorrow with the skills necessary to rapidly advance in companies and assume middle and senior management positions. Similarly Busby (2001) found that internships in tourism- and hospitality-related degrees in the UK played an important role in ensuring graduates had the skills required to ensure future employability.

Mulcahy (1999) claims that the internship program may benefit all three major stakeholders: universities, students and the industry as a whole. First, it benefits universities as students can learn about the industry in a formalised setting with the university controlling the structure of this experience to enhance programs offered. Second, it additionally benefits the students as they gain invaluable work experience. Third, it benefits the industry as there will be a higher number of good quality graduates available for employment. Ruhanen et al. (2012) and Eames (2000) state that there are a number of benefits an intern (student) can obtain from participating in an internship or work-based learning program. These include providing the student with an opportunity to use and enhance existing knowledge and skills, the acquisition of new skills and an opportunity to develop new expertise. Students undertaking work-based learning programs are given the opportunity to see first-hand the on-the-job operations
of the company and be exposed to a number of different specialties within the company. The experience will also help the students to assess career goals, gain experience that can be added to their resume, and it may additionally expand the students’ business network (Eames, 2000; Jack, 2011; Ruhanen et al., 2012).

Whilst the benefits of work-based learning are numerous, there are many challenges facing the introduction of work-based learning courses within university degree programs. Higher education typically encourages specialisation rather than the generalisation effect work-based learning can have on educational programs (Fensham, 1980; Kings, 1990; Kolb, 1984; Tse, 2010). Kolb (1984) claims that this is one of the points that have traditionally stifled university education from moving into a work-based curriculum; however, integrative development is important for both personal fulfilment and cultural development. The difficulty universities face is deciding on how to best facilitate this development while addressing the needs of universities to provide the specialist knowledge expected of modern graduates (Kolb, 1984). Moreover, Kolb (1984) argues that experiential learning offers educators a means of addressing this dilemma, in a variety of ways, including through work-integrated learning.

One major problem that impacts the success of an internship is the student’s level of technical and social skills. Bartkus (2001) claims that while universities are in a position to provide formal training in both these areas, they seldom do. This problem is increased as universities have often been criticised for their inclusion of work experience in an academic program with some academics claiming that the work component is not ‘academic’ enough (Beckett, 2001; Eames, 2000; Solnet, Kralj, Kay & DeVeau, 2009). As Van Gyn, Cutt, Loken & Ricks (1997, p. 72) point out, “the traditional view is that cooperative education is an effective training strategy rather than an educational strategy.” Thus, developing courses to help increase students’ technical and social skills, as well as finding a way to measure the social skills of students, has proven highly difficult to facilitate (Bartkus, 2001).

A further challenge facing tertiary educators is finding an appropriate setting and style in which the internship program will operate (Warren, Sakofs & Hunt, 1995). No individual falls into a single category of learning style with each student using different techniques to learn. Such a dilemma makes the process of finding an appropriate setting more difficult (Dennison & Kirk, 1990). To ensure the success of the work-based learning program, companies must ensure that the work environment is capable of supporting learner-managed, reflective learning at an appropriate level (Lester & Costley, 2010). According to Lester & Costley (2010, p. 568) “the value of high-level work-based learning to employers does appear to depend on the ability of the work context to respond to individuals who are undergoing rapid personal and professional development”. Whilst this may be the case, universities are also facing
considerable issues in finding positions for students undertaking internships. Moreover, Baum (2002) claims that at present there are not enough companies involved in the internship process and that more companies should make themselves available to participate in these programs as part of their long term planning and recruitment goals.

When specifically assessing internships in the tourism and hospitality field, a recent study highlighted that “existing internship practices lack sufficient clarity and purpose, appropriate academic assessment and industry recognition, and effective integration with the rest of the hospitality curriculum” (Zopiatis, 2007). Zopiatis (2007) claims that most institutions focus on ensuring students have work placements and do not focus on the other issues such as the type of work or the overall experience that students will be provided. This problem is further exasperated by the fact that hospitality organisations are failing to provide interns with quality experiences and do not provide positive working environments that will allow interns to develop personally and professionally resulting in hospitality internship practices failing to deliver the anticipated opportunities sought by interns (Zopiatis, 2007).

There have been a number of educational models proposed to describe the experiential process by which people learn. John Dewey’s ‘Model of Learning’ is seen as one of the best models for experiential learning and it examines the developmental nature of learning by describing how learning alters the impulses, feelings and desires of concrete experience into focused action (Kolb, 1984). Kolb (1984) developed an adaptation of Dewey's model which can be used to develop the internship program. A graphical representation of Kolb’s adaptation of this model can be seen in Figure 1.

To increase the likelihood that the internship process will succeed, Weber, cited in Berger (1991, p. 30), claims that one of the first elements that must be considered before the students begins their internship is to draft a job description as “it sets the standards that the students, school and organisation must live by. It becomes a management and evaluation tool during and at the completion of the semester”. Berger (1991) claims that Weber’s internship job description is an excellent model to follow and it consists of the seven steps which can be seen in Table 1.

Method

This research used an evaluative approach to determine the benefits and effectiveness of work-based learning within one university tourism and hospitality program. Qualitative methods were used to collect data utilising face-to-face semi-structured interviews with students. Rather than structured questions, a prompt sheet was used with exact interview questions evolving naturally as the interviewing process progressed. The interview structure followed Patton’s (1990) advice to allow for free-flowing
Weber’s internship job description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Procedure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key results</td>
<td>Describing the educational value of the program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basis for accountability</td>
<td>Describing all the student’s responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The organization</td>
<td>Describing the reporting structure of the internship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of the position</td>
<td>Describing in general terms what the student should be expected to learn from the internship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Describing the different internal and external publics, the student will interface with on a daily basis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The knowledge</td>
<td>Education and skills required by the student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predominant tasks</td>
<td>Outlining day-to-day activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. Kolb’s adaptation of the Dewey model

1. Experiencing: Activities, personal and group challenges.
2. Reviewing: Encourage individuals to reflect, describe, communicate and learn from the experience.
3. Concluding: Use of models and theories to draw conclusions from past and present experiences.
4. Planning: Applying new learning from previous experiences.

comment and clarification by the participants. While the interviewer attempted to use the same wordings and order of the questions with each interviewee, at times it became necessary to modify them in order to solicit more responses from the interviewee.

All participants were required to have undertaken at least one internship of a minimum 10 weeks duration. These interviews ranged from 5 minutes to 20 minutes depending on the number of internships the respondent had undertaken with the majority of interviews lasting approximately 15 minutes. Denzin & Lincoln (1994) suggested that qualitative methods of research have been identified as a ‘crucial perspective’ because they offer an alternative way of understanding social phenomena.
which a quantitative approach could not. Veal (2006) agrees, suggesting that while qualitative research is often seen to be limited to small numbers of participants, it does have the potential to divulge a ‘rich’ seam of information which is unobtainable via a quantitative approach.

Prior to the conduction of interviews, students were asked to fill in a short quantitative survey to obtain demographic data and some data on their internship experiences. The face-to-face qualitative interviews were used to identify the significant experiences of students during their internship(s). A prompt sheet was used and the interview structure followed Patton’s (1990) advice to allow for free-flowing comment and clarification by the participants. The interviews were audiotaped using a digital recorder, with the approval of the participants and then transcribed (within a few days of the interview).

In a qualitative interview, validity and reliability are derived throughout the whole process of data collection and analysis, “from the researcher’s presence, the nature of the interaction between researcher and participants, the interpretation of perceptions, and rich, thick description” (Merriam, 1988, p. 120). Field notes were taken that were both descriptive and reflective with an emphasis on ideas, impressions, constant comparisons between field notes, speculations about what the outcome of the study was going to be, about the themes and patterns emerging, or connections between pieces of data.

Jennings (2010) claims that when choosing a sampling method in qualitative research there is confusion due to the lack of clear guidelines on principles for selection of a sample. Morse (1991, p. 127) provides the example of a researcher who used random sampling to select a small sample in a qualitative study and points out that this “violates both the quantitative principle that requires an adequate sample size in order to ensure representativeness and the qualitative principle of appropriateness that requires purposeful sampling and a ‘good’ informant (i.e. one who is articulate, reflective and willing to share with the interviewer)”. Therefore theoretical sampling, as opposed to random sampling, was chosen as the preferred sampling method for this research question, as it involves deliberate selection of individuals within a population that are expected to provide diverse, relevant, useful or clarifying insights into key issues in the research (Bryman & Burgess, 1999; Jennings, 2010). It is a common method of subject selection in qualitative research, and involves a small number of information rich cases, rather than a large, more representative sample. While this approach has the potential to create a biased sample, it was considered appropriate for the current study for two reasons. First, time and resource constraints prohibit a large sample, and second, the purpose of this research question is to conduct a preliminary exploration of a new area of research. As such, this research question does not purport to be an exhaustive examination of all tourism and hospitality students’ internship experiences,
rather a starting point to give an insight into how internships should be structured. A total of 56 students were interviewed providing a wide range of responses and information. The key findings will now be critically analysed and discussed.

Analysis

Quantitative Demographic Survey

As described above, all respondents were asked to complete a short survey before the interview began to obtain demographic as well as internship specific information. Table 2 highlights that 53.6% of the interviewees were male, with the majority of respondents (78.6%) being bachelor degree students; more than half (51.8%) had completed 3 or more internships; and nearly three-quarters (73.2%) were domestic (Malaysian) students. When it came to choosing a workplace for their internship, the most important factor was ‘location of the job’ (44.6%), followed by ‘best training/career development’ (16.1%) and ‘most interesting position’ (10.7%). The majority of students worked in hotels (58.9%) or restaurants (32.1%) with the vast majority (91.1%) working in frontline positions, reflecting that the University’s industry partners’ value the internship process; only one respondent claimed they would not recommend their internship employer to future students.

When analysing the impact the internships had on students, 67.9% claimed it had a positive impact on their desire to pursue a career in the tourism and hospitality industry, with only 12.5% stating it had negatively impacted their perceptions of careers in the industry. More than three-quarters of respondents suggested that they would definitely (39.3%) or more than likely (37.5%) pursue a career in the industry. This is reinforced by the discovery that only two (3.6%) respondents claimed that it was unlikely that they would work in the industry. Moreover, only one (1.8%) stated that he/she definitely would not work in the industry on completion of studies. Highlighting how important work-based learning can be, 94.6% of respondents claim that their internship experience has helped them to clarify their career goals and all believe it will be either be very important (66.1%) or important (33.9%) to their future career.

Interviews

As described in the methods section above, the primary goal of this research was to gather rich data about the experience students encountered whilst undertaking their internship(s). The interviews were designed to solicit advice respondents would give to future students to ensure they gain maximum benefit from their internship, as well as provide advice for both the University and their industry partners on ways to improve the program.
Table 2.

Demographic and internship information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Sample %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>53.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>46.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of study</td>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Higher Diploma</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>78.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Internships</td>
<td>One</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>completed</td>
<td>Two</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Three</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More than 3</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic or International</td>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>73.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>International</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factors in choosing</td>
<td>Personal connection to the company</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internship employer</td>
<td>Location of the job</td>
<td>44.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Best training/career development</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advice of friends/family</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Efforts/attitude of the recruiters</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prestige/reputation of employer</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Highest salary</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Most interesting work/position</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Best benefits package</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People at the company</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area worked in longest</td>
<td>Hotel/ Front Office</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hotel/ Food and Beverage</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hotel/ Other</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Restaurant/ Café: Kitchen</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Restaurant/ Café: Front of House</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bar</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Travel agents</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Airlines and their offices</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of position</td>
<td>Frontline</td>
<td>91.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low level manager</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle manager</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Senior manager</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Positive Outcomes

Many respondents suggested that the internship(s) they had undertaken yielded many positive outcomes. This is consistent with the findings of the quantitative survey which found 67.9% of respondents claimed the experience to have a positive impact on their desire to pursue a career in the tourism and hospitality industry. Some of the positive comments espoused included the opportunity to enhance existing knowledge; the chance to acquire new skills; access to new expertise; an opportunity to see firsthand the job operations of the company; and the exposure to a number of employment opportunities within the company. Four main themes appeared to emerge. The opportunity to learn new things was the most commonly cited experience amongst interviewees. One respondent claimed that “during my internship I learnt many things I would not have learnt at the university” whilst another stated that “the best thing about the internship was to get the opportunity to do tasks that I had never done before.” Additionally, a respondent also spoke about learning new things and stated “Training in Sales & Marketing was my favourite part. The Senior Event Manager was willing to teach and guide me throughout my 6 weeks there.
From computer systems like Opera, Delphi, sending emails in the proper way, meeting clients, preparing contracts, organising events and following up. I learnt many new things which I did not learn at my University. It helped me to build up my confidence and communication.

The second theme to emerge was that students found the opportunity to meet new people very useful. One respondent stated that “I’d say the best part of my internship was having the best working colleagues ever. Working in a team is where I gained most of my experience. Having a good relationship in the team keeps me motivated”. Others responses related to meeting new people included “getting to know the different people on the job was definitely a plus point” and “the thing I enjoyed most was having the opportunity to talk to and consult with current employees from various departments in different companies about their jobs and experience.”

Recognition and undertaking ‘real’ tasks were two further themes that also surfaced. In regard to recognition, some of the responses included “being recognised for the things I did was very satisfying” and “knowing that my employer valued my presence and guided me throughout my internship period made me proud. Some of the comments related to real tasks were “being assigned to complete a meaningful task independently allowed me to evaluate the nature of the job more intimately. This invaluable observation and input helps me in choosing my career path” and “experiencing the real hospitality industry life, dealing with real customers in a real situation was the highlight for me.”

**Negative Outcomes**

Respondents were also asked to identify the worst aspect(s) of their internship. A common concern students revealed was that the internship was not structured enough. Several implied that they were assigned no ‘real’ tasks and the following response was highly representative of these students: “I was not given a proper job, all I did was run errands, and data entry because they thought I was incapable.” A number of other comments were made including

“I was assigned to admin in Front Office for two weeks whereby I only needed to update the Duty Manager’s Log into the computer, updating the stock requisition and to photostat material. I learnt nothing other than understanding the feedback from the guests and what is happening in the hotel according to the Duty Manager’s log.”

and

“Being dispensed to any department and assigned as an insignificant frontliner, general worker or casual helper. The responsibilities and tasks given were of inferior standard and impeded my learning and skills development process.
Time and effort were wasted and I could not contribute my knowledge or skills to the benefit of the employer.”

Weber, cited in Berger (1991, p. 30), argues that one of the first elements that must be considered before the student begins internship is to draft a job description. Weber states “It [the job description] sets the standards that the student, school and organisation must live by. It becomes a management and evaluation tool during and at the completion of the semester.” This is one procedure that needs to be put into place so that students and companies providing positions know exactly what is expected from each party.

Other reasons for negative experiences included managers being rude and uncaring; feelings of being treated like ‘cheap labour’; and a lack of communication between the intern, the hotel and the university. The problem of communication was an important issue as this is one particular area that must function effectively in order for the internship program to operate successfully. Comments made in this area included “senior managers had no idea what to do with me and did not talk amongst themselves, therefore I was taking orders from a number of managers” and “my company didn’t really communicate with the university.” If an internship program is to be successful, it is imperative that there is constant and constructive communication between all parties.

Advice for Internship Employers

Next students were asked to provide some advice to their internship employer. Whilst a number of comments were made, the main theme to emerge was that respondents believe that their internship program was inadequately structured with insufficient training opportunities provided. Some of the comments included “create more programs/assignments/task for interns to develop their skills”; “be more willing to teach”; and “develop a proper schedule.” Whilst these comments are brief, some students provided much more comprehensive feedback including:

“Have a structured internship program that covers each area comprehensively. Empower interns with meaningful tasks and significant responsibilities. Also assign challenges to interns such as suggesting or proposing solutions to problems or risks existing in the operations and also to provide interns with feedback and suggestions to improve or encourage their performance.”

and

“Prepare a schedule or flow chart for the whole internship. That would help a lot in order for an intern to learn things in sequence. It would be easier for the intern to see a whole clear picture of what is going on in the company.”
Many students also commented on the lack of training opportunities including “I would like to advise the hotel to give the trainee more opportunities to take part in the hotel activities and training” whilst another stated “I wished the hotel would pretend trainees were permanent staff in the hotel and provide the same training opportunities.”

Advice for Universities

The final topic discussed with students was what advice they would give universities in order to improve the internship process. The most dominant theme to emerge from the interviews were that interns need more support from the university, particularly in finding the right internship employer. Some of the comments in relation to this included “The Career Centre should be a bit more concerned about the welfare of the trainees. Never was I once visited by the university despite being promised so. Sometimes it really feels like the career centre does not care at all.” “Help us through some difficulty when comes to applying for visa or applying for overseas internships.” Another statement was “Make sure the career department prepares a list of blacklisted companies to ensure students avoid applying for an internship with them.”

Recommendations

Whilst students clearly understand the benefits of an internship program and most have had positive experiences, there are a number of recommendations that can be made to ensure the success of an internship (work-based learning) program.

Recommendations for Universities

The first of these recommendations are for any institution offering programs involving work-based learning. One area that students identified as crucial to the success of the program was communication. More effective relationships between the university and host organisations need to be fostered by increasing the communication between the university and host organisations. A system should be devised whereby staff from the educational institution should visit internship sites on a regular basis. There should also be regular contact between the university and students during the internship to monitor any problems. One way this can be done at low cost is to set up an area where students can communicate with each other, as well as teaching staff, during the internship. This could be done by creating a discussion board on the institution's e-learning management system.

The second area that needs to be carefully considered is the design of the program. It is recommended that tertiary institutions utilise Kolb’s Experiential Learning Cycle adapted from Dewey’s Model of Learning as the base model on which to build
work-based learning programs. Institutions should ensure that all internship programs focus on cross-training and allow students the opportunity to shadow as many supervisors or managers as possible to ensure students receive the full benefit of the internship experience. Ensure students and employers have an understanding as to what is expected of them by drafting a comprehensive internship description (job description) explaining what is expected of all parties during the internship. This should be written in partnership with the host organisation to ensure the needs of the organisation, the university and the students are met. It is recommended to use Weber’s 7-step procedure to write the job description. Students should also undertake a structured training and development class prior to beginning their internship where information would be provided on what students should expect from the experience. This course should equip students with the necessary skills and understanding of professional behaviour in the workplace and further develop a range of graduate skills and attributes. This course should also provide students with an understanding of contemporary industry employer requirements and future employment trends within the industry. On completion of this course, students should possess skills required to competently market themselves to potential employers and to participate in the selection process for graduate positions in their chosen discipline. Students should also be employed in a variety of departments to ensure students gain maximum benefit from participating in the course. Other areas of concern for students include who they report to, their relationships with management and obtaining useful feedback. Therefore the program must have a reporting system whereby students primarily report to one manager within their internship employer as well as reporting on a regular basis to the internship program coordinator. To ensure a smooth relationship between the intern and the employer, a mentor system should be established whereby one senior staff member at each property participating in the program will provide assistance and guidance to interns. Finally there needs to be clear feedback mechanisms in place including a mid-program as well as end-of-program evaluation and feedback session.

**Recommendations for Internship Employers**

The next recommendations are intended for employers taking part in work-based learning programs. Students have commented on the fact that there was a lack of communication between themselves and the employer meaning that they did not feel welcome and they also felt sufficient training opportunities were not available to them. Therefore, the employer should provide increased access to management through regular meetings with department managers or supervisors so that students gain an understanding of how each department functions. The company should also ensure that each intern goes through a comprehensive induction session so that the
intern gets a clear picture of the company and understand their role and feel welcomed into the company. Finally, as mentioned previously, the employer should work in partnership with the university to prepare the internship description to ensure the needs of the organisation, the university and the students are met. This document must include cross-training as a focal point for the program and should indicate the training and development opportunities that will be offered to interns.

Recommendations for Future Students

The final set of recommendations is for students contemplating or undertaking an internship. The choice of organisation in which to undertake the internship is crucial, therefore the intern should choose the internship property carefully considering a number of factors such as location, best training systems, and the most opportunities for cross-training. Cross-training must be a major part of the program and students need to ensure they start it early in the internship. Students should also consider interning for a smaller company, where the opportunities for cross-training and management access may be enhanced. Whilst it would seem that these opportunities may be greater in a large establishment, this is quite often not the case, as larger organisations can be more bureaucratic making cross-training difficult. A final recommendation is that they need to have a positive attitude and be proactive to ensure they receive maximum benefit from the program and they should not rely on their employer or university to do everything for them.

Conclusion

This research has highlighted the importance of work-based learning in a higher education. This type of learning is of particular importance to tourism and hospitality education as often there is a disconnect between the courses universities offer and the needs (graduate skills and attributes) of industry (Wang, Ayres & Huyton, 2009; World Bank, 2007). By offering an opportunity for students to undertake a structured work-based learning program, encompassing challenging and demanding tasks, rather than basic, low-skilled, entry level tasks, students will feel a sense of responsibility and achievement. Rewarding students when they successfully complete tasks, will also result in students feeling valued and appreciated. Previous research has identified responsibility and feeling valued by the company as key characteristics of this generation of employee (Martin, 2005; Morton, 2002). If companies can offer students this type of learning experience, they are more likely to have a positive experience working in the industry, making it more likely that they will remain in the industry after graduation.
Limitations and Future Research

This study only focussed on the students views of the internship program. Obviously to gather a complete picture of the internship process, the other interested parties (industry and educational institutes) need to be considered. Future research will investigate the views of both of these parties.

References


Research Note

Empowering Women through Tourism: A Study of Kullu Valley

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*Himachal Pradesh University, India*

**Abstract:** This paper examines the issue of women empowerment through tourism in Himachal Pradesh, a predominantly rural state where tourism is a flourishing industry. The tourism industry cannot be visualised without women participating actively in the growth of the industry. The role of women in informal tourism settings such as running home-stay facilities, restaurants and shacks, crafts and handicrafts, handloom, small shops and street vending is significant in Himachal Pradesh. Women have gained tremendous importance since the advent of alternative tourism. General perceptions of the native population are that females play a passive and submissive role in tourism. Through this paper an attempt is made to understand female perceptions and to determine if tourism is actually leading towards women empowerment. Using stratified random sampling, 150 females were selected on convenience as well as judgement basis from the Kullu area of Himachal Pradesh, India. The selection of Kullu area was based on tourist arrivals; Kullu district of the Himachal Pradesh is amongst the top three tourist destinations in the state. While selecting the sample, care was taken to choose respondents that represented the entire population. An opinion survey was administered on the sample. Response to each statement was evaluated on a 3-point scale of “Agree”, “Disagree” or “Cannot Say” and each opinion and statement were assessed statistically using frequencies and percentages. Survey results indicate that tourism is actually leading towards empowering women.

**Keywords:** Alternative tourism, informal sector, local community, tourism, women empowerment


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**Women in Tourism**

Tourism has demonstrated its potential for creating jobs and encouraging income-generating activities to benefit local communities in destination areas. The tourism
sector definitely provides various entry points for women's employment and opportunities for creating self-employment in small and medium sized income generating activities, thus creating paths towards the elimination of poverty among women and local communities in developing countries.

Tourism, both international and domestic, is a booming industry worldwide that is growing at a rapid pace. It has emerged as a strong economic force. The upsurge in tourism has affected people's lives one way or other as tourism is a service industry that is people oriented. Women have also been contributing directly and indirectly in both the organised and unorganised tourism sectors. In fact, the tourism industry cannot be visualised without the active participation of women in its growth. The tourism industry is one of the major employers of women. It offers various opportunities for independent income generating activities while simultaneously affecting women's lives in destination communities.

In gender terms, the ILO reports (2001; 2007) that women account for 46% of workers in wage employment in tourism globally. However, expanding the definition to include catering and accommodation brings the proportion of female labour in tourism up to 90%. To quote the report:

“They [women] occupy the lower levels of the occupational structure in the tourism labour market, with few career development opportunities and low levels of remuneration (some estimates suggest that wages for women are up to 20% lower than those for men). The greater incidence of unemployment among women is attributed to their low skill levels and their low social status in many poor countries. They also tend to be the first affected when labour retrenchment occurs as a result of recession or adjustment to new technology. It should also be noted that the majority of workers in subcontracted, temporary, casual or part-time employment are women (ILO, 2001: 74).”

According to the Global Report on Women in Tourism (2010): “...tourism has the potential to be a vehicle for the empowerment of women in developing regions. Tourism can account for better economic opportunities and can prove to be a vehicle for upliftment of women than any other economic activity. Women in tourism are still underpaid, under-utilised, under-educated, and under-represented; but tourism offers pathways to success.” According to UNWTO/UN (2010) findings on women's role in tourism include:

1. Women make up a large proportion of the formal tourism workforce.
2. Women are well represented in service and clerical level jobs but poorly represented at professional levels.
3. Women in tourism are typically earning 10 to 15% less than their male counterparts.
4. The tourism sector has almost twice as many women employers as other sectors.
5. One in five tourism ministers worldwide are women.
6. A large amount of unpaid work is being carried out by women in family tourism businesses.

These UNWTO/UN (2010) findings do not present a very rosy picture of women empowerment through tourism. Based on these findings, it can be deduced that though tourism offers tremendous employment opportunities for women, they are mostly occupying clerical positions and not serving as professionals. They are hired to do menial jobs and are often less paid than their male counterparts.

A very strong argument in favour of tourism development is that it generates employment at different levels due to the wide range of services and products it requires. Tourism does provide a range of activities where women can participate and also creates opportunities for entrepreneurship development. Global data on numbers of women and men working in tourism-related professions suggest that the organised tourism sector is a particularly important sector where 46% of the workforce comprises women (in general, 30-40% of the workforce is women) (ILO, 2007). It appears that there has been a broad increase in the participation of women in the tourism industry at a global level.

The informal sector is the most direct source of income for local communities in tourism in the developing countries. In the developing world 60% of women (in non-agricultural work) work in the informal sector. Much of this is linked directly and indirectly to tourism. The role of women in informal tourism settings such as running home-stay facilities, restaurants and shacks, crafts and handicrafts, handloom, small shops and street vending is significant. But these roles and activities that women perform in tourism are treated as invisible or taken for granted.

Like other industries, in the tourism industry too, the typical ‘gender pyramid’ is prevalent - lower levels and occupations with limited career development opportunities being dominated by women and key managerial positions being dominated by men. In India too, women in the organised tourism sector are relegated to relatively low skills, low paying or stereotypical jobs like front-desk and reception, housekeeping, catering and laundry services. They face very high risks of sexual harassment and exploitation and are discouraged from forming unions or associations to consolidate their strength and influence. Proportionately, women earn less than men. Women feature significantly more in part time and/or temporary employment and are typically paid less than men for the same work done. The role that has been assigned to women is just the extension of the traditional roles they play in families and society, which is as a caretaker of the family and looking after their every need. The relative benefits of tourism development to women and men inevitably reflect socio cultural norms regarding gender relations and the sexual division of labour (Apostolopoulos & Sönmez, 2001; Long & Kindon, 1997; Scott, 1997). It has also been widely noted that women have been generally less able than men to access and benefit from tourism.
work and business (Apostolopoulos & Sönmez, 2001; Scott, 1997; Sinclair, 1997a; 1997b; Swain, 1995).

Tourism in Kullu Valley

Himachal Pradesh is a small hill state in India. The development of tourism in Himachal Pradesh began with the Second Five-Year Plan. Himachal Pradesh received about 15,089,406 tourists in the year 2011 (Tourism and Civil Aviation Department, Himachal Pradesh, 2011). Of this, 14,604,888 were domestic tourists and, about 484,518 were foreign tourists from different parts of the world. Tourism is now a booming industry in Himachal Pradesh. The state is blessed with bounties of natural beauty, offering a cool and comfortable climate, a serene environment, fascinating customs, fairs and festivals and breathtaking thrills of adventure. Himachal Pradesh has 12 districts. High priority has been accorded by the State Government to the tourism industry, which has also emerged as a major sector for the development of the economy of the state. The Himachal government has also developed appropriate infrastructure for the growth of tourism in new areas where the private sector may be reluctant to undertake such activities initially. A number of new schemes have been initiated to boost Nature, Adventure, Historic, Religious and Rural tourism. ‘Home Stay’ is another scheme which has been initiated to promote rural tourism in the State. As a result of high profile media attention, a significant rise has been noticed in tourist numbers during the last few years. The contribution of the native community in general and women in particular is quite significant in these alternative forms of tourism in Himachal Pradesh.

Various steps have been taken by the authorities to promote alternative forms of tourism, which would not burden the fragile eco-system of the state. Rural tourism and community tourism are being promoted in the state providing tremendous opportunities not only for the rural people in general but also providing for sustainable tourism growth. This particular type of tourism is proving to be beneficial for the women of these areas and it has proved to be a provider of opportunities for the rural women thereby leading to women empowerment. Rural tourism is instrumental in empowering rural women.

Objectives, Aims and Scope

Himachal Pradesh is a small hill state in India which is predominantly rural. The population of Himachal is 6,856,509 with almost 90% residing in the rural areas Females constitute half the population with 3,382,617 with males being slightly more with 3,473,892 (Himachal Pradesh Population Census, 2011). Though the contribution of women is tremendous in the tourism sector in Himachal, much of their work is
indirect and informal in nature. Therefore the main objective of this paper is to determine whether tourism has truly empowered the women in the State.

The area of Kullu-Manali has been deliberately chosen because the district received the second highest number of domestic tourists in Himachal after Shimla and the highest number of foreign tourists followed by Shimla in the year 2011. Satellite areas around the district are rural and these places are frequented by tourists.

Table 1. *Domestic and international tourist arrivals in Himachal Pradesh*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Tourist arrivals (2011) in top two tourist districts of Himachal Pradesh</th>
<th>Total arrivals in 2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indians</td>
<td>Foreigners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shimla</td>
<td>2,818,270</td>
<td>134,167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kullu</td>
<td>2,659,527</td>
<td>138,488</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Tourism and Civil Aviation Department, Himachal Pradesh*

**Literature Review**

There is a dearth of literature on women empowerment through tourism. Most of the authors suggest that there is a definite relationship between women empowerment and tourism in general. Ateljevic & Peeters (2009) explain the nexus between women empowerment entrepreneurship and tourism, emphasising that it is a process of social innovation.

**Understanding Women Empowerment**

It is generally noted that empowerment is a process by which individuals, organisations and communities gain mastery over their own lives. Empowerment is self-actualisation of competencies which results in opportunities (Rappaport, 1984 cited in Sofield, 2003). Empowerment is always discussed within the topic of community development especially in ecotourism literature (Scheyvens, 1999; 2000; Zeppel, 2006). Scheyvens (1999) designed an empowerment framework to analyse the impacts of ecotourism ventures on local communities which consists of four levels of empowerment: economic, psychological, social and political. She emphasised the need for involving local communities in the development of tourism in their particular areas.

Empowerment has been defined as infusing people with power (Narayan, 2002) World Development Report, 2002; 2000), that is, providing access to resources, and
expanding an individual’s power to make decisions, consequently resulting in greater autonomy (Kishore & Subaiya, 2008; Jejeeb hoy, 1995).

Empowerment has come to denote women’s increased control over their own lives, bodies, and environments. Women’s empowerment, emphasis is often placed on women’s decision-making roles, their economic self-reliance, and their legal rights to equal treatment, inheritance and protection against all forms of discrimination, in addition to the elimination of barriers to access resources such as education and information (Kishore, 2008).

Women’s empowerment can be seen as a process in which the following elements will be considered: awareness/consciousness, choice/alternatives, resources, voice, agency and participation. This dimension of women’s empowerment is linked to enhancing women’s ability to make choices over the areas in their lives that matter to them, both the strategic life choices that Kabeer (1999) discusses and to choices related to daily life (Charmes & Wieringa, 2003).

Batliwala (1993: 4-5) surveyed organisations working for women’s empowerment in South Asia in the early 1990s to stimulate discussion and improve programming. She suggests that “the process of challenging existing power relations, and of gaining greater control over the sources of power, may be termed empowerment.” According to Batliwala “the goals of women’s empowerment are to challenge patriarchal ideology; to transform the structures and institutions that reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and social inequality;… and to enable poor women to gain access to, and control of, both material and informational resources” (1994: 130). She focuses on gender while recognising and attempting to address multiple discriminations. Batliwala recommends a comprehensive and integrated approach whereby women address their own objectives in the domestic and public spheres, and take collective and mass action.

Kabeer defines empowerment as “the expansion in people’s ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them” (1999a: 437). Kabeer recognises that the choices open to women are often limited compared to men of the same community – a manifestation of gender inequality – and that women can internalise their lesser status in society (2001: 24). The critical factor is whether the choices that people are making are based on their own preferences and priorities, or limitations in their options. To show a link between individual choice and wider social change, Kabeer suggests evaluating the consequences of choices “in terms of their transformative significance, the extent to which the choices made have the potential for challenging and destabilising social inequalities and the extent to which they merely reproduce these inequalities” (2001: 26).

Rowlands does not clearly define empowerment, other than to say that “women’s empowerment… encompasses women moving into positions of ‘power over’, but… also embraces their movement into ‘power to, with and from within’ – generative
rather than controlling power” (1998: 15). ‘Empowerment in close relationships’ with husbands, parents and mothers-in-law, “is the area of change that comes hardest; it is the place where the individual women is ‘up against it on her own’, and where positive and negative aspects of her life tend to be most closely intertwined” (Rowlands 1998: 23).

**Understanding Gender and Tourism**

A well established tradition of work on gender and tourism has addressed a broad range of issues, case studies and approaches. Scholars within tourism studies have long argued that tourism is a highly gendered industry (Kinnaird, Kothari & Hall 1994; Kinnaird & Hall 1996). Kinnaird & Hall (1996: 100) argue “Unless we understand the gendered complexities of tourism, and the power relations they involve, then we fail to recognise the reinforcement and construction of new power relations that are emerging out of tourism processes. From the values and activities of the transnational tourist operator to the differential experiences of individuals participating as either hosts or guests, all parts of the tourism experience are influenced by our collective understanding of the social construction of gender.”

One such dynamic is the gendered characteristics of tourism work. Feminist research has identified a clear segmentation of men’s and women’s work in tourism. This shows how the majority of women’s work is concentrated in seasonal, part time and low paid activities such as retail, hospitality and cleaning (Sinclair, 1997a; Chant, 1997). Gender refers to socially constructed roles and behaviours of men and women in which gender relations are characterised by unequal power and norms that determine an unequal distribution, of resources, work, decision making, political power, and the entitlement of rights and obligations in both the private and public spheres (Thierry, 2007). Gender is a system of cultural identities and social relationships between females and males, It is a significant variable in any study of human relations that is distinct from biological differences between sexes (Swain, 1995). Most tourism studies done in relation to gender tend to touch upon gender difference from the perspective of women tourists, which cover a wide range of issues such as perception, motivation, empowerment etc. Besides, some existing tourism research regarding gender cover mostly the issue of employment with its relations to gender segmentation and income inequalities (Breathnach, 1994; Jordan, 1997; Munoz-Bullon, 2009) and gender exploitation in tourism or the sex industry. Research has also been carried out on gender analysis in the tourism industry, for example Kinnaird et al. (1994) but the impacts of tourism and their potential to enhance the community lives are rarely studied from the gender perspective.

One of the earliest published collections of gender in tourism studies was an edited volume by Kinnaird et al.(1996) attempting to stimulate debate on the gendered
nature of tourism-related activities and processes, in the context when social construction of tourism was lacking a gendered component in the literature. The authors focus on three principle issues which are crucial to an understanding of gender in tourism (Kinnaird et al., 1994). First, tourism is a process which is constructed from gendered societies and therefore all aspects of tourism-related development and activity embody gender relations. Second, gender relations over time inform and are informed by the interconnected economic, political, social, cultural and environmental spheres of any society engaged in tourism development. Third, power and control are articulated through race, class, and gender relations in tourism practices.

Research Questions

Review of literature has suggested that gender related issues are crucial in the tourism industry as there is a need to understand the gendered nature of tourism. It has been suggested by various authors that though tourism empowers women, a great deal of gender segmentation and income inequalities exist in the tourism industry. Focussing on these issues, the following research questions have been framed for this research paper

1. Does tourism contribute towards upliftment of women in Kullu region by making them self-reliant?
2. Do women in Kullu have a high confidence level because of tourism?
3. Does tourism present immense opportunities for employment of women (formal or informal) and income-generation in their native area, setting the foundations for poverty reduction and local economic development?

Methods

This study presents the results of a study of 150 women of Kullu valley of Himachal Pradesh who are directly or indirectly involved in the tourism industry. The paper explores the perceived impacts of tourism on their livelihood, sustenance and status in society. The women constitute approximately 85% of the workforce indirectly or directly involved in tourism in the Kullu valley. The survey was conducted in different villages of Kullu and Manali and Bhunter region. Using stratified random sampling, 150 females (n=150) were randomly selected based on convenience and judgement from Kullu, Manali and Bhunter and neighboring villages for the interview. The final sample consisted of 50 respondents each from the destinations of Kullu, Manali and Bhunter areas of Himachal Pradesh. All the respondents were local residents of the study area. An opinion survey was administered on the sample. The survey consisted of ‘six opinion statements’ to gauge the response of the local female population on tourism as an instrument of women empowerment. Response to each statement was
evaluated on a three point-scale of ‘Agree’, ‘Disagree’ or ‘Cannot Say’ and opinions were assessed through statistics using frequency and percentage of respondents on each statement.

The socio-demographic profile of the respondents revealed that the majority of women working in the tourism sector were married and were in the age group of 31-50. The majority were educated up to matriculation level. Their household income per month was also good, with the income of the majority of the respondents being in the range of 10,001 to 20,000 Rs per month (Table 2).

Table 2.
Socio-demographic profile of women working in the tourism sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Above 61</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>Unmarried</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Widowed/Separated/Single</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational qualifications</td>
<td>Primary/uneducated</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Matriculation</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>54.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduation</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Higher Education/Post</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduate/Professional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household income</td>
<td>Up to 5000 Rp</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5001-10000 Rp</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10001-20000 Rp</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20001 and above Rp</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Findings and Discussion

Perceptions of Respondents on Tourism Empowering Women

Tourism has definitely contributed towards women empowerment in the Kullu valley of Himachal Pradesh. More than 59% of women agreed with the statement that tourism has uplifted their social status. Tourism has proved to be a source of employment for the women folk of Kullu Valley of Himachal. More than 57% stated that they have become financially independent because of tourism. More than
53% of the native women agreed with the statement that working in the tourism sector has increased their self-confidence. They were also of the opinion that working in the tourism sector and interacting with the foreigners had definitely given a boost to their self-confidence. Himachal Pradesh is a predominantly rural state and the villages of Kullu district which are also rural offer much potential for alternative tourism. There is no dearth of alternative accommodation like homestays etc. in these places. According to the official website of Himachal Tourism Department, the number of registered homestays in Kullu district is 434. These homestay units are operated by the native population of the area. The homestay units which are managed by native women, provide opportunities to these women to work and interact with the tourists, More than 58% of women are in agreement with the statement that these alternative forms of tourism such as homestays provide more opportunities for the native women. Also, 66% of the women agreed to the statement that the majority of women work in the informal or unorganised tourism sector. More than 81% of the sample agreed with the statement that the majority of the workforce engaged in the making of handicrafts in Kullu are women (Table 3).

Table 3.
Tourism contributing towards women empowerment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Opinion Statements</th>
<th>Responses (n=150)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tourism has uplifted the social status of women in my area. (RQ1)</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>59.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I have become financially independent due to tourism. (RQ1)</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>57.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>My confidence has increased because of my working in the tourism sector. (RQ2)</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>53.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Alternative forms of tourism like rural tourism etc. in my area employ more women as compared to men. (RQ3)</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Most of the women are working in the unorganised sector or informal sector in my area. (RQ3)</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>In my area, the majority of workforce engaged in the handicrafts industry is women (RQ3)</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>81.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion

It is evident from the study that tourism has uplifted the social status of women in Kullu district of Himachal Pradesh by providing them employment. Tourism leads towards empowerment and economic upliftment of women. As in any other developing country, decision making has been a taboo for the women folk in India but the advent of tourism has changed the scenario in Kullu valley of Himachal Pradesh. Working in the tourism industry has made women in the area more confident and financially independent. Tourism has employed more women in the unorganised sector in the area and it can be seen that women have a definite role to play as far as tourism industry is concerned. There is no denying their importance in this industry. The handicraft industry forms an integral part of tourism and the women of Kullu have contributed tremendously towards the growth of this cottage industry as they make these products. Alternative tourism like rural tourism and agri-tourism cannot be visualised without women playing a role. In Kullu district, the majority of the workforce engaged in the alternative tourism is women and their responses indicate that women also play a role in promoting alternative tourism. It is the active participation of women that has led to the success of the homestays in Kullu.

Tourism has a positive impact on the status of women of Kullu area of Himachal Pradesh. Though women have benefitted from the tourism industry, there is a dire need to attach more significance to their contribution in this industry. Alternate tourism benefits women more than the traditional forms of tourism in the study area but it is also felt the women in the tourism industry take a back seat when it comes to occupying the senior positions. Through the survey conducted in the study area, it has been found that the majority of the women are employed in the informal or unorganised sector. Tourism has a great potential for women, provided a conducive environment is created for them. The benefits of tourism need to be dispersed in a more egalitarian manner so that the majority of the native women population benefit directly from it. Women empowerment is possible only by creating pro-women environment and policies. More avenues for women should be created in the tourism industry by offering special incentives to women entrepreneurs. The handicraft industry of the study area also offers great potential for women empowerment. This industry could also be promoted on a big scale. The need to acknowledge the important economic contribution of women and ensure their access to credit and capacity building is critical.

References

Women as producers and consumers of tourism in developing regions (pp.3-17). Westport, CT: Praeger.


New York: Routledge Press  
by John T. Mgonja, Clemson University, USA

Provision of high quality service to customers is the central goal that all service businesses struggle to accomplish from time to time. The ability of a service provider to deliver high quality service is considered an essential strategy for success and survival in today’s competition. Service encounter is considered to be one of the factors influencing customer perceptions of service quality, satisfaction and consequently loyalty. Numerous studies indicate that, in general, the hospitality industry is one of the sectors, with a relatively high level of customer contact. The higher the level of customer contacts, the more numerous and longer the service encounters between customers and frontline service employees. Understanding the encounter theory and its application is therefore considered to be fundamental for service providers.

The book is built on the premise that service delivery is a complex undertaking as it involves social exchange between service providers and consumers (participants) who in most cases have never met before. How these participants communicate both verbally and non-verbally in the process of social exchange is of particular importance in the hospitality industry. The social exchange process reflects how individuals feel about a relationship with another person as determined by their perceptions of the balance between what they put into the relationship (e.g. money, time) and what they get out of it (e.g. good service). In travel and tourism, the exchange process is more intricate due to the time factor. Time is considered to be a critical issue in tourism since tourists stay in a particular destination for a relatively short time before going to another destination.

The book consists of 9 chapters and an index. The first chapter is preceded by an introduction that provides a comprehensive overview of the book. The first chapter introduces the attribution theory and explains its rationale as a model suitable to examine the customer-provider relationship. Chapter two focusses on service providers’ roles and discusses how those roles are influenced by the social situation. The chapter firmly differentiates between an interactive encounter and a relational service situation. Chapter three describes the importance of market segmentation in
service delivery. This chapter also examines and discusses the relationship between quality standards and customer expectations. Chapter four explores the manager’s role from a social interaction perspective. It discusses and enumerates the types of interactive roles a manager must try to master. The last part of this chapter focuses on the importance of front line employees in maintaining customer satisfaction and loyalty. Chapter five focuses on how to properly position the travel provider in the mind of the consumer. The chapter pays special attention to the question of employee empowerment and in managing accurate and useful customer information. Chapter six deals with how hospitality firms can simultaneously appeal to their frontline service providers and to travelers. It also focuses on the importance of having a proper service failure recovery system. Chapter seven describes how service providers should react, project, and promote a positive posture or attitude when interacting with the customers. The chapter describes how the use of verbal and non-verbal communication during service provision can enhance or destroy the image of the service provider. Chapter eight articulates issues that are not only important in ensuring customer satisfaction but are also important for achieving a more complete state of customer loyalty. In this chapter, the authors argue that firms must possess an understanding of which service-related amenities customers value the most and what truly drives their loyalty. The last chapter in this book focuses on the techniques that a firm can use to enhance employee selection process. It also explores the use of technology to enhance service provision.

On the content of the book, authors apply the encounter theory to explain the nature of interaction in the hospitality industry. Similarly, authors consistently insist on the importance of frontline service providers to understand the concept of cultural differences as one of the important keys in providing high quality services (e.g. p. 41, 86, 97, 123 and 139). In supporting this argument, the authors contend that in Western cultures such as American and Western European, people are more individualistic in character and thus more independent whereas in Eastern cultures such as the Chinese people exhibit a more collective behaviour and thus are more interdependent. This implies that people from different cultures may have different service requirements and therefore, service providers need to pay attention to cultural differences during service provision. Similarly, the authors consistently insist on employee empowerment as one of the critical issue in service quality, customer satisfaction and loyalty (e.g. p. 16, 30, 62, 77, 86, 93, 165). Employee empowerment is viewed as an important factor in eliciting and facilitating intrinsic motivation which positively contributes to service delivery. The authors argue that in most cases tourists interact with only the frontline employees and not the management. Therefore, promotion of frontline employees’ performance and self-esteem through empowerment is highly important in service provision. The authors make their case that in order to achieve a high level
of customer satisfaction and loyalty, service providers, particularly employers, should consider their employees as internal customers if they want their employees to deliver high quality services to their external customers (e.g. p. 64, 81 and 104).

The authors have considerable experience in marketing, hospitality and tourism management. They have published widely on these topics in various books and journals and have successfully used their experience to substantiate their arguments. Throughout the book, the authors provide a wide range of examples from empirical studies to support their arguments. Similarly, concepts and arguments are presented from a well-integrated perspective. The authors adequately provide appropriate linkages among the chapters and make use of examples, concepts and theories from previous chapters to avoid repetition in subsequent chapters. Additionally, authors provide useful definitions of important terms or theories and make clear distinctions among related concepts (e.g. in ch. 1 p. 5 on *categorical symbols* and *self-expressive symbols* and p. 8 on *gestures and postures body language*).

However, there are a few criticisms regarding the book. On p. 108, the authors recognise the importance of firms to view customer complaints as an opportunity to build customer loyalty. Yet, they fail to describe the appropriate procedures through which such complaints should be handled; this is perhaps the major drawback of this book. Similarly, the authors fail to address the question of seasonality in the hospitality industry and how service providers should address it. The annual peaking of tourism activities during a few hectic weeks or even months can cause inefficiencies within the industry and can place a great deal of pressure on the physical and social resources of a destination.

In conclusion, the book is an exciting and outstanding one, in that it explains in detail what service providers are supposed to do in order to enhance their role. The book is unique in its approach. It provides many theories and shows how these theories can guide service providers' practices. Overall, the authors are commended for their work. Tourism scholars, students, researchers and practitioners will highly appreciate this book.
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