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EDITORIAL

Tourism has always been characterized by constant need for innovation - smart technologies transform tourism management and marketing practices and concepts in a way where “tourism markets and actors both shape and are shaped by technology” (Sigala, 2018:153). All present and future technologies are characterized by the interconnected concepts of connectivity, data and smartness with the aim of forming an ecosystem which is proactive, reactive and able to take autonomous pre-emptive actions (Sigala, 2018).

The ultimate goal is to increase competitiveness and improve business practices; revolutionize tourist experience creation; produce economic, social and environmental value for all (Fyall, 2011); and enhance quality of life of all tourist actors (Wang et al., 2013; Gretzel et al., 2015).

In Chapter 1, “What drive customers to spread the word and be loyal? Factors influencing e-loyalty and eWOM to OTA’s websites” by Chatzopoulou Evi and Xanthopoulou Panagiota, a model is developed explaining how the consumers’ digital loyalty and Word of Mouth (WOM) of online travel agencies is formed. The literature review leads us to consider the users’ perceived website quality, e-perceived value, e-satisfaction, e-trust and switching barriers factors of website as main antecedents of the e-loyalty and e-WOM. In order to accomplish the study’s objectives, a model has been constructed and estimated using Partial Least Squares (PLS). Results show that e-satisfaction, e-trust, e-value and switching barriers have a direct effect on e-WOM and e-satisfaction, website quality and switching barriers have a direct effect on e-loyalty. Also, website quality creates e-WOM with e-satisfaction as a mediator; and e-trust creates e-loyalty as moderator by switching barriers. The developed model helps improve the explanation of e-loyalty and e-WOM from consumer in an online tourism and hospitality industry environment.

Enhancement of local touristic societies and tourists’ experiences with application of smart technologies is the topic of the third paper as illustrated by Vicky Katsoni and Evi Dougali. The authors highlight the necessity of developing an intelligent platform for gathering and distributing information within a destination. Various benefits seem to be emerging in local tourism communities both in the micro and in the macroeconomic level.

In Chapter 3, “Moroccan domestic tourism: prioritization as an inevitable outcome of coronavirus” El Hafid Mohamed and Sair Aziz try to evaluate the travel opportunities for domestic tourism and figure out how far Covid-19 influences Moroccan travelers. In addition, this study was a good opportunity to discover the preferences of Moroccans and assess their satisfaction regarding the quality of services. Indeed, we targeted to evaluate the impact of the pandemic on tourism operators (Hotels, restaurants, tour operators, travel agencies etc.) as well. After having stripped down the results obtained from the qualitative study, it is indisputable that there is a unanimity on the interest

in the development of domestic tourism as a solution to revive the tourist activity which is heavily impacted by the lockdown.

References

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