

CONFERENCE REVIEW

21st biennial international scientific congress “TOURISM AND HOTEL INDUSTRY 2012”

The Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management in Opatija, University of Rijeka, organized the 21st biennial international scientific congress "Tourism and Hotel Industry 2012" from May 3-5, 2012 in the hotel "Ambasador" in Opatija.

This congress dates back to 1972, when the 1st Symposium named HOTEL HOUSE was organized. It continued to be called this way until 1990, when it changed its name to International Congress HOTEL HOUSE, and finally in 2000 it changed its name once more to International Scientific Congress "Tourism and Hotel Industry", as it is also called today.

Apart from the primary goal of the congress, which is to connect Croatian and international scientists and practitioners, facilitate knowledge and experience exchange, as well as present the results of newest research in the field of management in tourism and hospitality, this year's congress also aimed at detecting and scientifically examining new, current trends in the field of tourism and hospitality management.

For this reason scientists from Croatia and other parts of Europe were invited to direct their research towards current topics, of which the following can be singled out:

- Challenges for future tourism
- Croatian tourism in the European Union
- Tourism in the Croatian economy
- Croatian and EU tourism / Comparative business conditions
- Quality and business excellence in the hotel industry
- Green accounting and eco-management in the hotel industry
- ICT and information systems of hotels and tourist destinations
- Planning and control of hotel business
- Managing processes of the modern hotel offer
- Business intelligence in the tourism and hospitality industry
- Eco-tourism destinations and eco-hotels: preconditions and perspectives
- Public-private partnership in the development of tourist destinations
- Destination management organization (DMO); destination management company (DMC); destination management systems (DMS)
- Preconditions and possibilities of knowledge management in tourism
- Life-long learning and personnel development in the hotel industry

The congress organizers received 89 submissions (abstracts) in total, but after the reviewing process was finished 67 papers were accepted and 22 papers (submissions) were rejected.

A total of 36 reviewers from all over Europe participated in the reviewing process, and out of the 67 accepted papers:

- 6 were categorized as "original scientific paper";
- 19 as "preliminary communication";
- 34 as "professional paper" and
- 8 as "conference paper".

By examining the national representation according to country of origin, out of the total number of papers, 42 papers were submitted by Croatian authors, 6 by Rumanian authors, 5 from FYR Macedonia and Serbia each, 2 papers from Bulgaria, Montenegro and Poland respectively and 1 paper from Slovenia, as well as 1 from Italy and 1 from Russia.

If we look at the subject area that was presented in the papers, the majority focused on the wider area of tourism (34), followed by papers from the hospitality domain (hospitality and restaurant business – 15 papers), public-private partnerships, information and communication technology, marketing, human resources management in tourism and hospitality, etc.

The international programme board divided this year's congress into four large sessions, so that apart from the introductory plenary sessions which were held by invited keynote speakers, the following three interactive workshops were held:

- A) «Hotel Management»,
- B) «Tourism Management and Sustainable Development» and
- C) «Human Resources in the Tourism and Hospitality Industry».

The working section of the congress began with the following invited speakers giving introductory plenary lectures:

1. Kristian Šustar, *President of the Croatian Hospitality Employers' Association*, THE CONTEMPORARY DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN CROATIA
2. Marko Perić, *Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management Opatija, University of Rijeka, Croatia*, PROJECT MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS: REMODELLING SACRAL OBJECTS FOR TOURISM PURPOSES
3. Mario Plenković, *Faculty of Tourism Brežice, University of Maribor, Slovenia*, NEW MODELS OF CRISIS COMMUNICATION IN TOURISM MANAGEMENT
4. Monica Rosciano, *University of Naples Parthenope, Italia*, A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ITALY'S AND CROATIA'S INBOUND TOURISM STATISTICS
5. Dobrica Jovičić, *University of Belgrade, Serbia*, ETHICAL BASES OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

The official languages of the congress were English and Croatian, moreover, the possibility of simultaneous translation was also offered for the duration of the congress.

Conference proceeding "Tourism and Hospitality Industry" is cited in:

- the Journal of Economic Literature and
- the American Economic Association online publications (e-JEL, JEL i EconLit).

Vlado Galičić, PhD, Associate Professor

University of Rijeka
Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Opatija
Primorska 42, P.O. Box 97, 51410 Opatija, Croatia
E-mail: vladog@fthm.hr

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8th international scientific conference “ MANAGEMENT IN THE FUNCTION OF INCREASING THE TOURISM CONSUMPTION ”

The 8th international scientific conference titled “*Management in the Function of Increasing the Tourism Consumption*” was held on 3rd May 2012 in Opatija. Since 1998 a team of researchers has been investigating the field of tourism consumption within the same named mentioned project.

Every two years a biennial scientific conference is held where participants, scientists and entrepreneurs present their ideas and knowledge gained referring to the mentioned topic of tourist consumption. Up to now the papers related to the project and presented at the previous conferences have been published in the conference proceedings.

Each of the conferences held had its contemporary topic and this year the topic was “*Marketing Presentation of Accommodation and Destination Facilities Attracts Tourists and Encourages Consumption*”.

The main aim of the project “Marketing Presentation of Accommodation and Destination Facilities Attracts Tourists and Encourages Consumption” is to present the results of research on this topic and to put forward measures and activities aimed at enhancing tourism consumption.

Hence, this year, conference participants focused on the following topics:

- Selection and research of demand on the target market
- Designing the offer of catering and commercial facilities for the target market
- Providing service quality
- Defining terms for marketing goods and services
- Promotion of goods and services through marketing channels
- Critical analysis of the tourist consumption and comparison with the competition
- Impact of consumption on tourist offer
- Management role in organization and development of the tourist offer.

By examining the national representation according to country of origin, out of the total number of papers, 24 papers were submitted by Croatian authors, 3 papers from Poland, 5 by Romanian authors, 2 from Serbia, 2 from Slovenia and 1 from Germany. Papers with positive reviews will be published in the conference proceedings.

The conference began with the Dean's opening address and a keynote speech by Franjo Radišić, PhD, Prof Emeritus, Chair of the Organizing Committee, followed by plenary presentations by professors from the Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Opatija:

1. Prof. Zdenko Cerović, PhD, *MANAGEMENT – CREATOR OF THE TOURIST OFFER*
2. Prof. Dragan Magaš, PhD, *PARTNERSHIP IN SHAPING AND PRESENTING DESTINATION OFFER*
3. Prof. Nadia Pavia, PhD, *ORGANIZABILITY IN THE PRESENTATION OF THE TOURIST OFFER*
4. Prof. Slobodan Ivanović, PhD, *PRESENTATION OF THE OFFER ON AUTHENTIC FOOD AND DRINKS*

The ensuing debate justified the reason for organizing this conference. To enable students, managers and entrepreneurs in tourism to learn about the results of research and the proposals put forward to help increase tourism consumption, the conference proceedings will be submitted to scientific, educational and business organizations in the field of tourism. In this way, persons in charge will be encouraged to dedicate ever more attention to designing offerings that will result in greater tourism consumption.

Ljubica Pilepić, PhD, Assistant Professor
University of Rijeka
Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Opatija
Primorska 42, P.O. Box 97, 51410 Opatija, Croatia
E-mail: ljubicap@fthm.hr

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1st international conference “FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND TOURISM”

Good communication skills are one of the key qualifications of tourism employees. They are based on the knowledge of foreign languages, what makes foreign language instruction one of the most important subject areas during the education of future tourism workers.

Which are the most important languages in tourism, how to teach them, how to develop the curriculum and teaching materials, how to motivate students to learn foreign languages, what are the main features of the language of tourism, ... ?

The 1st international conference “Foreign Languages and Tourism”, which was held from May 04 - 05, 2012 at the hotel Ambassador in Opatija, aimed at providing answers to these and many other questions related to this topic. The conference was organized by the Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management Opatija (Croatia), the University of Applied Sciences Burgenland (Austria) and the Faculty of Tourism Studies Portorož (Slovenia). Therefore the official languages of the conference included English, German, Italian, Slovenian and Croatian.

The main objective of the conference was to bring together scientists and practitioners in order to create a forum for knowledge exchange and to present the latest achievements in the field of foreign languages for tourism. The Organizing Committee accepted 21 manuscripts all of which were double-blind reviewed and published in the Conference Proceedings. The diversity of the conference participants is also mirrored in the multilingual nature of their submissions – ten papers were written in German, seven in English, four in Croatian and one in Italian.

The conference began with several presentations dealing with various issues regarding the importance of good foreign language skills in tourism. Communicative competence in several foreign languages is the key competence of tourism employees and represents an important precondition for achieving overall guest satisfaction. The structure of tourists in Croatia according to their country of origin indicates that German-speaking tourists constitute the largest percentage when compared to other nationalities. Based upon this, German ought to be the most important foreign language not only in the tourism industry, but also in educational institutions. However, data about foreign language teaching in various educational institutions indicate that the needs of this increasingly important sector of the economy are not met and that the instruction of German is largely neglected.

The conference continued with presentations focusing on intercultural communication in tourism, which pointed out that in order to understand people from other cultures, one needs to have not just linguistic, but intercultural knowledge as well. Language education is a good basis for the acquisition of intercultural competences since language learning is a cultural encounter of its own sort.

The majority of the presentations dealt with the features of the language of tourism, which constitutes a very special type of communication that combines different components from everyday language with elements belonging to specialized tourism terminology. Moreover, its own lexical, morphosyntactic and textual features including various levels of specialization make it a language for special purposes.

Another area touched upon by the conference was the role of language in tourism promotion and marketing. An analysis of advertizing texts showed that advertising in tourism does not use all the linguistic means characteristic for advertising itself. What is especially frequent is the use of adjectives in order to stress the quality of the destination and in order to attract more tourists. Furthermore, certain verbs are also often used in order to entice potential customers to take a certain course of action.

Lastly, several presentations related to foreign language learning in tourism pointed out the role of motivation and the importance of various extracurricular activities outside the language classroom. Unfortunately, in spite of a significant presence of foreign languages in tourism schools, the foreign language skills of tourism graduates do not satisfy the needs of the tourist industry. The answer would, therefore, be to put more emphasis on the communicative orientation of language teaching.

The closing section of the conference was reserved as an open platform for those participants who wanted to share and present their new books or teaching materials to other colleagues, which proved to be a very pleasant and rewarding conclusion of the day's events.

Since this first edition of the "Foreign Languages and Tourism" conference resounded very well among all those involved and was considered to be a highly successful and useful experience by all participants, the Organization Committee has decided to organize the event on a biannual basis. The 2nd international conference "Foreign Languages and Tourism" will be hosted by the Faculty of Tourism Studies Portorož (Slovenia) in May, 2014 and it will take place at the Hotel Park in Portorož.

Nevenka Blažević, PhD, Associate Professor
University of Rijeka
Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Opatija
Primorska 42, P.O. Box 97, 51410 Opatija, Croatia
E-mail: nevenkab@fthm.hr

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4th Advances in Tourism Marketing Conference (ATMC 2011)

Special Issue of the International Journal of Hospitality and Tourism (IJOHAT)

Introduction

In early September 2011 (6th – 8th) the 4th Advances in Tourism Marketing Conference (ATMC 2011) was taking place in Maribor, Slovenia (EU). Following the success of the previous three conferences in Mugla (Turkey, 2005), Valencia (Spain, 2007) and Bournemouth (UK, 2009), this conference never attempted to become one of the huge conferences boasting with hundreds of papers to be presented – it was much more a boutique conference of stunningly high quality, which has resulted in nominating six conference papers with outstanding quality.

This 4th ATMC conference, entitled: “**Transforming Experiences – Tourism Marketing from both Sides of the Counter**” was aiming to explore, analyse, and evaluate the co-creation of experiences, that is, the involvement of tourism operators and how tourists involve themselves in their own production of experiences. The multidisciplinary tourism marketing conference has brought together leading academic researchers, policy makers and practitioners. It provided a forum for ‘cross-fertilising’ discussion and dissemination of the latest themes and topics related to the tourism experience economy. The audience was very engaged, and the scientists were happy to have had enough time for discussions after each presentation. All sessions were intensively visited, no people sitting on the sunny terrace outside the stunning conference venue except during the coffee breaks – this too can be seen as proof of the superb quality of the papers presented and the discussions that followed.

Conference Aim

Tourism experiences are no longer just provider-generated but co-produced, often social events that occur in communities and subcultures. After the long-awaited ‘death’ of SERVQUAL (Vargo and Lusch, 2004; 2008) the challenge for tourism marketers is the renewed analysis, definition and discussion of tourism services and experiences.

For the conceptualisation of tourism experiences, this year’s theme took its lead and inspiration from **Consumer Culture Theory (CCT)**; Arnould and Thompson, 2005) and the **Service Dominant Logic (SDL)**; Vargo and Lusch, 2004). CCT highlights that consumption is a socially and (sub)culturally determined practice, while SDL takes its lead from the co-productive processes involved in services. Here particularly, skills and knowledge feature in the creation of value. **Both theories form a new lens for innovative approaches and new insights into resources and activities on both sides of the counter.**

The **transformation of tourists from ‘passive audiences’ to ‘active players’** (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2000; Prahalad, 2004) is facilitated by the digital environment. It also resonates with **new thinking on consumer-driven value co-creation**. Attaching tourists emotionally to

the value propositions offered at destinations (Bagozzi et al., 1999) requires the consideration of the consumption situation including the feeling and thinking tourist (Chou, 2009). Both, the **Service Dominant Logic and the Nordic School of Services** around Groenroos (2006) and Gummesson (1997) urge tourism marketers to re-evaluate their resources, their approach and understanding of tourists as co-creative customers. CCT adds the socio-cultural perspective.

Marketing management thereby shifts its dominant logic of marketing from a goods-centric logic to a service centric logic. A service-centered view identifies operant resources, especially higher-order, core competences, as the key to obtaining competitive advantage (Vargo and Lusch 2004). Tourism marketers are thus challenged to review the processes on both sides of the counter:

- Firstly, they need to revise their understanding of their role and resources in the co-creative process they engage in with the tourist when co-producing experiential benefits.
- Secondly, and according to the dimensions of CCT, tourism marketers need a firm grasp on how tourists, (1) create meaning and identity (2), create their own tourism cultures, (3) are influenced by institutional structures that pattern consumption, and (4) generate and employ interpretive strategies to deal with mass-mediated normative messages.

With this in mind, and **focusing on the tourist experience**, questions guiding the inspiration of conference visitors were; what are the implications for the definition and creation of customer value? How is the transformational process of 'recreation' to be conceptualised and measured, including the implications for loyalty, word-of-mouth and satisfaction formation? What is the role of the new social media, of family, peers and other tourists in this co-production? What is it actually that is creative when tourist and provider meet?

Conversely, there is the **business on the other side of the counter**. What are the implications for the tourism system, including transport, accommodation, hospitality and the attractions in which tourists feature as producers? If resources and offerings are nothing but value-propositions how does that affect communications with tourists? What are the implications for missions, strategies and staff-training if tourists are acknowledged as bringing their own expectations and experiential background to the 'moment of truth', when staff has to decide on the scope of what, how and when to generate service?

Conference theme and subthemes

Regarding the two perspectives on experiential and transformational marketing exposed above, we invited papers that illuminate three specific aspects of tourism & hospitality marketing:

- a) the creation and perception of value and quality
- b) the company's ways of conceiving, producing, delivering and measuring its output
- c) the value of new and existing methodologies for a new approach to experiential marketing under a shifting paradigm.

Accordingly we were inviting papers on the following sub-themes:

- Customer experience in tourism: determinants and management strategies
- Modern ICT and social media
- Virtual communities and construction of new social bonds
- Cross-cultural issues in customer experience management
- Postmodern consumption
- Who is the new tourist?
- Changing demographics
- CSR and cause-related marketing
- Quality management, brand equity and labelling
- New trends in tourism consumption (couchsurfing, glamping, participative tourism etc.)
- Innovation; processes of value co-creation and co-production

- Service production and consumption
- Research methods for experiential and co-creative production and consumption
- Strategy
- Tourism destination shaping of cultural and spiritual experiences: current theory and prospects
- Practitioners and tourism researchers: opportunities and challenges

For the conference, and for this issue, special regard has been paid to the originality of the papers and authors were asked to avoid self-plagiarism (“recycling” of already published research results unless you present new insights).

Regarding the two perspectives on experiential and transformational marketing, we were inviting papers that could illuminate three specific aspects of tourism & hospitality marketing:

1. The creation and perception of value and quality
2. The company’s ways of conceiving, producing, delivering and measuring its output
3. The value of new and existing methodologies for a new approach to experiential marketing under the shifting paradigm.

The conference started with a Doctoral Colloquium a day prior to the conference. Eight young researchers presented their research work – yet 35 senior conference participants were present to analyse and to discuss – and thus help the doctoral candidates with their future work.

ATMC 2011 had first-class keynote speakers: after the welcoming words of the director of the Slovene NTO and the Maribor-LTO, Professor Steve Vargo, Distinguished Professor of the Hawai’i University in Manoa, the “Father of service-dominant logic (SDL)” presented his proposal how to use SDL in the field of tourism. The second keynote speaker was Ms Sandra Carvão, the Communications Manager of the UNWTO. She presented the major tasks the UNWTO is providing for its members, as well as the latest news on tourism trends. The third keynote speaker, Professor Frédéric Dimanche of the Skema Business School in Provence (France), addressed the audience with his discussion on value creation based on interactions between organisations and consumers, with special regard to service design in tourism. The fourth speaker, Professor Terry Stevens from Stevens & Associates (Swansea, UK), faced the audience with the practitioner’s view of experiential tourism. Our last keynote speaker was Professor Pablo de Diesbach from École Hôtelière de Lausanne; his contribution was the conceptualization and reflections on tourism destination ambassadors. He exemplified how to switch from a cognitive to an experiential approach of persuasion.

The conference was divided into six tracks with two parallel sections each. The participants were given 30 minutes time to present their work, and asked to provoke a discussion on the research-work they presented. ATMC 2011 has discussed the following themes:

- Co-creation and Service Experiences in Tourisms
- Evaluation of Rural Tourism Destinations
- Responsibility and Nature Area Issues
- Innovation and Value in Tourism
- Modern ICT and Social Media
- Tourism Destination Competitiveness
- Tourist Experiences in Destinations
- Tourist Perception and Destination Branding
- Rural- and Nature-based Tourism,
- Value co-creation in Tourism
- Customer Experience in Tourism and
- Tourism Managers’ and customers’ perceptions.

The conference had 56 reviewers from all continents that have done a great job. The wish of the organisers was to set the quality of the presentations as the highest priority and the result was that out of more than 100 abstracts and papers received, 40 papers made it to their presentation.

The ATMC was hosted by the Multidisciplinary Research Institute Maribor, the second biggest city in Slovenia, being the European Capital of Culture in 2012. It took place in the wellness seminar hotel Arena at the foot of the Pohorje Mountain – a quiet place with great culinary that has allowed very intense work on the one side and a lot of enjoyments after the sessions have been completed.

Sonja Sibila Lebe, University of Maribor (Slovenia); sonja-sibila.lebe@uni-mb.si
Juergen Gnoth, University of Otago (New Zealand); juergen.gnoth@otago.ac.nz
Luisa Andreu, University of Valencia (Spain); luisa.andreu@uv.es
Metin Kozak, University of Mugla (Turkey); m.kozak@superonline.com