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ROSEN RESEARCH REVIEW

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UCF | Rosen College of Hospitality Management

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

A message from Dean Youcheng Wang

You have something great in the palm of your hands!

Welcome to the first edition of the Rosen Research Review, the research magazine of UCF Rosen College of Hospitality Management. This publication includes research from some of Rosen College's top scholars; however, it is not another academic journal. It is presented to appeal to industry experts and the layperson, who has a critical interest in hospitality, tourism and the factors that comprise the world of guests and services. In addition, the research featured also has an impact on the communities that engage in destination management.

Each issue of Rosen Research Review will feature 10 articles, derived from research conducted by our faculty, and sometimes our graduate degree-seeking students. At Rosen College we educate the future leaders of the hospitality industry and work collaboratively with the current leaders. Our goal with the magazine is to share the topics we are researching in a conversational manner. We will present impactful insights ranging from climate change to economics, from technology to wine. Current events that relate to hospitality and tourism management as well as foodservice and restaurants will also be addressed.

Now, let me tell you a bit more about our college. Ranked among the top five hospitality management programs worldwide by CEOWorld Magazine, Rosen College is the largest hospitality college in North America, with 3,000+ students studying in a wide range of undergraduate degree programs, as well as graduate degree programs in both Master and Ph.D. studies. We are one of the 13 colleges of the University of Central Florida (UCF), also known for its perfect-season football team, and a men's basketball team that almost beat number one seed Duke; we lost by one point.

The educational mission of Rosen College is to provide students with advanced classroom studies and a working knowledge of the hospitality and tourism industry, and to apply creative decision-making techniques in responding to those opportunities.

Students have the opportunity to build their resumes through dedicated internship programs and extensive contact with leading hospitality management companies and brands. We are also proud of our approach of not only focusing on imparting knowledge and skills to students, but also emphasizing their attitude and behavior in order to be successful in the service industry. The fact that 97% of our students have full-time jobs upon graduation is the best recognition of the quality of our program.

The strength of Rosen College is also reflected by our internationally renowned faculty members who represent 17 different countries. Our faculty bring a wide range of scholarly expertise, rich professional experience, and diverse global perspectives to our students and to their body of research in the fields of hospitality, tourism, events, foodservice, and entertainment.

Rosen College of Hospitality Management is a leader among hospitality programs and its location in Orlando, Florida – the largest tourism destination in North America with more than 72 million visitors a year – provides the best living laboratory for our students, faculty and researchers.

Thank you for reading the Rosen Research Review. We hope that you enjoy its content and pick up each new issue as it becomes available.

Youcheng Wang, Ph.D., Dean and Preeminent Professor in Destination Marketing

Rosen College of Hospitality Management
UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

9907 Universal Blvd.,
Orlando,
Florida
32819
407.903.8000
rchminfo@ucf.edu

https://hospitality.ucf.edu/

Produced in collaboration with Research Features. For further detail contact Emma Feloy: emma@researchfeatures.com

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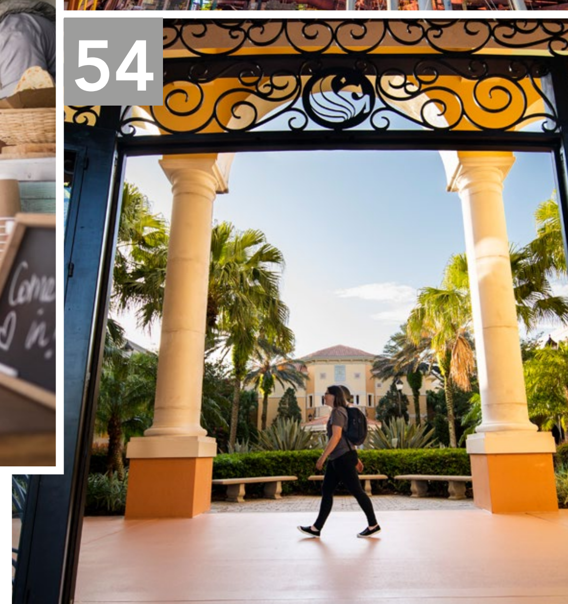
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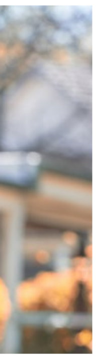


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PROFESSIONALISM
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TOURISM'S POTENTIAL TO BENEFIT ECUADOR'S POOR

The 2018 Thea Sinclair Award

San Cristobal is the easternmost isle of the Galapagos Islands, a key draw for visitors to Ecuador.

FOTOGRIN/Shutterstock.com

Tourism development has long been discussed as having potential to promote economic growth and alleviate poverty in developing countries. In an award-winning paper, Rosen College researchers Dr. Robertico Croes and Dr. Manuel Rivera use a novel model – the Social Accounting Matrix (SAM), to assess the impact of tourism development using Ecuador as an example. Their focus? To examine whether the poor, in particular, benefit from increased levels of tourism.

You might assume (and not without reason) that tourism can help improve the living standards of those in poverty. It is something that Western travelers often tell themselves and others in order to justify travel to less economically developed countries, and the intrusion on places where quality of life is much lower than their own. The positive impact of tourism on poor communities has been described in previous studies (Croes & Vanegas, 2008) as a trickle-down effect, where the boost to the domestic economy from international tourism eventually benefits everyone. However, thinking on this is beginning to change. Might it be possible that international tourism actually effects positive change disproportionately for the poorest? Could it even contribute to the advancement of social equality? If the development of tourism within developing economies does indeed offer a 'pro-poor' solution to economic growth, this could be of major importance to economic policy makers around the world.

PRO-POOR POSSIBILITIES

In a recent demonstration of the high-quality research undertaken at Rosen College of Hospitality Management, Dr. Robertico Croes and Dr. Manuel Rivera's 2017 article in *Tourism Economics* won the journal's 2018 Thea Sinclair Award for Journal Article Excellence. Their novel approach, using a Social Accounting Matrix (SAM) to model the flows of capital between different industrial sectors and households, adds to the discussion of tourism development within developing countries as a means of creating pro-poor growth. They suggest that increases in the levels of international tourism within developing countries directly relate to rises in income amongst the poorest within society that are higher than those experienced by other citizens. In other words, the poorest citizens see their absolute incomes increase, but their incomes also increase relative to more well-off citizens. This finding is at odds with how a trickle-down effect has previously been understood to affect the poor.

Ecuador has one of the highest levels of inequity in South America and almost half of its population lives in poverty. In particular, there is a strong economic disparity between rural and urban populations. It also has one of the fastest growing tourism industries in South America. The sector currently accounts for 5.3% of GDP, with over 300,000 people directly employed in tourist-related jobs. These

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Rural populations receive just a small percentage of the income generated from tourism.

Cocos.Bounty/Shutterstock.com

factors combined make it the perfect case study for a look into the effects of tourism on poverty-stricken populations. Croes and Rivera aimed to explore how an additional $10 million increase in the international demand for tourism would be re-distributed throughout the Ecuadorian economy.

To investigate whether the effects of tourism on those in poverty are more immediate than a slow trickle-down, Croes and Rivera asked two key questions using Ecuador as an example: Does tourism benefit the poorest people within developing societies? And if this is the case, do the poorest citizens from developing countries disproportionately benefit i.e., can tourism reduce inequality?

PRO-POOR ECUADOR?

To evaluate whether tourism in Ecuador is pro-poor, Croes and Rivera used a Social Accounting Matrix (SAM). Until now, this method has rarely been used in studies relating to the economic consequences of tourism development. SAM models represent the movement of capital flows across different sectors within a country over a single year – they can be thought of as a 'snapshot' of the economy during that time. SAM models also allow the impact of external influences on domestic economies to be illustrated. The SAM of Ecuador was developed using Ecuadorian government national accounts data from 2008 and household income data from the 2010 census. The researchers wanted to be able to view the impact of tourism development according to income level as well as reflect the pronounced rural/urban income disparity. The population was therefore spilt according to income level into five quintiles for rural populations and five quintiles for urban populations.

Firstly, due to the multiplier effect that tourism spending creates, Croes and Rivera found that the $10 million increase in the demand for tourism produced an associated $23 million increase in the size of the Ecuadorian economy. This figure can be explained by a 'tourist dollar' being spent more than once; a tourist will spend their money, for example, on dinner in a restaurant. In turn the restaurant will either consume goods from producers in other sectors or pay its own staff wages, which will be spent elsewhere (Akkemik, 2012). The researchers demonstrated that approximately 60% of tourist-related income was accrued to service industries. Also, around 65% of the economic gain that tourism produces is received as either remuneration (e.g. wages) or mixed income. The mixed income metric includes self-employed earnings. Poorer quintiles rely on self-employment for up to 90% of their pay. This suggests that it is

STRIKINGLY, THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT SAW WAGES RISE BY 31% MORE IN THE LOWEST QUINTILE GROUPS WHEN COMPARED WITH THE HIGHEST.

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Urban populations, like those living in the city of Guayaquil, receive 85% of the benefits of tourism developments.

The rural poor benefit the least from increased tourism.

Ruslana Iurchenko/Shutterstock.com

Increased development of rural-based attractions could increase income for the rural poor.

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> *THIS RE-DISTRIBUTION OF INCOMES CONFIRMS THAT TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IS A PRO-POOR METHOD OF DELIVERING GROWTH WHICH HAS THE POTENTIAL TO REDUCE INEQUALITY.*

likely in this case that poorer households do disproportionately benefit from tourist spending.

Using the SAM methodology, the authors concluded that a 10% increase in the international demand for tourism boosted incomes across all income-ranked quintiles. Strikingly, the economic impact of tourism development saw wages rise by 31% more in the lowest quintile groups when compared with the highest. People in the lowest quintile gained most from tourism when compared to their national share of average, with people in the top quintile seeing their share of tourism-related income fall below the national average. This re-distribution of incomes confirms that tourism development is a pro-poor method of delivering growth which has the potential to reduce inequality.

Many of the poorest citizens in Ecuador are not directly employed in the tourist industry, meaning that the indirect benefits households gain from increased tourism are more important to the poorest groups. Croes and Rivera suggest that 78.35% of the total economic effects of increased tourism are acquired by households, reflecting the strong links between industry sectors. These strong links provide an explanation of the multiplier impact of tourist-based spending in Ecuador. Notably, 85% of the benefits derived from tourism development went to urban areas. The location of tourist hotspots is therefore important and more rural-based attractions need to be developed in order to assist the rural poor.

Tourism development in Ecuador is pro-poor: it disproportionately benefits the poorest.

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PRO-POOR RESEARCH AND POLICY-MAKING

It would appear that tourism development meets both the absolute and relative definitions of pro-poor growth, and that it is an effective strategy for addressing poverty issues in countries of a similar economic status to Ecuador. In addition, there are some clear implications for the wider research and policy community. The SAM is clearly demonstrated to be an appropriate technique to evaluate the diffusion of income within an economy. Detailed data is not required in order to utilize a SAM, ideal when studying the interactions that occur within a developing country's economy. Policy-makers should take heed of the fact that the study also highlighted that where tourists spend their money is important, with hotels and restaurants noted as particularly beneficial. The strong links across sectors related to tourism are also key in spreading and multiplying tourist spending and should be nurtured. Ecuadorian policy-makers should, however, not ignore the fact that currently 84% of the benefits are going to urban households; an emphasis on developing infrastructure in rural Ecuador would spread the economic benefits of tourism more equitably.

The Ecuadorian government do already plan to spend $660 million over four years to promote Ecuador as a destination and improve infrastructure, so it looks as if the pro-poor phenomenon will continue to play out in Ecuador as Croes and Rivera have so carefully plotted. With the new detailed data in the policy-makers' hands, we can also hope that wealth can now be distributed more evenly across urban and rural communities; this research may pave the way for real social good.

RESEARCHERS IN FOCUS

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Drs. Croes and Rivera focus their work on the potential of tourism as a tool of poverty alleviation. They recently published a book, *Poverty Alleviation through Tourism Development: A Comprehensive and Integrated Approach* (2016).

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PERSONAL RESPONSE

If increasing numbers of developing country governments increase their tourism industries, is this likely to reduce the effectiveness of tourism as a pro-poor development tool?

" No. The global tourism industry has continued to grow for decades. The value of the industry either equals or surpasses some top performing industries such as oil exports, food production, and automobiles. By 2030, the World Tourism Organization (WTO), estimates that international tourism numbers will increase by 1.8 billion tourists/travelers. The share of international tourists visiting developing countries has steadily increased over the years and the expectation is that it will continue to grow. The continued growth of the industry guarantees that developing countries will have access to new potential markets that are in search of different experiences and exposure to different cultures. Each tourist destination can create culturally authentic experiences that are derived from the interaction between the people who live there and the tourists who visit. "

Dr. Robertico Croes

Robertico Croes is a Professor currently serving as the Associate Dean of Research and Administration at the University of Central Florida, USA. He is also the Director of the Dick Pope Sr. Institute for Tourism Studies. Dr. Croes has authored four books and has more than 100 published works. His research has been presented and applied in many countries. Professor Croes is the recipient of numerous research awards such as the 2018 Thea Sinclair Award.

E: Robertico.croes@ucf.edu **T:** +1 (407) 903 8028
W: https://hospitality.ucf.edu/person/robertico-croes/

Dr. Manuel Rivera

Dr. Rivera is the Assistant Dean of the Rosen College of Hospitality Management at the University of Central Florida. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Central Florida, a M.S. from Florida International University and a BS. from Penn State University. He is the Editor in Chief for the *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, and the recipient of the 2018 Thea Sinclair Award.

E: Manuel.rivera@ucf.edu **T:** +1 (407) 903 8210
W: https://hospitality.ucf.edu/person/manuel-rivera/

THE SHARE OF INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS VISITING DEVELOPING COUNTRIES HAS STEADILY INCREASED OVER THE YEARS.

THE WINE TOURIST

Motivations, satisfaction and behavioral outcomes

Spain's Rioja region boasts lush vineyards amid stunning mountainous scenery.

What inspires someone to visit a winery? And why do they go back? Three professors from the Rosen College of Hospitality Management have been considering these questions with a particular focus on the world-renowned winery, Marqués de Riscal, in Spain. Dr. Robin Back, Dr. Diego Bufquin and Dr. Jeong-Yeol Park examined customer revisit intentions, previous visits, motivation to visit, customer satisfaction levels, and the geographic proximity of a destination to their home.

Spain is the third largest producer of grape wine, steeped in a rich history of wine production going back around 3000 years. While Spain has long been a popular tourist hotspot for sun worshippers, it is now marketing itself as a wine tourism destination and, more specifically, targeting the new connoisseur of the winery experience.

A RICH CULTURAL EXPERIENCE

Gone are the days when wine tourism involved a visit to a winery simply to taste and purchase. With the growth in popularity, tourists now want – and expect – a more encompassing and cultural experience. From food and shopping to recreation and beautiful environs, the investment in wineries suggests that consumers are demanding more. With this shift in expectations comes a number of benefits: most notably wineries can sell direct to consumers and increase brand loyalty. To facilitate this, many have invested in the winery experience.

A case in point is the multi-award-winning Marqués de Riscal winery in Spain: they have invested 70 million Euros in a postmodernist hotel to woo and wow wine tourists, echoing the trend within the industry for building hotels, spas and cookery schools to entice visitors. Lying deep within the Rioja Alavesa region, Marqués de Riscal is today considered one of the ten most admired wine brands in the world (Drinks International). Rioja is Spain's most famous wine region and it is no surprise that it is becoming increasingly attractive to wine tourists from around the world. It offers a stunning mountainous backdrop, world heritage sites and a vast number of wineries to visit.

Seeing an opportunity, Marqués de Riscal opened its 'City of Wine' back in 2006, which is home to its iconic hotel, spa, restaurants and, of course, its winery. This investment was bold and set itself apart from its competitors. Moreover, in its first year of opening, visitor numbers to the Rioja region increased by a staggering 68% (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2010; IREA, 2008), making it a key base for research into motivations for wine tourism. For this reason, the team of Rosen researchers selected Marqués de Riscal for their study.

KEY MOTIVATORS

At a time of such growth in wine tourism and such high levels of investment in the industry, it is increasingly important to understand the key motivations for such visits and particularly revisits. The researchers chose to focus on those who have actually visited Marqués de Riscal once or multiple times rather than those planning to visit. They were looking at actual behavior rather than behavior intentions as traditionally used in academic research.

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Wine production at Marqués de Riscal.

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The luxury hotel designed by Frank Gehry in the Marqués de Riscal City of Wine.

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Left: Wine stored in the cellar at Marqués de Riscal.
Above: Ripe grapes ready to harvest.

The team examined how satisfied previous visitors were with the winery, how many revisits they made and their motivations for returning. They aim to enable wineries "to make more informed decisions regarding the expansion and marketing of their tourist offerings". Informed investment will allow wineries to use investment to develop the experience most likely to win new customers and keep them returning, therefore developing a loyal customer base.

Marketing has a key role to play in determining what motivates a consumer to visit a given area, whether that might be to explore a new culture or for a more immersive experience, getting to know the locals.

To date there are three key theories on motivations: Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1954), which determines that the need to travel is governed by "higher social and self-actualization needs"; Crompton's (1979) and Dann's (1981) theory on push-and-pull factors where push is based on psychological desires such as needing time out or a new adventure and pull are the things that draw you to a destination such as warm weather, a beautiful vista or the infrastructure itself; and Iso-Ahola's (1982), which is based on the motivations of escapism (e.g. the humdrum of work or a health issue) and seeking (e.g. gaining knowledge about a different culture). Previous research has looked at how motivations have impacted on a wine tourist's intentions. This ranges from the wine itself, preferences and the tasting of it to educational opportunities, entertainment and events.

THE RESEARCH EXAMINED THE PREVIOUSLY UNTESTED HYPOTHESIS OF HOW CUSTOMER SATISFACTION INFLUENCES THEIR INTENTION TO REVISIT.

However, the team cites that – while valuable – "behavioral intentions are not always highly correlated with repeat behaviors (Ajzen, 1985; Courneya, 1994; Sutton, 1998)". Further investigation was needed.

THE IMPACT OF MARKETING

The team identified that more research is needed on the effects of media coverage, advertising and word of mouth marketing on revisit intentions and the number of visits. To date, such research has been largely focused on measuring social media's effects in different contexts or industries, rather than looking at how customers' behavioral outcomes are affected by such marketing channels.

The team also identified that the return intentions or number of visits needs to be measured, citing that most research has "used winery visitors' attitudes as dependent

The winery invested heavily in the City of Wine in 2006.

The City of Wine seen from across the vineyards.

variables" and as such the effects on return intentions or number of visits needs to be measured.

UNDERSTANDING VISITOR MOTIVATIONS

Unlike other research that has focused on different motivations for repeat visits, the team has also looked at the effect of such motivations. They explain this is just as important, especially when it is far cheaper to maintain an existing customer than attract a new one (Kotler & Keller, 2011). With such investment happening in the wine tourism industry, this is especially critical to understand.

So, while wineries need to know what affects a visitor's choice (such as location), how a visitor perceives their experience will be, together with how much they enjoyed their trip and how likely they are to revisit, "it is equally important to understand the motivations that result in visitors wanting to return and in actually returning", cites the team.

Using the Marqués de Riscal winery as a case study provided lots of advantages due to its undeniable reputation, location, investment in its 'City of Wine', and media coverage. Back, Bufquin and Park focused on a number of hypotheses, based on both visits and revisit intentions, examining:

- The effect of a winery's reputation, media coverage such as reviews, and a visitor's perception of the winery and its wines
- The architecture of the hotel, its location, media coverage and advertising, and positive word of mouth

> *AWARDS AND GOOD REVIEWS … SHOULD BE SHARED AND PUBLICIZED.*

Crucially, the research examined the previously untested hypothesis of how customer satisfaction influences their intention to revisit.

THE METHODOLOGY

For this research, the target sample comprised travelers who had visited the Marqués de Riscal winery at least once since the opening of its City of Wine. The survey was written in both English and Spanish, back-translated, and examined by experts before a link to the online survey was emailed to participants.

The team used both convenience and self-selection sampling, including Marqués de Riscal sending an email link randomly to its database of previous visitors and posting the link on its social medial channels. From 10,500 surveys distributed, 1,602 were used for further analysis.

THE RESULTS

Visitors who were motivated by reputation, reviews and the perceived quality of the winery and its wines, and by the location, visited more times (e.g. had more revisits) compared to those who visited spontaneously.

Media coverage and advertising had a positive impact on revisit intentions: visitors motivated by these factors expressed a higher level of intention to revisit than those who visited spontaneously. Interestingly, however, the research found that media coverage did not appear to deliver multiple visits. Participants' satisfaction with the winery also increased revisit intention, while the number of previous visits also significantly increased revisit intentions.

KEY LEARNINGS

One of the key take-homes for the wine industry is that the reviews and reputation of a winery and its wines, together with the overall experience, are the key drivers in revisits and those intending to revisit, rather than investment in a hotel's architecture. Awards and good reviews, therefore, should be shared and publicized.

The research identified that repeat visitors are the most important visitor segment and, as such, need to be satisfied on each visit. To this end, it is important to innovate, so that visitors do not have an identical experience. The team suggests recognizing repeat visitors with a loyalty program, free tasting, or exclusive invitation to an event, making such visitors feel valued.

The research also found that despite showing the highest revisit intentions, North American visitors' revisit intentions do not translate into actual multiple visits, possibly due to the distance and expense involved. However, the US wine consumer market is the largest in the world and its wine tourists are generally well educated and wealthy. As such the team recommends that Marqués de Riscal considers targeting North Americans in its marketing campaigns and that it stays in touch with its American visitors, "enticing then to revisit and thereby fulfilling their desire to do so". Finally, the research showed that older and more educated guests visited the most, so this is one of the target demographic segments that should form part of Marqués de Riscal's marketing strategy.

RESEARCHERS IN FOCUS

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Back, Bufquin and Park examined the factors influencing wine tourists' revisit intentions using a sample of previous visitors to the Marqués de Riscal winery in Spain.

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COLLABORATORS

We would like to acknowledge Ramón Román, Marketing & Public Relations Manager at Marqués de Riscal, for his willingness to help us gather the data.

PERSONAL RESPONSE

What was the most surprising discovery in your research?

" After a certain number of repeat visits, winery tourists' revisit intentions start to diminish significantly. However, tourists' revisit intentions decrease more slowly if they are highly satisfied with their winery experience. Interestingly, two different attributes (i.e. winery tour/wine tasting, overall ambiance) significantly impact visitors' satisfaction. Likewise, participants' age, gender and country of residence also affect satisfaction. "

As the industry continues to grow, what do you think will be the biggest changes to the winery experience?

" Wineries should enhance visitors' experiences through improved winery tours and wine tastings, both of which should be delivered in memorable surroundings. Such unique experiences should improve tourists' overall satisfaction, regardless of their age, gender, and country of residence. "

Dr. Robin M. Back

Dr. Back has over 25 years of experience in the retail, travel and tourism, and alcoholic beverage industries on three continents. His research is mainly in the area of consumer behavior and consumer experience tourism, focusing on wine tourism, wine marketing, and special events. He teaches Exploring Wines of the World and Fine Spirits Management.

E: Robin.Back@ucf.edu **T:** +1 (407) 903 8207
W: https://hospitality.ucf.edu/person/robin-back/

Dr. Diego Bufquin

Dr. Bufquin has a multicultural background that has led him to live and work in a variety of countries. In the hospitality industry, Dr. Bufquin has had the opportunity to work at several hotels and restaurants. His research mostly focuses on the areas of consumer and organizational behavior.

E: Diego.Bufquin@ucf.edu **T:** +1 (407) 903 8209
W: https://hospitality.ucf.edu/person/diego-bufquin/

Dr. Jeong-Yeol Park

Dr. Park has conducted multiple research studies that have examined potential travelers' purchase behavior at online travel agencies, restaurant customers' behaviour, and demand analysis for hospitality industries. Currently, he teaches Hospitality Industry Financial Accounting and Research Methods in Hospitality and Tourism.

E: Jeong-Yeol.Park@ucf.edu **T:** +1 (407) 903 8027
W: https://hospitality.ucf.edu/person/jeong-yeol-park/

Thought Leader

OUT WITH THE OLD, IN WITH THE NEW:

Education in the hospitality industry

What does it mean to be Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the largest hotel group in the world outside of the United States? How do you effectively lead a company that manages so many different brands and franchises? And how is it best to train new employees to be part of that shared vision? Accor is one of the largest hospitality companies in the world, with resorts, hotels and vacation properties across the globe. Current CEO Sébastien Bazin is hoping to bring together the worlds of hospitality and education to build a bright and sustainable future for the company. Rosen College Ph.D. student Louis A. Lenglet caught up with Bazin to find out how.

Former private financial equity investor and now Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Accor, Sébastien Bazin describes hospitality as part of the 'old economy'. Compared with businesses like tech start-ups, the building and management of hotels and resorts has been done for a very long time. As a result, there is much to teach, and much to learn, about the trade. Bazin believes that by collaborating with hospitality management education institutions, companies like Accor can ensure they curate a young, educated and proud employee base, while institutions gain partnership with experienced and knowledgeable industry veterans for their students to learn from.

In an insightful interview, Rosen College Ph.D. student Louis A. Lenglet found out a bit more about Bazin's vision for the future of one of the largest hotel groups in the world, what it was like to take on the role of CEO and how he hopes to keep this 'old economy' fresh and forward thinking.

LL: SINCE YOUR APPOINTMENT AS CHAIRMAN AND CEO HOW HAVE YOU CHANGED?

SB: Tremendously. I have had four lives. I have been a stock broker in Wall Street for four years, then an investment banker in Wall Street for seven years and then a private equity investor for 15 years. I left the finance and stock market industry to become Accor's CEO – and it could not have been any more different! It helps to have the financial background obviously. But when you become a CEO, your first mandate is to manage the people around you, to make sure that they accept you as their leader, that they feel proud and engaged. What comes with it as well is the need for a long-term vision. You have to define five- and ten-year roadmaps, to tell your people ahead of time where you want to be in five and ten years. And it is difficult to change direction, people usually do not understand it. You must change to get where you want to go, but keep the same direction. It has been very challenging, very rewarding, and a blessed personal decision. I am putting myself at risk every day, and it is extraordinary to have 280,000 people backing you up.

WHAT SKILLS FROM YOUR PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE HAVE BEEN MOST VALUABLE IN YOUR CURRENT ROLE?

When you are in private equity, you have to accept that things will go differently than expected and you have to share the bad news with your partners. The same things exist in any management role – nothing will go as expected. Accepting the unforeseen event is something I have done before. While at Colony

Capital, I was extremely aware of what was happening in Europe and America. The understanding of different cultures, different economies, and different GDPs has been very useful to me as the leader of a multinational company with a presence in over a hundred countries.

WHAT COMPANY INSPIRES YOU THE MOST? WHY?

Google. I am stunned by the size, the profitability, the number of new innovations, and the ability to make moves like buying Waze or YouTube. I am very interested in the ability that Google and other "new economy" companies have for beta testing. They test and learn, constantly. There are probably a thousand projects that are being tested by Google every single year. We actually know only the 30 or 40 which passed the test. That ability to take risks, not knowing what will work, is extraordinary. I just wish that older economic model companies like Accor could have the same ability to announce something that might not work – but still have the audacity and the energy to try it.

Sébastien Bazin and Nasser Al-Khelaifi, Chairman & CEO of Paris Saint-Germain football club, announcing their new partnership.

WHAT ACCOMPLISHMENTS ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF AS CEO OF ACCOR?

The main accomplishment is that pride is back within the company. Pride was lacking when I arrived six years ago. It was a sad company. Now we do not look at ourselves as being better than anybody, but we certainly do look at ourselves as being one of the top three hotel companies in the world.

HOW DO YOU SEE THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY REGARDING UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE LEVELS?

It is primordial and indispensable, but it is awfully difficult. A lot of graduates want to work in the "new economy" world, in startups. Only a third of them may consider positions within the older economy. The main reason for this is that they fear that it would take them 20 years to become someone within the company. We need to give them opportunities much sooner than we have for the last 30 years. We need the more experienced people to accept that a new person may know better than they do – even though they may not have more than two years' experience.

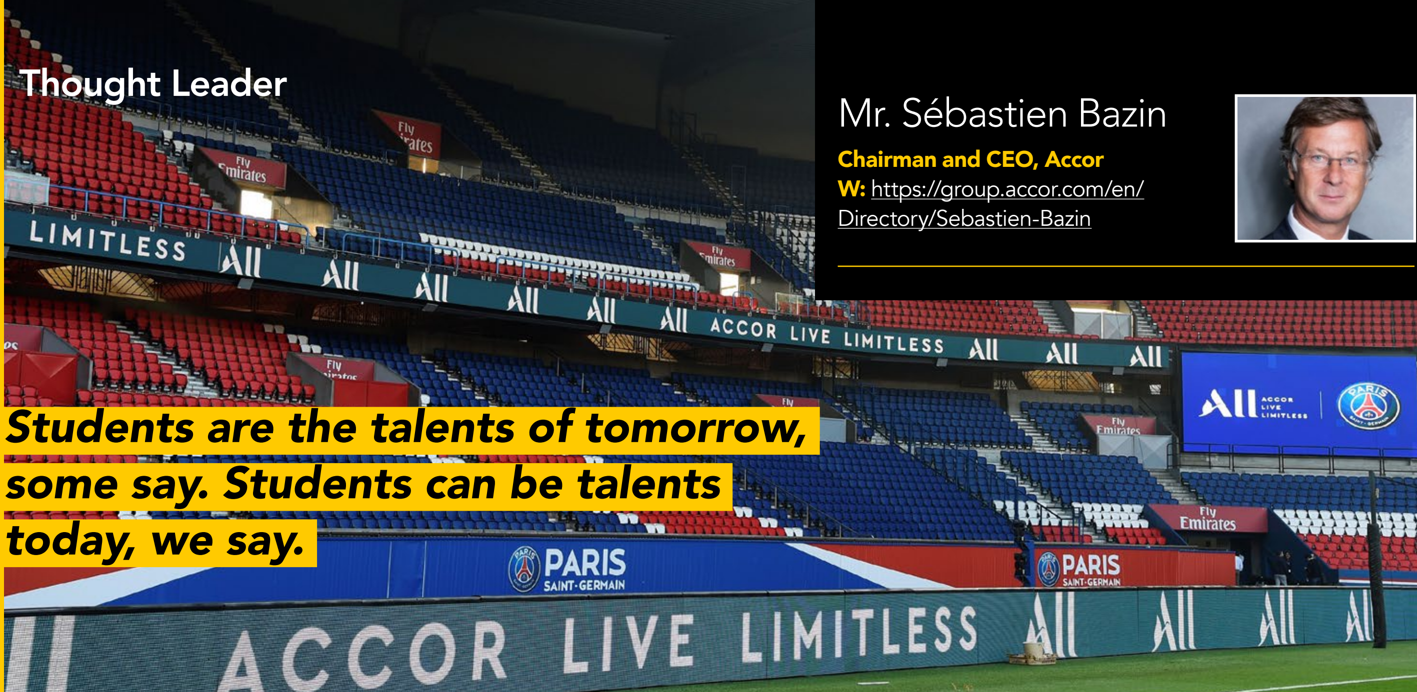
My main concern is Accor's role as one of the biggest employers in the hotel industry. Because we manage 75% of our properties, we are therefore responsible for the 250,000 people that work in our over 3500 global properties; the rest are franchised hotels. Accor hires 80,000 new people every single year – but Accor also loses 50,000 people every year. I need to retain them. I need to do a better job in training them, particularly in the United States. We have done very well in Europe. But we are falling short in the US because of our relatively small footprint in the region.

We do not look at ourselves as being better than anybody, but we certainly do look at ourselves as being one of the top three hotel companies in the world.

AS A COMPANY, IN WHAT WAYS WILL ACCOR BE DIFFERENT IN FIVE AND TEN YEARS FROM NOW?

I think that we will be vastly different. We are moving away from the net. Accor has been a Hospitality player for the last 50 years: 90% of our revenue comes from welcoming guests who are using our accommodation and food and beverage outlets. I am trying to change that dramatically. In ten years only two thirds or a maximum of 50% of Accor revenue will be derived from what we have done for the past 50 years. The other 50% or one third will come from services being rendered to the local neighborhood, services to those using shared economy products like onefinestay that we have purchased, or using John Paul

Thought Leader



Mr. Sébastien Bazin

Chairman and CEO, Accor
W: https://group.accor.com/en/Directory/Sebastien-Bazin

Students are the talents of tomorrow, some say. Students can be talents today, we say.

The Accor Live Limitless platform offers rewards and services to its members.

which is a digital concierge that we have also acquired… What I am aiming for is to increase the number of interactions and touch points, the frequency with the same guests. Why? Because of the costs associated with the acquisition of a hotel guest. I need to follow my guest when he returns home. This could mean a wide range of services from concierge to laundry to handling Amazon deliveries…

HOW DO YOU DESCRIBE YOUR DESIRED LEADERSHIP TYPE? WAS THERE ANY DISCREPANCY IN YOUR LEADERSHIP STYLE (I.E. WHAT YOU WANTED TO BE AS A LEADER VS. WHAT YOU WERE ASKED TO BE)?

I think that there is no common quality for different leaders. There is an equilibrium you have to find. You can have vastly different personalities, and they can all be extremely good leaders within their own industry.
I had never been a leader myself before joining Accor. I can tell you what works for me. Firstly, have doubts. Do not be full of certitude. Second, be humble but keep the lead. If your team have doubts, tell them that you also have them, but give them direction. Be convinced that where you are going is the best direction, and be sure why. Give your teams a calendar and a methodology. Tell them who is in charge of what so that they understand the recipe. Keep new blood coming in – probably 25 to 30% of what you need. Having fresh eyes brings an enormous impact to an organization. Accept differences – gender parity, different religions and cultures. Have a melting pot – this works very well for Accor. Finally, be firm on your values. Do not change them, but do have empathy. People will fight for you if they know where you are taking them. They will also fight for you if they know that you respect and value them. This makes me think of a quote from Henry Kissinger who stated that the task of the leader is to get his people from where they are to where they have not been.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT COLLABORATING BETWEEN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY AND ACADEMIA?

This is key! We do need to help the younger generations to build their own path, their career, and the academic world is the first step to enter the industry most of the time. We have different partnerships with schools to create fluidity between those two worlds. We have nurtured partnerships with over 50 schools in the fields of business and hotel management, and with universities in the various countries in which we operate. We also collaborate on the course or applied Master's degree in "Revenue Management", with l'Institut Paul Bocuse and l'IAE Savoie Mont-Blanc in France. As a partner of Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne, we are also involved in the extremely innovative "Master of Sciences in Hospitality" course, organized in collaboration with Houston University and Hong Kong Polytechnic. Students are the talents of tomorrow, some say. Students can be talents today, we say. Also, students have the time to step back and dig around in topics that may be crucial for us. We need their eyes and brains and understanding of the world.

HOW CAN ACCOR AND A HOSPITALITY-BASED RESEARCH INSTITUTION CO-BENEFIT?

In many ways! We have knowledge from the ground, you have the academic knowledge. Let me give you one example. At Accor a few years ago, we launched the "Innovation Lab". The role of this department is to create value for the Group by investigating new territories and infusing a culture of open innovation. They identify exploration territories and distinguish market opportunities for the Group. They work on different priority projects such as wellbeing, co-living, co-working, mobility etc. and they build partnerships with actors in the start-up ecosystem like Vivatech, Techstars, The Camp… You can mutually benefit from each other's knowledge.

Interview conducted on March 14, 2018 in Paris, France.

The author would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Sébastien Bazin for agreeing to this interview, as well as Miss. Nathalie Stefani and Miss. Victoire Drummond for all their help advising and coordinating. Furthermore to Rosen College faculty members Dr. Fevzi Okumus and Dr. Jeong-Yeol Park, for their invaluable input and Dr. Robertico Croes for providing this opportunity.

ROSEN COLLEGE HOSTS FOUR IMPORTANT JOURNALS IN THE HOSPITALITY & TOURISM FIELD:

International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management communicates the latest developments and thinking on the management of hospitality and tourism businesses worldwide. http://emeraldgrouppublishing.com/products/journals/journals.htm?id=ijchm

Editor-in-Chief: Dr. Fevzi Okumus
Managing Editor: Dr. Mathilda van Niekerk
Associate Editor: Dr. Marissa Orlowski
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International Journal of Hospitality Management discusses major trends and developments in a variety of disciplines as they apply to the hospitality industry. www.journals.elsevier.com/international-journal-of-hospitality-management

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Journal of Destination Marketing & Management seeks to develop a theoretical understanding of destination marketing and management by harnessing knowledge drawn from the full breadth of disciplinary approaches to the study of destinations. www.journals.elsevier.com/journal-of-destination-marketing-and-management

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Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights aims to enhance the ongoing conversation among hospitality and tourism practitioners, academics and professionals. http://emeraldgrouppublishing.com/products/journals/journals.htm?id=jhti

Co-Founding Editors: Dr. Fevzi Okumus and Dr. Mathilda van Niekerk

HELP YOURSELF

Are self-service technologies doing enough to elicit a positive response from consumers?

The use of self-service technologies (SSTs) has grown significantly over the last ten years. In their research paper, Dr. Wei Wei, Dr. Edwin N. Torres and Dr. Nan Hua from Rosen College of Hospitality Management, University of Central Florida, aim to identify gaps in current research into the value of SSTs within hotels and restaurants. They also look at the role extrinsic and intrinsic attributes play and how an SST can lead to a transcendent service experience (TSE).

We are all well used to self-service technologies (SSTs) within banking in terms of service tills and deposit machines and within retail with self-checkout. Less familiar is the rise in such technology within the hospitality industry where, for example, such devices can enable consumers to check in and out or order food for themselves. The aim? To make the process much faster and easier for guests.

Marius Pirvu/Shutterstock.com

Self-service machines have become commonplace in the banking industry.

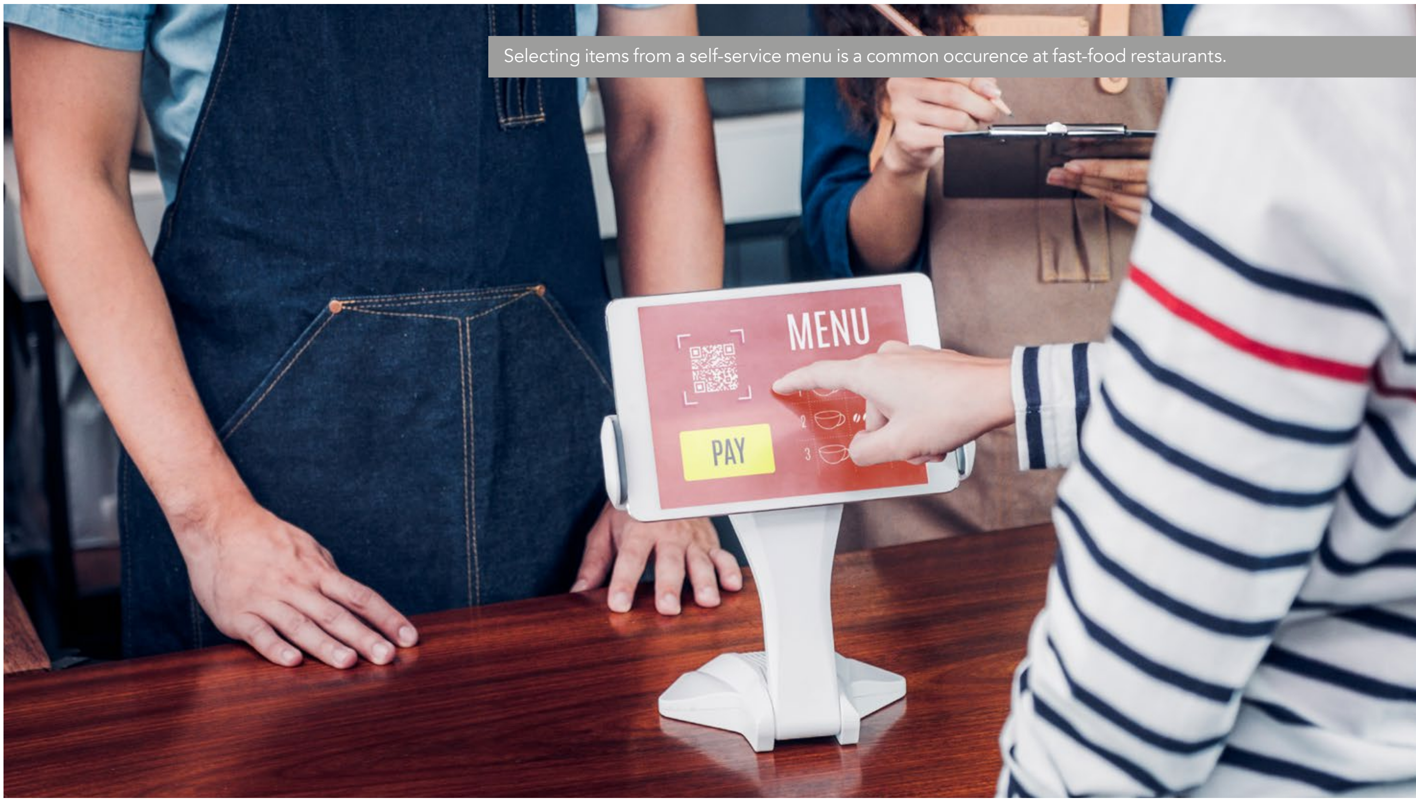
As consumers, we are guided by both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations when making decisions. Extrinsic refers to the functional, and therefore tangible, factors involved. For example, we might choose a particular product because it will save us time. And as Kokkinou and Cranage (2015) found, in the hospitality industry, "consumers were more likely to embrace SSTs, as the waiting time for a service associate became longer". Intrinsic motivations are slightly more complex in that they relate to the emotional, and therefore intangible, benefits. Perhaps we make a decision based on social image, or emotional value, because it will satisfy our curiosity or is relevant to the particular situation we are in. When it comes to the use of SSTs in a hospitality context, the Rosen researchers argued, this distinction is key. Consumers, they suggested, respond differently to both intrinsic and extrinsic attributes of SSTs.

THE TRANSCENDENT SERVICE EXPERIENCE

When a customer interacts with an SST – such as to order food via a tablet device in a restaurant – this has the ability to empower and engage a customer and so enhance their experience. In so doing, this creates an opportunity for businesses to "capitalise on consumer experience (Bill Xu and Chan, 2010) by deliberately designing engaging experiences and creating memorable events that could generate economic value (Pine and Gilmore, 1998)", cite Wei, Torres and Hua. Schouten et al. (2007) label this "the transcendent customer experience (TCE)".

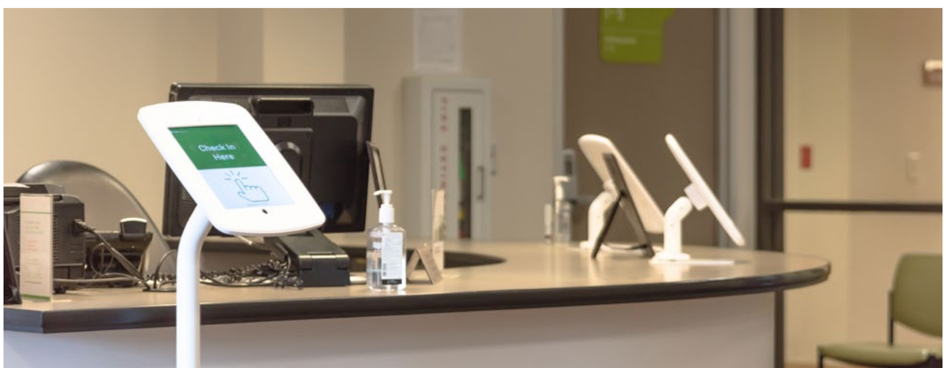
The researchers wanted to 'reflect the service context' of their study and so used the modified term 'transcendent service experience' (TSE). Because a TSE relates to a 'peak' experience, the researchers used it in the context of discovering the most memorable service experience.

Using an SST not only provides functionality to a consumer; it can also enhance service experience. SSTs can elicit emotional responses, create positive recollections and offer a unique experience. All of these are opportunities for businesses to leverage a competitive edge. For this reason, Wei, Torres and Hua are clear: the question for the hotel industry is now no longer *whether* to adopt SSTs but instead the focus is on *how* to use them to create a TSE.



Selecting items from a self-service menu is a common occurence at fast-food restaurants.

weedezign/Shutterstock.com


Many hospitals use automated check-in technology to save time.

Trong Nguyen/Shutterstock.com


Transport hubs use self-service ticket machines.

Travelerpix/Shutterstock.com

PLUGGING THE GAPS

However, compelling research from a number of studies focusing on ‘technology anxiety’ (Collier and Sherrell, 2010), ‘waiting lines’ (Kokkinou and Cranage, 2015) and ‘functionality issues’ (Wang and Wang, 2010) has identified that consumer response to SSTs within the hotel industry has to this point been far from engaging. As Wei, Torres and Hua cite: “According to a survey conducted by American Hotel and Lodging Associations in 2011, only 10%–25% of hotel customers used kiosks to check in or out when such service was available and customers’ responses had been lukewarm or unfavorable in those hotels that had removed traditional front desk.”

THE MAIN QUESTION FOR BUSINESSES IS HOW – AND NOT WHETHER – “TO BEST LEVERAGE SSTS TO CREATE A BETTER CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE”.

Wei, Torres and Hua also identify three gaps in SST research. These were the areas of hospitality; consumer attitude and willingness to use such technology; and how SST usage impacts on the wider service experience within hospitality. They set out to examine whether the extrinsic and intrinsic factors affected consumer satisfaction with SSTs and what impact they had on the overall TSE.

SHAPING THE RESEARCH

A survey was sent to 220 hotel and restaurant customers, being first sent to a panel of three senior researchers for feedback. Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) helped find participants who matched the criteria of being aged 18+ and having used an SST in a hotel or a restaurant context in the past 12 months. The survey had four distinct parts: the background of the participants’ most memorable SST recollection; the participants’ subjective SST experience;

Replacing customer-facing staff with self-service machines is not always popular.

Matej Kastelic/Shutterstock.com

the participants' TSE at the recalled encounter; and demographical information.

The study identified that both extrinsic and intrinsic attributes impact the success of an SST, while the lure of saving time and offering convenience – extrinsic values – are key consumer satisfaction drivers. As such, extrinsic attributes have a greater role to play when evaluating the consumer satisfaction level of using an SST.

The research also found that intrinsic benefits have a more significant impact on consumers' views of SSTs than previously thought. However, the team explain that, while the "impact of the intrinsic attributes of SSTs on satisfaction with SSTs was found to be positive and significant in a restaurant setting, such impact in a hotel setting was positive and insignificant". Therefore, extrinsic factors are the driving force behind consumer satisfaction with SSTs.

INFLUENCING TSE

Interestingly, however, the research also highlights that, in terms of TSE, customers are much more swayed by intrinsic attributes while, conversely, extrinsic values have a negative impact. The researchers attribute the likely rationale for this to two possibilities:

1. Consumers are becoming familiar with the convenience and time saving factors associated with SSTs. Rather than making an experience memorable, such extrinsic attributes have instead become an expected (and mundane) part of the experience.

2. TSE involves the creation of a memorable, unique experience. So, the intrinsic aspects of the experience therefore become more important. As the team explains: "The extrinsic attributes associated with SSTs are utilitarian in nature, thus are likely to provide the wrong benefits for those who are seeking TSE."

IMPLICATIONS FOR INDUSTRY

The research highlights how the hospitality sector can enhance a customer's overall satisfaction by ensuring an SST is closely aligned to a customer's needs, giving a much more personalized experience and contributing to TSE. As the authors point out, the main question for businesses is *how* – and not *whether* – "to best leverage SSTs to create a better customer experience".

Furthermore, due to the already identified negative influence of SSTs' extrinsic attributes for hotel guests' TSE, the hospitality industry may be better served by improving "the uniqueness of SSTs' extrinsic attributes at service encounters", states the team. For example, a guest could use an SST to ask room service to collect a tray or housekeeping for cleaning services. They could also use an SST to contact a specific manager directly.

In so doing – and by empowering and engaging the customer – the hospitality industry has the tools to create a more personalized experience. As Wei, Torres and Hua cite: "Such service customization was found to further lead to higher customer satisfaction (Ding and Keh, 2016). And by creating SSTs that emphasize entertainment and satisfy customers' curiosity, managers will have a better chance of staging TSE." By examining the effect of intrinsic and extrinsic attributes separately, the researchers have been able to give a new insight into the benefits of SST use in the hotel and restaurant industry.

EXTRINSIC FACTORS ARE NEEDED TO GAIN ACCEPTANCE AND USAGE OF SSTS; INTRINSIC FACTORS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR A BETTER CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE.

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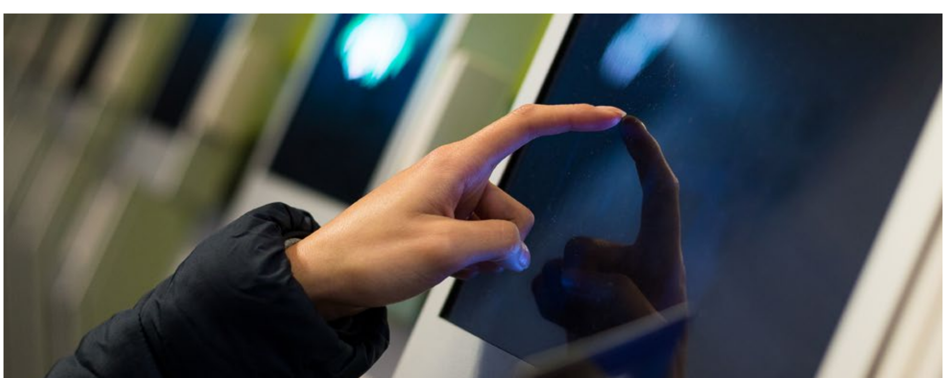

Consumers respond differently to SSTs' intrinsic and extrinsic factors.

RESEARCHERS IN FOCUS

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This paper from Wei, Torres and Hua examines how self-service technologies can improve customer satisfaction, ultimately leading to a transcendent service experience.

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PERSONAL RESPONSE

What is the key take-home for industry from this research and what is the next stage of research leading on from this?

" This research helps hotel and restaurant practitioners to gain a deeper understanding of how various characteristics of SSTs contribute to consumer satisfaction with SSTs and transcendent service experiences. Effective strategies are recommended to expand the role of SSTs in the hotel and restaurant sector beyond extrinsic attributes to satisfy consumers' curiosity, foster customer–customer interactions, and personalize consumer experience.

Future studies should examine whether SST experience would vary with different demographic groups. As SSTs are becoming increasingly prevalent in daily life, longitudinal studies are also recommended to explore how the tested relationships may change over time. "

Dr. Wei Wei

Dr. Wei Wei is an Assistant Professor at Rosen College of Hospitality Management, University of Central Florida. Her research interests include consumer behavior, psychology, and experience with a focus on consumer-to-consumer interactions, consumer engagement behavior, and consumer experience with emerging technologies.

A: 9907 Universal Blvd., Orlando, FL 32819
E: Wei.Wei@ucf.edu **T:** +1 (407) 903 8230
W: https://hospitality.ucf.edu/person/wei-wei/

Dr. Edwin N. Torres

Dr. Edwin N. Torres is an Associate Professor at Rosen College of Hospitality Management, University of Central Florida. Prior to his current role, Dr. Torres received a Ph.D. from Purdue University. His research, which focuses on consumer psychology, has been published in multiple scholarly journals and presented in multiple conferences.

A: 9907 Universal Blvd., Orlando, FL 32819
E: edwin.torres@ucf.edu **T:** +1 (407) 903 8103
W: https://hospitality.ucf.edu/person/edwin-torres/

Dr. Nan Hua

Nan Hua (PhD) is an Associate Professor of hospitality management in Rosen College of Hospitality Management at University of Central Florida. His areas of research interest include performance and intangible asset evaluation and analysis in the hospitality and tourism industry.

A: 9907 Universal Blvd., Orlando, FL 32819
E: nan.hua@ucf.edu **T:** +1 (407) 903 8095
W: https://hospitality.ucf.edu/person/nan-hua/

CLIMATE CHANGE AND TOURIST DESTINATIONS:

Florida's case

Crandon Park Beach in Miami, Florida, typifies the beautiful beach scenery that attracts tourists.

Fotoluminate LLC/Shutterstock.com

Aside from the physical impacts of climate change, society's perception of climate change, and the response to it at different decision-making levels, are now critical issues. As public awareness of the consequences of climate change increases, it becomes a consideration in everyday decision-making, including tourism. The research of three colleagues at Rosen College of Hospitality Management, Dr. Alan Fyall, Dr. Asli D. A. Tasci, and Dr. Jill Fjelstul, along with Dr. Roberta Atzori from California State University, Monterey Bay, examines how social representations of climate change may affect a choice of holiday destination. In particular, they examine how they might affect the prosperity of the state of Florida.

Climate change is a slow-to-take-effect, complex phenomenon that remains contentious among the American public with some arguing that it is a "socially" constructed rather than an objective "physical" process. Reluctance to accept climate change is partially due to the complexity of the science involved and the complications in communicating the degree to which human activity has contributed to a rise in temperatures. At the same time, it is also related to the large-scale involvement of international institutions, world celebrities as well as political and religious leaders. The number of factors and influencers involved in the debate has left plenty of room for sceptics and deniers to take advantage of the public's natural resistance to change, which has bred complacency. As a result, there has been little action taken to slow down climate change or reduce its effects.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND TOURISM CHOICES

As citizens' knowledge and awareness of climate change and its consequences increase, it begins to be an important consideration in everyday decision-making. Tourism is one area where climate change may have a particularly strong impact on thoughts, plans and behaviours. For example, as the frequency and intensity of storms increase, they impact on the safety and beauty of seafronts making prospective visitors less likely to choose particular leisure or holiday destinations. Without appropriate precautions, it is likely that the effects of climate change will damage the appeal of various locations and, in effect, damage the prosperity of local businesses and the well-being of local populations.

To prevent this, it is important to understand how people's attitudes toward climate change moderate their leisure choices. A research team including three colleagues from Rosen College of Hospitality Management, Dr. Alan Fyall, Dr. Asli D. A. Tasci, and Dr. Jill Fjelstul, and Dr. Roberta Atzori from California State University, Monterey Bay, are taking the lead by examining how climate change attitudes affect the likelihood that past visitors to Florida choose this destination again. Although their findings should be treated with caution – they report the likelihood of future decision-making, which is difficult to measure – they offer tentative insights as to how climate change may affect Florida's future.

BEAUTY AND VULNERABILITY OF FLORIDA

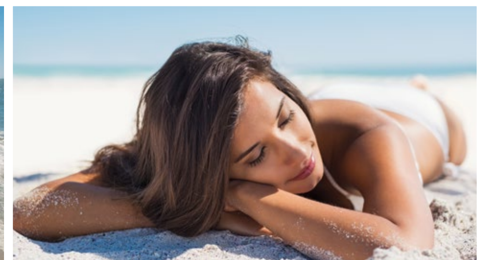
Florida is one of the states most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. With its

Hurrican Irma struck Florida in 2017, causing deaths and widespread damage.

FotoKina/Shutterstock.com

Florida's beachfronts are a key draw for tourists.

Radoslav Cajkovic/Shutterstock.com



Sunbathing is a top activity associated with Florida.

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favorable climate and beautiful beaches, the region is understandably popular with tourists. However, as hurricanes become more common and more severe, prospective visitors may not want to vacation in an area where the seafront has lost its appealing aesthetic and where they may also fear for their safety. As Florida's income largely depends on tourism, any decline to the number of visitors would significantly affect the state budget and the population's livelihood.

In response, local communities across Florida have been developing and implementing adaptation measures that include, among others, installation of storm water pumps, upgrades to storm water and sewer systems, and suitable updates to building codes. However, as these efforts are being undertaken by communities without state coordination or oversight, they are sporadic and disjointed, and lack sufficient consistency.

To provide Florida with a framework for thinking about how climate change may affect the state's future, the team of colleagues used the social representations theory to understand the likely effects of climate change on tourists choosing Florida as a holiday destination.

SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS HELP MAKE SENSE

The theory proposes that social groups develop a shared meaning of a new, unfamiliar phenomenon by aligning it with what is already a familiar and comfortable representation. These representations come from a combination of direct experience, mass media exposure and social interactions that help individuals define and organize their reality in the context of their cultural and social world. Social representations distort reality to preserve the existing preconceptions and become particularly important when dealing with issues subject to debate, like climate change. Even though these are not logical or coherent thought patterns, and are therefore full of contradictions, they may provide tentatively useful insights as to the direction in which attitudes may affect decision-making.

There are three mechanisms of social representations: anchoring, objectification and personification. Anchoring is a type of cultural assimilation that makes the unknown known by relating it to an already assimilated phenomenon, which includes naming or use of metaphors, for example, describing the planet as "sick" or "on the way to die". Meanwhile, objectification works by transforming the unknown into something concrete that a person can perceive with their senses, for example, images of people escaping floods caused by climate change that are used in mass media. A special type of objectification is personification where individuals assimilate the unknown through a person who is strongly associated with the phenomenon, for example, former American vice-president Al Gore as a stand-in for climate change.

FLORIDA IS ONE OF THE STATES MOST VULNERABLE TO THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE.

An increase in storms could be offputting for visitors.

majicphotos/Shutterstock.com

City of Miami Beach after Hurrican Irma.

Mia2you/Shutterstock.com

The opportunity to take part in watersports was a key motivation behind choosing Florida as a destination.

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CHANGING THEORY INTO INSIGHTS

While the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change declared warming of the global climate system as "unequivocal" with many of the changes observed since the 1950s unprecedented over millennia, doubt remains in the public's eye. Understanding how social representations of climate change might affect tourists' choice of destination allows particular locations to prepare for shifts in seasonal demand and to prevent changes to their regions that might become associated with discomfort or dissatisfaction.

As theory of social representations suggests that views and opinions stated in surveys reflect representations of realities that are commonly shared, the group conducted a cross-sectional survey on former Florida visitors, to explore how consequences of climate change might affect their decision to come again. Consideration was given to phenomena that included unacceptable changes to temperature, rainfall, cloud cover or wind, disappearance of beaches or increased spread of tropical disease, and others. All the phenomena chosen are well-documented consequences of climate change reported elsewhere in the world. Although no explicit reference to climate change was made in the survey, it is likely that respondents associated words and phrases with climate change nonetheless.

SURVEY RESULTS

Five hundred and nine individuals took part in an online survey, and 432 surveys were included in the final analysis, following data examination for outliers and distribution assumptions. More than half of participants were male and the median age of respondents was in the range of 25–34 years old. In the past, visitors travelled to Florida mostly to sunbathe on the beach, relax, swim, observe marine wildlife, fish or pursue water sports.

Data analysis revealed that levels of anchoring did have an effect on the declared likelihood of a repeat visit under provided scenarios. A low level of anchoring – where people declared limited worry about climate change – was associated with no change to the likelihood of visit. At the same time, people who reported a high level of anchoring – had high concerns over climate change – were less likely to choose the same destination again.

At the same time, the study detected no relationship between objectification or personification on the declared likelihood of repeat visit. In addition, social representations of climate change seemed to have no effect on the declared likelihood of repeat visit of a place with implemented adaptation measures aimed to prevent or limit climate change-related consequences.

TOURISM IS ONE AREA WHERE CLIMATE CHANGE MAY HAVE A PARTICULARLY STRONG IMPACT ON THOUGHTS, PLANS AND BEHAVIORS

INSIGHTS FOR FLORIDA TOURISM

In conclusion, this study suggests that attitudes toward climate change have a small effect on the projected decision to visit a destination. However, it is important to note that participants in this survey were not deterred from declaring a visit to Florida when told about climate change adaptations. This suggests that the state should not fear a concerted effort to lessen any possible damage caused by climate change. The fear is that it would keep tourists away prematurely; in fact, introduction of such adaptations might be welcomed by people highly concerned about the state of the planet, who declared they're more likely to visit if adaptations are put in place. Nevertheless, the results of this study should be treated with caution. Analysis of projected tourist intentions offers only a small glimpse into a decision-making process and does not directly determine future behavior. In addition, study participants were not randomly selected and the sample was skewed toward a younger and lower income demographic, not necessarily representative of the average population visiting Florida. Future research should look to qualitative methods to elucidate tourist attitudes on climate change and how they may affect visits.

RESEARCHERS IN FOCUS

PERSONAL RESPONSE

What would be your recommendation regarding strategy that the state of Florida should adopt in light of impending climate change?

" In light of the pressing climate challenges confronting Florida, it is imperative that state, county and city governments acknowledge the importance of the natural environment, especially its rivers, streams, waterways and coastlines, as it is integral to the future economic prosperity of the state – a state which already receives in excess of 120 million out-of-state visitors per annum – and its unique way of life. Any measures to minimize flooding, inundation of low-lying lands and saltwater intrusion are critical along with initiatives to minimize the loss of high-value beaches and the collapse of coastal ecosystems and loss of biodiversity. "

Are there popular tourist destinations that, in your opinion, serve as examples of good practice in implementing climate change adaptations that maintain tourist traffic despite climate change having taken effect?

" Coping strategies of destinations that have long been struggling with climatic issues may provide directions for future strategies. The Canary Islands, for example, in the Atlantic Ocean, have historically had a desert climate. Over the years, these islands adopted best practices of water-friendly irrigation systems to continue prospering by using minimal water resources. However, the climatic issues have been worsening with increased heat waves and Saharan dust events due to global warming. Scientific studies revealed the need for climate-based policies inclusive of all sectors for the islands' resilience against climatic or non-climatic shocks (Hernandez, Pereira, & Barbosa, 2018).

Hernandez, Y., Pereira, Â. G., & Barbosa, P. (2018). Resilient futures of a small island: A participatory approach in Tenerife (Canary Islands) to address climate change. *Environmental Science & Policy*, 80, 28-37. "

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The team's research interests include international tourism management and destination marketing and management, with a particular focus on sustainable tourism and destination resilience in Florida.

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Dr. Alan Fyall

Dr. Alan Fyall is Visit Orlando Endowed Chair of Tourism Marketing at the Rosen College of Hospitality Management and is a member of UCF's National Center for Integrated Coastal Research. His current research interests relate to coastal tourism and destination resilience in Florida, the Caribbean and South East Asia.

E: alan.fyall@ucf.edu **T:** +1 (407) 903 8808
W: https://hospitality.ucf.edu/person/alan-fyall/

Dr. Asli Tasci

Dr. Asli Tasci is Associate Professor of Tourism and Hospitality Marketing at the Rosen College of Hospitality Management, University of Central Florida. Her research interests include tourism and hospitality marketing, particularly consumer behavior. She has completed a number of studies measuring destination image and branding with a cross-cultural perspective.

E: asli.tasci@ucf.edu **T:** +1 (407) 903 8197
W: https://hospitality.ucf.edu/person/asli-d-a-tasci/

Dr. Jill Fjelstul

Dr. Jill Fjelstul is Associate Professor of Private Club Management and the Director of Hospitality in Sports at the Rosen College of Hospitality Management. Her current research interests include drive tourism, electric-based vehicles and related technologies, and the sustainability of nature-based destinations.

E: jill.fjelstul@ucf.edu **T:** +1 (407) 903 8096
W: https://hospitality.ucf.edu/person/jill-fjelstul/

Dr. Roberta Atzori

Dr. Roberta Atzori is Assistant Professor at California State University, Monterey Bay, where she teaches and conducts research within the Sustainable Hospitality Management Program. Her research interests include sustainable tourism and hospitality, and climate change mitigation and adaptation in tourism destinations and hospitality businesses.

E: ratzori@csumb.edu **T:** +1 (831) 582 5278
W: https://csumb.edu/directory/people/roberta-atzori

SHOPPING AROUND

Can good corporate social responsibility lead to positive service recoveries?

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Good customer service is key to brand loyalty.

We have all experienced 'bad service', whether it be at the hands of ill-tempered waiting staff or a poorly trained shop manager, and you wouldn't be alone if you had regaled the story to friends and claimed, 'they've lost me as a customer forever!' But have you ever been won back? And if you were, what was it that persuaded you to return? Some of the latest research from Ms. Heidi Albus and Dr. Heejung Ro at Rosen College for Hospitality Management investigates whether knowledge of a company's corporate social responsibility might have a significant effect on 'service recovery'.

Service recovery, simply put, is when a company or organization resolves a situation with a dissatisfied customer, resulting in the conversion of that customer from an unhappy one to a returning and potentially loyal one. It might be that your meal is offered to you for free after it is served to you following a long wait; you feel compensated and so you return to the establishment again. Or perhaps you receive a faulty item from an online retailer, but they swiftly send out a replacement as well as some store vouchers for goodwill, so you go on to recommend them to a friend. In fact, service recovery can sometimes be handled so effectively, that customers are even happier after a bad situation is resolved than they ever would have been if the service had just been delivered as it should be in the first place. This has been termed the 'service recovery paradox'.

A positive experience with a company or brand may result in a 'halo effect', even in the event of a service failure and recovery. In a marketing context, the halo effect can be described as a situation where the customer favors a product or service from a company as a result of their good experience with a different product or service which has already been provided. For example, having had a positive experience with a mobile phone provider, you might choose to switch to the same brand when your broadband deal comes up for renewal. In these circumstances, such a halo effect could result in brand loyalty and consequently contribute to the brand strength. A poor customer service reputation can be as damaging for a brand as a poor product, and can lead to the opposite of a halo effect: a 'horn effect'. A brand's perceived corporate social responsibility is acknowledged as an important contributing factor to a company's positive branding, and therefore the catalyst for a halo effect, but in a service recovery context, could a customer's perceptions of a company's corporate social responsibility help lead to a resolution and the return of the client?

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While negative service encounters can occur, it is the response to them, the service recovery, that is crucial to the customer's lasting impression.

Effective service recovery can convert an unhappy customer into a loyal one.

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A tip can indicate a customer's satisfaction.

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Corporate social responsibility is an organization's effort to practice both ethically and fairly within the organization as well as to possibly contribute to some social cause or effect some social good beyond anything that would financially benefit the company itself or that which it is legally contracted to carry out. In terms of the latter, a company might donate a pair of shoes to a community in need for every pair bought by a paying customer, or might make a point of advertising the fact that it only buys cocoa from a confirmed Fairtrade provider despite this produce being more expensive and reducing profit margins.

Nowadays, there are many more legal requirements relating to a company's corporate social responsibility than there used to be, and much of a brand's social contribution may actually be legally and ethically necessary rather than extra. Either way, visible and relatable policies can have a very constructive effect on brand reputation overall. It could even be argued that the act of being a 'good' corporate citizen is no longer exclusively a clever marketing ploy used by some, but a minimum expected by consumers. In recent years, popular concern about climate change and environmental/ecological disasters has led to many companies and organizations choosing 'green practices' as part of their flagship corporate social responsibility strategy. Evidence of a corporation's efforts to reduce its carbon footprint has become an almost essential element of marketing strategy in an ever-competitive global economy. This can lead to a halo effect, whereby the brand's strength is increased as a result of consumer knowledge about its practices, even if they have never used the company's products or services previously.

> *A BRAND'S PERCEIVED CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IS ACKNOWLEDGED AS AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTING FACTOR TO A COMPANY'S POSITIVE BRANDING…*

RESEARCH AND RESULTS

At first glance, service recovery and corporate social responsibility are two separate marketing strategies: the first mainly aims at retaining current customers and locking in repeat custom following a negative encounter; the second intends to catch the attention of new consumers and reinforce brand reputation with current consumers. However, hospitality research leads at our own Rosen College of Hospitality Management think that within a service encounter there might be a demonstrable positive relationship between the two.

Ms. Heidi Albus and Dr. Heejung Ro propose in a recent paper published in the *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research* that corporate social responsibility could be an influence on customer perceptions and behavioral intentions within a service recovery situation. Using a casual restaurant as the setting for the research, Albus and Ro focus on the halo effect of consumer perspectives on the company's green practices. They wanted to know how these discernments might help mitigate any negative feelings towards the experience and brand, as well as contribute to a good service recovery. The authors also posited before carrying out the study that the halo effect might be stronger in the recovery of a negative

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CSR might include sponsored volunteer days for staff.

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Carbon offsetting is one way of having an environmental slant to CSR.

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Using Fairtrade certified products can highlight that a company cares about workers' rights.

scenario than in the aftermath of a positive one (the aforementioned 'service recovery paradox'). Providing empirical evidence of these hypotheses could be invaluable to corporations with regards to ongoing marketing strategies.

In the first part of the experiment, participants were presented with a company description which included information about either its positive or negative green practices or thirdly did not mention green practices at all. In the second part of the study, the participants took part in a role-play where, in a casual restaurant setting, a service failure was recovered. The failure involved an inattentive server and the recovery was played out as either an apology from management and compensation (positive) or a delayed management response and no apology or compensation (negative). The participants were questioned after each part. After analysis and processing of the results of the surveys, Albus and Ro concluded that it was indeed the case that a corporate social responsibility halo effect could play a critical role in a service encounter. As expected, knowledge of positive corporate social responsibility led to a significantly increased overall chance of customer satisfaction, trust, repeat patronage and word-of-mouth recommendations. But did the experiment prove the second part of the authors' theory; that corporate social responsibility could have a direct effect specifically on the outcome of a service failure and recovery?

Interestingly, the researchers found that there was an interaction effect between awareness of the company's green practices and service recovery in terms of trust, word-of-mouth recommendations and repeat patronage. Customer satisfaction was, however, found to be less affected. These results suggest that whilst satisfaction following a particular interaction with a company relies on a positive service recovery after a service failure, a consumer's overall perception of a company and ongoing behavioral intentions can be more greatly affected by knowledge of its positive corporate social responsibility, even after a negative encounter. Further to this, when a positive service recovery was coupled with positive green practices, positive service recovery effects were magnified, whilst negative green practices greatly reduced the effectiveness of any positive service recovery efforts.

…WHEN A POSITIVE SERVICE RECOVERY WAS COUPLED WITH POSITIVE GREEN PRACTICES, POSITIVE SERVICE RECOVERY EFFECTS WERE MAGNIFIED…

RETURNS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Albus and Ro's recent study has demonstrated that there is almost certainly a relationship between, and benefit of, coupling a positive corporate social responsibility reputation with positive service encounters and recoveries in order to gain customer trust and increase the potential for customer return and word-of-mouth recommendations. This information will be vital to corporation marketing strategists who may be weighing up the worth of growing their company's positive corporate social responsibility, as it appears that it is in fact doubly effective. It both strengthens a brand and increases the potential for positive service encounters, even in the event of a bad customer experience, thereby not just attracting new consumers but maintaining current ones. Initial outlay to support social good will almost certainly be returned in kind by a bigger and more permanent customer base.

It is of course probable that in service industries other than the casual dining sector – with different customer types who may have varying senses or ideas of social responsibility and with alternative ways of advertising corporate social responsibility – different results to those presented in this study would occur. With this in mind, Albus and Ro do stipulate that further research into the phenomenon needs to be done. From a managerial point of view though, it is clear that a well-balanced combination of positive corporate social responsibility and service recovery where necessary, could play a key role in securing repeat customer returns and recommendations.

RESEARCHERS IN FOCUS

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This research examines the interplay between corporate social responsibility and service recovery.

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Albus, Heidi & Ro, Heejung. (2017). Corporate social responsibility: The effect of green practices in a service recovery. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 41(1), 41-65.

PERSONAL RESPONSE

How do you plan to build on this research?

" Extending from this research, Dr. Ro continues conducting research about other types of corporate social responsibility (e.g., LGBT friendliness) and managers' responses to negative online reviews. "

Which elements of corporate social responsibility do you think are particularly persuasive to customers?

" Customers may respond to CSR differently depending on the type of CSR. Therefore, the fit between customers and type of CSR is important. When customers identify themselves with a company's CSR efforts, they would be more likely to be influenced. "

What inspired you to investigate this aspect of corporate social responsibility?

" We believed that environmental sustainability initiatives (e.g., green practices) are relevant to the restaurant industry and appeal to a broad range of customers compared to other types of CSR, such as philanthropic giving, LGBT rights, etc. "

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Ms. Heidi Albus

Ms. Heidi Albus holds a M.S. from Rosen College of Hospitality Management at University of Central Florida. This research was her Master's Thesis.

E: halbus@knights.ucf.edu **T:** +1 (407) 716 3282

Dr. Heejung Ro

Dr. Heejung Ro is a faculty member of Rosen College of Hospitality Management at University of Central Florida. Her research interests include service encounters with a focus on customer complaining behavior, service recovery, consumption emotions, and gay/lesbian customers' service evaluations.

E: Heejung.Ro@ucf.edu **T:** +1 (407) 903 8075

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES ARE RELEVANT TO THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY AND APPEAL TO A BROAD RANGE OF CUSTOMERS.

THE ROLE OF HOSPITALITY SERVICE QUALITY IN THIRD PLACES FOR THE ELDERLY

As a result of the ageing baby-boomer generation and increasing average life expectancy, the active elderly is a growing population who enjoy their later lives. In order to support these individuals, it is essential to provide appropriate housing and services. In addition to the provision of these resources, it is also important that these are of a high quality in order to adequately meet resident needs. Dr. Denver Severt and Dr. Ji-Eun Lee from Rosen College of Hospitality Management have explored the role of hospitality service quality in a Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC) setting.

The US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) estimates that nearly 70% of the elderly will require some form of long-term care, including appropriate housing types and supportive care services in senior health care communities. One type of senior housing facilities and care community is a Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC), which represents a hybrid of hospitality and health care services. CCRCs provide a number of services, including onsite pharmacy, insurance billing, bank, swimming pool, health/wellness program, fitness area, beauty or barber shop, onsite nursing/physicians, physical therapy, water aerobics, paint classes, transportation to events, additional meals, transportation, recreational therapy, onsite counselling, as well as home health care. These are long-term life-care communities that also act as a home for residents.

Previous studies have attempted to measure service quality and food quality in CCRCs, proposing structure, process, and outcome as important variables in assessing quality of care and service delivery. However, in addition to hospitality and service quality, the long-term nature of the relationship of the elderly residents with their CCRC is also significant.

In particular, the perception of a CCRC as a suitable 'third place' is important. Third places are defined as "public places that host the regular, voluntary, informal and happily anticipated gatherings of individuals beyond the realms of home and work."

According to the relational third-place theory framework proposed by Rosenbaum, older consumers develop meanings related to a particular place based on their ability to satisfy consumption, such as food, prices, ambient conditions and layout of the place, as well as social and emotional needs through companionship and support. Perceived deeper meanings of the place exist and can be categorized as place-as-practical, place-as-

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Exercise facilities like a gym are available in CCRCs.

Informal meetings provide valuable opportunities to socialize.

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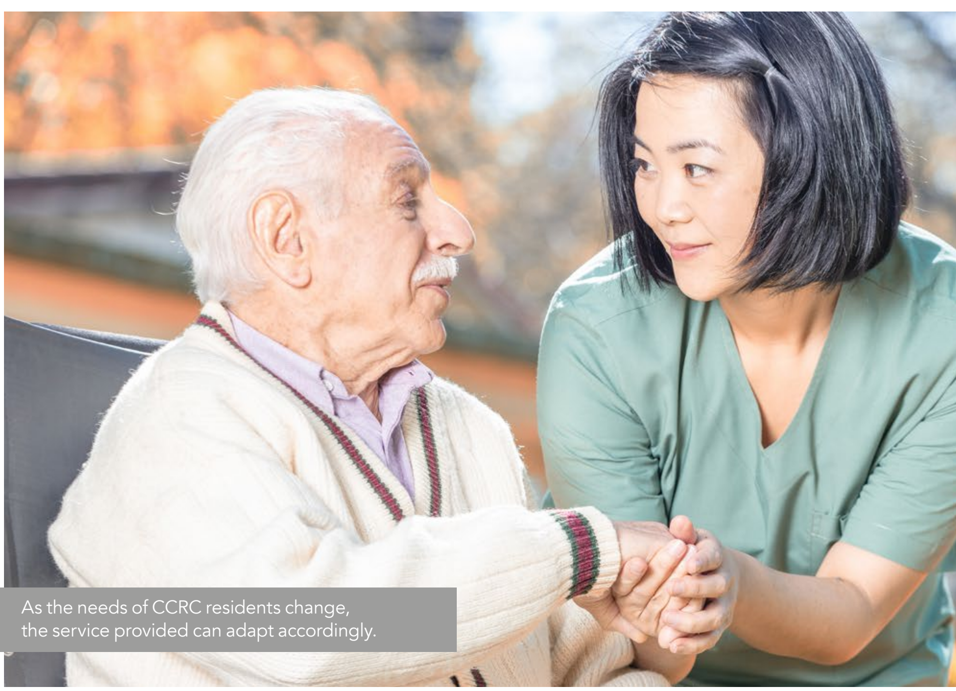

As the needs of CCRC residents change, the service provided can adapt accordingly.

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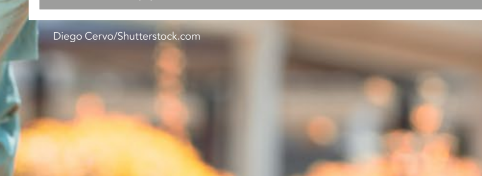

Providing space for leisure, exercising and socializing is key to increasing residents' satisfaction.

Joshua Resnick/Shutterstock.com

Tom Wang/Shutterstock.com

gathering, or place-as-home. The perceived meanings of the place influence an individual's loyalty to it.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THIRD SPACES FOR THE ELDERLY

Elderly people often experience loneliness as a result of losing a family member, a family unit or a divorce. These feelings can also be brought about by physical illness or a diminished social group. These circumstances exacerbate the need for third-place relationships to be established and these are sought out by the elderly, either consciously or unconsciously.

Research has shown that individuals who do find supportive relationships within these communities obtain greater health and longevity. For elderly people in CCRCs, the role of the third space might be particularly important as a result of the enhanced vulnerability, loss of freedom, and increasingly compromised health, on top of the loneliness they are already experiencing. There is therefore a need for the provision of physical, instrumental and emotional support within CCRCs so that these individuals are able to have all of their needs met within one place. Dr. Denver Severt and Dr. Ji-Eun Lee thus sought to explore how hospitality and service quality relate to third-place components of the relational third-place theory and residential loyalty.

If residents' experiences within a CCRC greatly exceeds their expectations, they will be highly satisfied and likely to share their experience with others. As individuals tend to stay in CCRCs on a long-term basis, they consider these places as a final residence. High levels of satisfaction and positive word of mouth is thus trustworthy information for potential future residents and their families. Based upon these ideas, Severt and Lee proposed two key hypotheses in their research: resident needs (physical, instrumental, and emotionally supportive resources) positively influence overall place meaning in a CCRC and residents' perceived place meaning positively influences loyalty outcomes in a CCRC.

EXPLORING THE CCRC AS A THIRD PLACE

Severt and Lee conducted their research within a CCRC of more than 300 residents in four different types of communities, including residential, apartment, assisted living and nursing home, located within the Southeast of the US. Surveys were sent to just under 300 individuals who had been defined as having sufficient cognitive competence, health and energy to participate. The survey measured three different components. The first was how the CCRC was performing in terms of meeting residents' physical, instrumental and emotional needs. The second was how residents felt about the CCRC as a place-as-practical, -gathering and -home. The final aspect was how satisfied they were with their experience in the CCRC.

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ELDERLY PEOPLE OFTEN EXPERIENCE LONELINESS AS A RESULT OF LOSING A FAMILY MEMBER, A FAMILY UNIT OR A DIVORCE.

Social and emotional support can help residents to develop place meaning.

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Of the surveys distributed, 157 were completed, representing a response rate of 54%. The majority of participants were female (66%) and were aged between 61 and 106 years. Most of the sample were white (98%) and were staying in the residential and apartment classification of the CCRC (82%). The vast majority of participants had lived there for over a year.

Results showed that the components of hospitality service quality in CCRCs (physical, instrumental and emotional support) strongly influenced residents' perceived meaning of place. This suggests that residents seek and find compensation for the loss of social and emotional support from their lives in the CCRC. A high level of satisfaction with the provision of these forms of support leads to a strong formation of place meaning, that is, place-as-practical, place-as-gathering, and place-as-home, in line with the relational third-place theory.

Findings also highlighted that physically, clean facilities are an essential element within hospitality service. In addition to physical support, there are a number of aspects that are vital within CCRC settings, including reliable delivery of promised services, empathetic community environment as well as knowing and caring for the individualized needs of residents. Environments rich in these attributes reduce social and emotional loneliness felt by residents, facilitating the ability to live active lives. Conversely, environments which do not provide these attributes can lead to depression and inactivity for individuals.

There are a number of industry implications of these findings. There is clearly a need to establish a culture within the industry based upon hospitality and service. This can be achieved in three key ways. The first of these is to design programs and resources that meet third-place needs, which will aid in the development of positive emotions, which are hugely important within a CCRC. This will also provide social and emotional support through staff and other residents within the CCRC. The increased social engagement will enhance resident health and longevity. Secondly, there is a need for programs that aid in the transition from third places to community places. It is important to consider the unmet needs of different residents and offer them a range of third-place substitutes. This can only be achieved by getting to know these individuals on a deep level. Thirdly, if management conceptualized the home and third place as converging into one place in the lives of residents, it may positively influence the entire culture of a CCRC. Through concerted efforts to maintain a hybrid of a third place while also having the trust and comfort of home, resident experiences can be optimized.

> *IT IS IMPORTANT TO CONSIDER THE UNMET NEEDS OF DIFFERENT RESIDENTS AND OFFER THEM A RANGE OF THIRD-PLACE SUBSTITUTES.*

RESEARCHERS IN FOCUS

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This research examines CCRCs from a hospitality perspective to shed light on the important factors for residents' wellbeing.

REFERENCES

Key paper

Lee, J. E., & Severt, D. (2017). The role of hospitality service quality in third places for the elderly: An exploratory study. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, 58(2), 214-221.

PERSONAL RESPONSE

What inspired you to apply hospitality theory to a retirement context?

" Vulnerable groups, such as individuals in senior living, are susceptible to many wrongs. Doing the least harm possible means promoting a culture of hospitality and service excellence. In negative service arenas such as retirement communities, no one truly wants to find themselves there. However, when they inevitably go to these communities, it is essential to find one that understands the community as the home – a safe space – of all residents. In this way, hospitality should be right at home in these communities. Additionally, investors in these expanding developments readily acknowledge that a culture that is hospitable is a strategic advantage. "

Tom Wang/Shutterstock.com

Dr. Denver Severt

Denver Severt, Ph.D., has had 25 years' experience in all phases of the restaurant industry from front-line service positions to general manager positions. Denver teaches guest services management, managerial accounting, and financial accounting for the UCF Rosen College of Hospitality Management. Denver's research interests involve linking customer and employee satisfaction programs.

A: 9907 Universal Blvd, Orlando, FL 32819
E: Denver.Severt@ucf.edu **T:** +1 (407) 903 8036
W: www.hospitality.ucf.edu

Dr Ji-Eun Lee

Ji-Eun Lee, Ph.D., received her doctorate from Purdue University. Her research interests include hospitality service management and organizational behavior.

T: +1 765-586-8803

RESIDENTS SEEK AND FIND COMPENSATION FOR THE LOSS OF SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT FROM THEIR LIVES IN THE CCRC.

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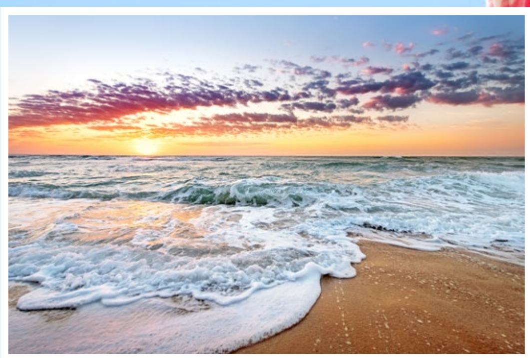
HOLIDAY RESEARCH:

How academia is informing a destination marketing organization



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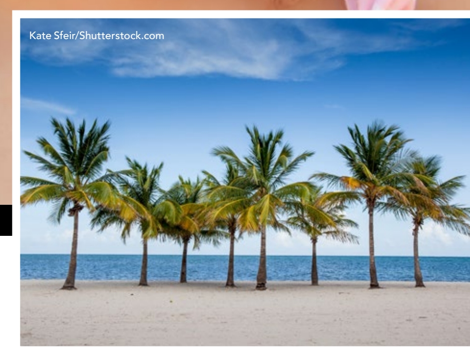

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Destination marketing is a changing industry; the advent of the internet and smartphones has led to an explosion in the number of destination marketing companies looking to be the reason you visit somewhere. So how does one destination marketing organization (DMO) stand out from another? How much has the role of DMOs altered in recent years? Misty Johantgen, Chief Operating Officer of Experience Kissimmee, one of the largest DMOs in Florida, is here to tell us more.

Traditionally a destination marketing organization (DMO) is responsible for promoting a particular place as a great destination for outsiders, be they day-trippers or holiday-makers. They work to improve public perception of their community, marketing it as attractive, safe and fashionable. DMOs are essential to many communities, as their work ensures continued investment in areas, improving quality of life and increasing job opportunities.

In the case of Experience Kissimmee, one of the largest destination management organizations in Florida, the goal is to encourage as many people as possible (both national and international) to visit Osceola County, Florida. In this interview with Experience Kissimmee's Chief Operating Officer Misty Johantgen, we found out how DMOs are adapting to the increasingly internet-led industry and how new research from academia is informing the organization.

TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND HOW YOU BECAME INVOLVED IN DESTINATION MARKETING?

Little did I know when I was studying to become a high school English teacher that I would one day wind up as the Chief Operating Officer for a destination marketing organization (DMO). My road to destination marketing included a stint as a trainer in a savings and loan office to overseeing the membership effort for a private business club, to directing the membership program for the Orlando/Orange County Convention & Visitors Bureau, Inc. My 24 years with the O/OCCVB, known today as Visit Orlando, provided ample and wonderful opportunities to grow my knowledge of destination marketing. Just over four years ago, I was able to take the knowledge I had gained while in Orlando and put it to great use here at Experience Kissimmee.

TELL US ABOUT EXPERIENCE KISSIMMEE? WHAT IS ITS SCALE AND TASKS?

Experience Kissimmee is the official destination marketing organization for Osceola County. Experience Kissimmee markets and promotes Kissimmee and the County globally to visitors,

A big challenge that DMO managers will face is how to remain relevant within the travel space.

The lake front at Kissimmee, Florida.

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An aerial view of Kissimmee, Florida.

sports events rightsholders, meeting planners, the tour and travel trade as well as the media. With a $23M+ annual budget, the 55-person Experience Kissimmee team develops and executes programs designed to grow overnight visitation – or "heads in beds" as we say in the industry. Those overnight stays result in a positive economic impact to both our 900 partner businesses as well as the community at large. The Kissimmee message is furthered by our contracted marketing and public relations representatives in Argentina, the Benelux, Brazil, China, Colombia, India, Mexico, and the UK.

WHAT IS YOUR MAIN RESPONSIBILITY AT EXPERIENCE KISSIMMEE?

The Chief Operating Officer job description states I am responsible for providing the leadership, management and vision necessary to ensure that Experience Kissimmee has the proper operational controls, administrative and reporting procedures and people systems in place to effectively grow the organization and ensure its financial strength and operating efficiency. In this role I oversee the Finance, Human Resources, Industry Partner Relations, Community Relations and Events Management teams. What these words do not convey is the human element that is as much a responsibility as the business element. Our organization enjoys tremendous success because of the amazing team we've built since we privatized close to five years ago. My role as COO is as much about coaching, counseling and cheering the team on as it is watching over the day-to-day aspects of the business.

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS CHALLENGES IN THE FUTURE FOR DESTINATION MANAGERS?

I think a big challenge that DMO managers will face is how to remain relevant within the travel space. Printed guides and comprehensive travel planning websites are no longer the "go to" for consumers planning their vacations, meetings or other activities. DMO websites are now just one in a list of 40, 50, or even 60 sites that consumers visit while in the planning and buying stages of travel. Serving as a destination's official source of travel information will remain a key role, but DMOs will need to shift from the destination marketing organization mindset to a destination management organization model. Participating in both the destination's product development

Misty Johantgen

COO, Experience Kissimmee
W: https://www.experiencekissimmee.com/

An airboat in Florida marshes.

Sunset over Lake Osceola.

Osceola County offers many family-friendly activities.

In the future I see an even stronger collaboration between the two fields of research and destination marketing.

as well as helping identify solutions to a destination's issues (e.g. homelessness, transportation issues, etc.) will become part of a DMO's everyday role.

YOU WORK WITH THE DICK POPE SR. INSTITUTE FOR TOURISM RESEARCH. HOW DOES THIS RESEARCH THROUGH THE DICK POPE INSTITUTE AND OTHER UNIVERSITIES AFFECT EXPERIENCE KISSIMMEE'S OPERATIONS?

It's funny you asked this question. I used to conduct a monthly orientation for new DMO members. When talking about the organization's resources, I listed the DMO's Research Department as the number one resource for members. After all, I would explain, you can't write a good marketing plan if it isn't based off good, solid research. In a similar manner, Experience Kissimmee relies on the research of partners like the Dick Pope Institute (DPI) to drive our programming decisions. When Experience Kissimmee needed an update to our vacation rental home study (originally conducted by DPI), we immediately turned to DPI to conduct the update. Dr. Robertico Croes and his team worked closely with me and our Board of Directors Task Force to ensure the update would provide the information needed to support the vacation rental home marketing programs that Experience Kissimmee develops.

WITHOUT THE ACADEMIC COMPONENT HOW DO YOU THINK DESTINATION MARKETING WOULD BE DIFFERENT?

A successful destination marketing program design and implementation process could not exist without the academic component of research. Sure, a DMO could create a program based on anecdotal information about certain markets or a gut feeling on what consumers might be interested in. Measuring the effectiveness of those programs, though, would be extremely difficult. In this era of transparency, the academic component becomes the "objective outsider with the briefcase" – the license to defend the programs, their design as well as ROI. Without the academic component, destination marketing lacks defensibility – positive or negative!

HOW DO YOU SEE THE COLLABORATION BETWEEN RESEARCH AND DESTINATION MARKETING EVOLVING IN THE FUTURE?

In the future I see an even stronger collaboration between the two fields of research and destination marketing. As technology continues to evolve, researchers will have even greater access to data about our customers than we do today. Already we utilize tools that can tell us when and where a consumer saw our messaging, when they first came into the market and where they visited while in market. Analyzing this data and providing insights into how the data can be interpreted will fall to our research partners. Destination marketers will have to work hand in hand with their research partners to effectively utilize the data to make smart, strategic decisions about the focus of their programs and campaigns.

DICK POPE SR. INSTITUTE FOR TOURISM STUDIES

The Dick Pope Sr. Institute for Tourism Studies is based at at the University of Central Florida.

In 1979, the University of Central Florida established the Dick Pope Sr. Institute for Tourism Studies (DPI), after receiving $25,000 from the Florida Public Relations Association (FPRA), Orange Blossom Chapter. The name honors the late Dick Pope Sr., the former owner of Cypress Gardens, one of Florida's first modern-day attractions, and the first commercial tourist entrepreneur in Florida.

The Institute was established for the purpose of (1) conducting proprietary and public domain research, (2) promulgating information to the public at large about the contributions of the hospitality and tourism industry, especially along economic, sociological, environmental, and quality-of-life dimensions, and (3) carrying out credit and non-credit educational activities.

Since 2005, DPI has secured over $1.4 million in contracts and grants for research purposes. Its extensive client list includes:
categorical sampling
destination management organizations
convention and visitor bureaus
hotels
hospitals
vacation homes
restaurants
theme parks

DPI has also played a significant role in facilitating over $4 million in non-credit educational programs with international partners. UCF's Rosen College doctoral students are extraordinarily essential to the Institute's ability to meet its objectives and its commitments. In addition, contracts and grants funded through DPI have been an invaluable source of external funds to support graduate assistantships for the doctoral students.

APPLIED INNOVATIVE RESEARCH
The Dick Pope Sr. Institute for Tourism Studies is the intelligent choice for private and public domain hospitality research, both domestically and abroad. We have conducted research for organizations in countries as widespread as Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, South Africa, Ecuador, Aruba and South Korea.

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF TOURISM
We are dedicated to increasing the benefits of tourism through research, public awareness and education. We invite you to visit the Dick Pope Sr. Institute for Tourism Studies digital collection to access our portfolio of research, publications, and white paper series. You may access the digital collection via this link: https://stars.library.ucf.edu/dickpopeinstitute/

Doctoral students from UCF's Rosen College contribute to the research at DPI.

Rosen College of Hospitality Management, is among the top five hospitality and tourism colleges.

In 1983, the Institute's advisory board successfully lobbied the Florida University System's Board of Regents and created the Hospitality Management undergraduate degree program at UCF. Its successor, UCF Rosen College of Hospitality Management, is among the top five hospitality and tourism colleges in the world with five undergraduate degrees, a master's degree and a Ph.D. program in hospitality management.

HOW EFFECTIVE ARE VIRTUAL REALITY EXPERIENCES AS DESTINATION MARKETING TOOLS?

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New virtual reality devices have made the experience more accessible to more people.

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Destination marketing has evolved with the advent of new technologies.

How did you decide where to go on your last holiday? Did you see a picture-perfect paradise promoted on your social media feed? Once upon a time, planning your perfect holiday was organized with a trip to the local travel agency. In recent years you are more likely to pick your destination based on the most attractive advertisements at the top of an online travel agency website. Dr. Mathilda van Niekerk, Dr. Marissa Orlowski and Dr. Fevzi Okumus from Rosen College of Hospitality Management, along with Alessandra Marasco and Dr. Piera Buonincontri from the National Research Council's Institute for Research on Innovation and Services for Development (CNR-IRISS) have been researching an even more immersive and compelling destination marketing tool though; can virtual reality experiences persuade us to visit a destination?

Gone are the days where we tortured our relatives and close friends with a stack of printed photographs on our return from our annual holiday. Tourists now share their experiences and emotions about new places in real time – over the internet. This movement has fed into how successful destination marketing works in the 21st century. Destination marketing professionals have looked to exploit our cultural habits in recent years, promoting a particular country, region, city, place to stay or experience via a combination of social media marketing and search engine optimization. To be effective, destination marketers nowadays need to ensure websites are quick, striking and mobile-ready, they need to build a memorable and appealing brand for the place being endorsed and they must fully engage and interact with customers over social media, both before, during and after vacations.

Destination marketers can play a key role in the socioeconomic conditions of a particular place, bringing in private investment and tourist revenue, resulting in higher employment and a better quality of life for local residents. There is a balance to be struck though; over-tourism can lead to cultural dilution and the pricing out of local populations. Destination marketers hold a level of responsibility to preserve cultural practices, protect the environment and ecology and respect social norms. With the rise of disposable incomes in the Western world and an increase in interest in spending on experiences rather than things, the global tourist market has become progressively more competitive and crowded. Destination marketers should look for much more innovative and eye-catching ways to promote their 'product' and enhance the experience of holiday shopping, as well

The applications of virtual reality technology are broad, including destination marketing.

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as staying true to the values of the responsible promotion of place and culture.

The exponential growth in the availability and possession of smart mobile technologies – phones and tablets in particular – has been integral to the rise of the internet and social media in the West. With this has come the possibility for the use and development of accessible virtual reality technologies and applications by destination marketing organizations. Virtual reality marketing applications give potential visitors the chance to explore, experience and evaluate a destination before their physical visit. Recent advancements in the variety of technologies available to create virtual reality experiences, including wearable devices such as head-mounted displays, smart watches, wristbands and body-worn cameras, have enabled marketers to come up with new ways of enriching and personalizing the process of buying, having and sharing holidays. These technologies are at the sharp end of destination marketing, and along with more traditional online and social media methods, are shaping modern tourism.

VIRTUAL REALITY MARKETING APPLICATIONS GIVE POTENTIAL VISITORS THE CHANCE TO EXPLORE, EXPERIENCE AND EVALUATE A DESTINATION BEFORE THEIR PHYSICAL VISIT.

VIRTUAL REALITY VERSUS REAL LIFE

Can a virtual reality experience really influence not just what you know about a place you haven't visited yet, but the way you feel about it too? Can this influence stretch to how you actually experience a destination once you arrive, and how you communicate the trip after your return home? Whilst it has been acknowledged that virtual reality experiences and devices such as head-mounted displays can build awareness, interest and anticipation in relation to a destination, and are particularly suitable for delivering engaging content related to difficult to access cultural heritage sites, until now there has been little to no research into how this actually translates into traveler behavior intentions.

As a center of expertise in hospitality, with international key opinion leaders teaching and researching in state-of-the-art facilities, our faculty at Rosen College of Hospitality Management (University of Central Florida), along with their connections with industry partners, are well placed to carry out both cutting edge and topical research into virtual reality destination marketing. In a recent collaboration with researchers Alessandra Marasco and Dr. Piera Buonincontri from the National Research Council's Institute for Research on Innovation and Services

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Is it possible that a virtual reality experience might actually reduce your desire to see 'the real thing'?


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The Fontanelle Cemetery, an ossuary in a cave in Southern Italy, could appeal to 'dark tourists'.

for Development (CNR-IRISS) Naples, Italy, Rosen College's Dr. Mathilda van Niekerk, Dr. Marissa Orlowski and Dr. Fevzi Okumus have been investigating the impact of virtual reality experiences created with the newest wearable technologies on intentions to visit sites and attractions at a particular destination. Via survey results collected at a specific destination (Naples, Italy), the team examined the impact of perceived visual appeal and emotional involvement (following a virtual reality experience with a head-mounted display) on behavioral intentions towards the destination.

The research team employed an immersive virtual reality experience created for the promotion of the Fontanelle Cemetery, an ossuary in a cave in Southern Italy dating back to the 16th century. The experience involved wearing a head-mounted display in a dedicated cabin near the historic center of Naples; users were virtually immersed in the cemetery site and could explore it while the story of the cave was narrated to them visually and orally by actors. Perceived visual appeal and emotional involvement of the participants were measured by the researchers using a questionnaire.

The survey results led the researchers to conclude that perceived visual appeal had both a positive and significant impact on the intentions of potential visitors to the cemetery and led to emotional involvement with the site. However, emotional involvement itself, and the virtual reality experience's capacity to immerse the subject in the virtual environment, did not have a positive or significant effect on behavioral intentions. This is in contrast to previous studies and led the authors of the paper to suggest that such a virtual reality system may not be enough to engage users as potential future visitors.

It is possible that this result is a product of either the type of site studied (the cemetery itself may mainly appeal to a particular type of tourist interested in 'dark tourism' rather than a more general and casual sightseeing tourist) or as a result of the 'replacement effect' (an effect acknowledged and debated by destination marketing researchers in which virtual reality visits negate the need/desire for real-life visits to destinations). So, while this particular research supports the use of a virtual reality experience to create a visually appealing replica of a cultural heritage site that may translate into increased visits, it also instigates discussion of the possibility that in some cases such well put together experiences may lead to a lower rate of intention to visit places and attractions. It is clear that going forward, destination marketers need to think carefully about both aspects of such research results when creating marketing content using new technologies.

DESTINATION MARKETING ORGANIZATIONS NEED SUCH RESEARCH TO AID DECISION-MAKING REGARDING EXPENSIVE NEW VR TECHNOLOGIES.

IS THE FUTURE VIRTUAL?

This research, published in the *Journal of Destination Marketing and Management* is among one of the first research projects to empirically evaluate the influence of virtual reality experiences on destination visit intentions, and as such will be invaluable to destination marketing organizations looking to improve their marketing strategies. From a theoretical perspective, the study begins to add to the so far sparse literature confirming that virtual reality experiences should be considered as an important element in the toolkit of destination marketers, as well as introducing 'perceived visual appeal' and 'emotional involvement' as strongly related factors that influence behavioral intentions. It also highlights the particular importance of the visual attractiveness of the destination within the experience as a factor that leads to both emotional involvement and visits/revisits.

Destination marketing organizations need research such as this in order to aid decision-making regarding expensive new virtual reality technologies and devices and to ensure they remain ahead in the ever-competitive tourism market. As has always been the case, marketing strategies must still be assessed on a site-by-site basis; virtual reality may not be appropriate or successful for all sites and markets. Going forward, it appears that while virtual reality has a place along with the internet and social media in selling holiday destinations and attractions, there is still much we do not know about the impact it may have on the industry. Can it be effective as a teaser trailer for potential visitors? Will it become the cheaper and more convenient replacement for real travel? Could it be used to facilitate experiences of sites which are no longer (or have never been) accessible to the everyman because of environmental change or degradation? Will it become a sellable destination experience in itself?

RESEARCHERS IN FOCUS

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This research examines whether virtual reality experiences can be effective destination marketing tools.

FUNDING

Campania Region and the National Research Council's Institute for Research on Innovation and Services for Development (CNR-IRISS), Italy.

COLLABORATORS

National Research Council's Institute for Research on Innovation and Services for Development (CNR-IRISS), Italy.

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PERSONAL RESPONSE

Where do you stand on the debate regarding the possible 'replacement effect' of real-life visits by virtual reality visits?

" Marissa Orlowski: Virtual reality doesn't replace the experience, the adventures, or the memories of visiting the world. What it can do is create a unique opportunity to stimulate interest in travel and destinations. "

Do you think technology is making it easier or more difficult to successfully market a destination?

" Mathilda van Niekerk: Technology assists destination marketers to give us the freedom to visit the tourism destinations in the comfort of our living rooms. We can gather information on the best time to visit, see what to expect, prices for accommodation, activities and transportation and then make a much more informed decision on where we really want to go. Although technology can assist us to gain all the insights about a destination, it can also cause information overload. With so much information coming from so many different platforms, deciding where to go becomes more and more difficult. Although there are advantages and disadvantages of technology, it has definitely made it easier for DMOs to market destinations. They not only can provide information but also add visual components like 360-degree views of a destination which was not previously possible with traditional marketing methods. "

Dr. Mathilda van Niekerk

Dr. Mathilda van Niekerk is an Associate Professor in the Tourism, Events and Attractions (TEA) Department at the University of Central Florida's Rosen College of Hospitality Management, USA. Her research focuses on festivals and events, destination marketing and management and hospitality and strategic management. She has extensive experience in the planning and managing of mega-events and festivals.

E: Mathilda.vanniekerk@ucf.edu
T: +1 (407) 903 8052 **W:** https://hospitality.ucf.edu/person/mathilda-van-niekerk/

Dr. Marissa Orlowski

Dr. Marissa Orlowski is an Assistant Professor in the Foodservice and Lodging Management (FLM) Department at the University of Central Florida's Rosen College of Hospitality Management, USA. Her academic career is preceded by extensive management experience in the hospitality industry, and her primary research interest lies in the domain of food and beverage. She also serves as an Associate Editor for the International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management.

E: Marissa.orlowski@ucf.edu
T: +1 (407) 903 8170 **W:** https://hospitality.ucf.edu/person/marissa-orlowski

Dr. Fevzi Okumus

Dr. Fevzi Okumus is the CFHLA Preeminent Chair Professor within the Hospitality Services Department at the University of Central Florida's Rosen College of Hospitality Management, USA. Dr. Okumus' teaching and consultancy areas include hotel/lodging management, strategic management, leadership development, international hospitality management and introduction to hospitality and tourism.

E: fevzi.okumus@ucf.edu **T:** +1 (407) 903 8177
W: https://hospitality.ucf.edu/person/fevzi-okumus/

Rosen Research Focus | Dr. Jeeyeon Hahm & Dr. Kimberly S. Severt

SWEET HOME ALABAMA

A great place to visit?

Historic Sloss blast furnaces at Birmingham, Alabama.

Sean Pavone/Shutterstock.com

How we choose our leisure destinations is a critical insight required by cities and regions that rely on tourism to fund their economy. In this study of Alabama as a destination, Dr. Jeeyeon (Jeannie) Hahm of Rosen College of Hospitality Management, University of Central Florida, and Dr. Kimberly Severt of Department of Human Nutrition and Hospitality Management, The University of Alabama, consider how destination marketing must focus on factors important to tourists to encourage them to visit, and then ensure they are not disappointed.

When people choose where to go for their leisure breaks, whether a major vacation or just a short visit, a main limitation is the budget they have available. Even if we ignore the pull of global tourist options, within the US there are 50 states all enthusiastic to take those vacation dollars.

For Alabama, that's 49 other states competing to grab their share, each offering an attractive choice of natural wonders (such as the Grand Canyon, Miami Beach or Niagara Falls), cultural and historical treasures (Nashville, Cape Kennedy and Hollywood for example), and of course, the lure of the iconic 'man-made' US theme parks (think Disneyland/Disney World, Universal and Sea World). How does a state such as Alabama, where tourism is its largest industry, assess its performance and manage the process that brings those essential tourists?

In 2017, Alabama attracted 26.6 million visitors, spending $14.3 billion (an increase from 2016 of 7.1%). That accounted for a minimum of 186,906 direct and indirect jobs for the Alabama population. But even with that level of economic activity, Alabama is not even in the top 25 of the states and territories being selected as the destination of choice across the whole of the US. People who live in the state and those who have previously visited, know that it has plenty of natural resources, heritage and man-made attractions to offer. It has a wide variety of local foods, great outdoor activities, beautiful landscape and the renowned Southern hospitality. So why the low ranking in terms of visits?

FAMILIARITY AND PERCEIVED IMAGE

The assumptions made seem to be that there is, quite simply, a low level of familiarity (that is, too few people know what the state has to offer), and/or that the state has a negative image. However, previous research has been exploratory and is largely outdated. Destination marketing organizations (DMOs) need much better insight and to act on that intelligence. A low level of familiarity could be a result of insufficient and ineffective marketing messages; but if the problem is a negative image, then what has caused this? Looking to the future; how can attitudes and perceptions of Alabama be converted to a measurable positive intent to visit? Ultimately, how can Alabama ensure that, when tourists consider their destination choices, Alabama is one of those candidate destinations? The purpose of this study by Hahm and Severt is to investigate both the cognitive (thinking and knowledge) and the affective (feelings

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The downtown city skyline of Birmingham, Alabama.

Sean Pavone/Shutterstock.com

Alabama State Capitol in Montgomery, Alabama.

Bob Pool/Shutterstock.com

A typical southern mansion in Mobile, Alabama.

and emotions) perceptions of Alabama held by those who have visited the state and those who haven't.

ECONOMIC AND ACADEMIC BENEFITS

Obviously, a change in marketing strategy to improve awareness of Alabama's offerings and create positive visit intentions should have a direct economic benefit for the state. But in addition, the research would have a benefit for academia in providing insight into the relationships between destination familiarity, destination image and visit intentions. Previous documented research had focused on people who had actually visited Alabama; this study would seek to understand, in addition, the perceptions of those who have had no direct personal experience.

DESTINATION IMAGE

The first challenge was to define the concept of destination image. In fact, this has been a topic of considerable research for many decades. It is defined as the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person or a group of persons have about a destination (Crompton, 1979; Gallarza et al., 2002). However, most of the research has been quantitative or structured in nature, attempting generalization and frequency.

"It is a complex and subjective concept that is comprised of both cognitive (perceptions of individual attributes, such as quality of hotels, friendliness of people, weather) and affective components (holistic impressions, such as atmosphere or mood of the destination)" according to Echtner and Ritchie (1993). The authors, therefore, adopted the approach of Echtner and Ritchie (1993) in using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Following an extensive literature review, Hahm and Severt constructed a questionnaire that was distributed using the online survey platform, Qualtrics. This sought to determine each respondent's awareness of Alabama and its particular attractions. There were 340 respondents with data collected over five days.

The survey opened with two open-ended questions to capture the range of perceptions associated with Alabama. The second section of the survey used a previously constructed set of 19 image attributes (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Beerli and Martin, 2004; and Echtner and Ritchie, 1993) and applied them to awareness of Alabama. It then explored how that awareness was expressed in the degree of intention to visit Alabama. The 19 image attributes mentioned above were then rated for importance by the respondent (as a general assessment of a potential destination, not specifically Alabama). Finally, demographic data was collected, together with confirmation of whether the respondent had ever visited Alabama. For those who hadn't, there was an additional question regarding intention or willingness to visit the state and, if none, an opportunity to give reasons.

ALABAMA IS NOT EVEN IN THE TOP 25 OF THE STATES AND TERRITORIES BEING SELECTED AS THE DESTINATION OF CHOICE ACROSS THE WHOLE OF THE US.

IMPORTANCE AND PERFORMANCE

Importance-performance analysis (IPA) is a tool sometimes used in destination image research, but it had not previously been used on data related to Alabama. In this study, the authors applied the tool to compare perceptions

Oak Mountain state park is an example of Alabama's natural beauty.

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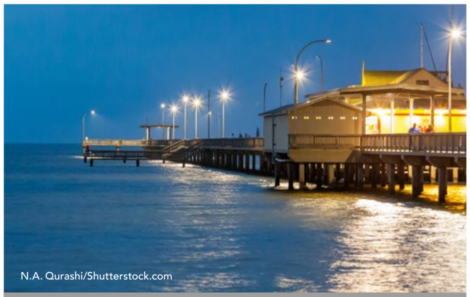
The US Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville, Alabama.

red7255/Shutterstock.com



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Pier at Fairhope, Alabama.

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Gulf Shores and Fort Morgan Peninsula.

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Rainbow lit bridge in Birmingham, Alabama.

of performance (i.e. from both prior visitors and potential visitors) with the destination attributes expressly deemed important.

These responses were plotted against axis of importance and performance to create a four-box grid. Each box defined a particular perception and labelled the destination position as a: Concentrate Here; b: Keep up the good work; c: Low priority; and d: Possible overkill. The IPA allowed comparison between those who responded based on prior visit(s) to Alabama, and those who responded based purely on theoretical familiarity and perceptions. In fact, of the 340 total respondents, only 120 (35.3%) had previously visited the state; whereas 220 (64.7%) had not. Interestingly, those who had visited demonstrated a much higher rating for the factors included in destination image.

CONCLUSIONS

Possibly the most powerful insight from the study was how little familiarity or perceptions of Alabama existed with those who had not visited the state. This sends a clear message to both the state authorities and to destination marketing organizations that there is a major opportunity to use marketing tools to increase awareness and familiarity of what Alabama has to offer. This could, at least, increase the frequency with which Alabama is included in the destination selection process. In general, respondents perceived the state to be pleasant, relaxing and family orientated; not necessarily a powerful incentive to commit to visiting and, potentially, even acting to dissuade tourists seeking something a little more dynamic and exciting.

NON-VISITORS HAD NO IMAGE OR CHARACTERISTIC THAT CAME TO MIND WHEN ASKED ABOUT THEIR IMAGE OF ALABAMA, WHILE PEOPLE WHO HAD VISITED NOTED BEACHES AS THE MOST POSITIVE IMAGE.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

This is the first academic study exploring Alabama as a tourist destination. Providing a unique and holistic evaluation of the destination's position, it has strong implications for Alabama's destination marketing organizations. Perhaps the most immediate challenge for the state and DMOs, is to deal with some issues where important attributes were rated as poorly performing by people who had direct experience. One of the most highly stressed importance factors was cleanliness and hygiene, but Alabama scored poorly on performance. The authors suggest that the state may need to improve performance through stricter regulation and monitoring. Another factor that scored badly on performance was the existence of cultural attractions. Given that Alabama has a host of attractions, including the US Space and Rocket Center often billed as Earth's largest space museum, there is obviously much more that could be done to promote what Alabama has to offer as a destination.

RESEARCHERS IN FOCUS

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This research focused on the importance of destination marketing with particular reference to Alabama.

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News article related to this manuscript

https://www.al.com/news/mobile/2017/12/boycott_threats_to_positive_pr.html

PERSONAL RESPONSE

Did the research identify what had encouraged those respondents who had previously visited Alabama to make that initial commitment?

" No. We did not ask the purpose of visit for those that had previously been to Alabama. Perhaps this information could have given us an insight into why they would travel back in the future but not necessarily recommend Alabama as a travel destination to others. For example, if their initial visit was to see family or friends, they might go back for that reason. This aspect is recognized as a limitation of our study. "

Dr. Jeeyeon (Jeannie) Hahm

Dr. Hahm is an Assistant Professor at the Rosen College of Hospitality Management at University of Central Florida (UCF). She holds a Ph.D. and a M.S. from UCF and a B.A. from Seoul Women's University. Her research areas include destination image, film-induced tourism, and consumer behavior in tourism and events.

E: Jeeyeon.Hahm@ucf.edu **T:** +1 (407) 903-8158
W: https://hospitality.ucf.edu/person/jeeyeon-hahm/
W: www.linkedin.com/in/jeeyeon-jeannie-hahm-31595b7a/

Dr. Kimberly S. Severt

Dr. Severt received a Ph.D. from Oklahoma State University in 2007. She is an Associate Professor and Director of the Hospitality Management program at The University of Alabama. Her research areas include incentive travel, meetings and events, consumer behavior, technology efficiencies and application systems.

E: ksevert@ches.ua.edu **T:** +1 (205) 348-8169
W: http://ksevert.people.ua.edu/

THERE IS A MAJOR OPPORTUNITY TO USE MARKETING TOOLS TO INCREASE AWARENESS AND FAMILIARITY OF WHAT ALABAMA HAS TO OFFER.

WHAT MAKES THEM SHARE:

Generation Y, electronic word of mouth and brand success

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Typically, Generation Y, those born between 1981 and 1994, share many aspects of their lives online.

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Multiple technologies allow constant connectivity.

Generation Y has redefined the way customers seek, share and consider information about products and services before purchasing. Proficient users of digital technologies and social media, members of Generation Y are quick to share their experiences with brands and companies and their opinions have a significant influence on brand revenue and reputation. Dr. Tingting (Christina) Zhang from Rosen College of Hospitality Management and collaborators Dr. Behzad Abounia Omran (Ohio State University) and Dr. Cihan Cobanoglu (University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee) examined what influences Gen Y's decision to participate in electronic word of mouth (eWOM).

Social media and digital technologies are key to information exchange, especially among people born after 1981. The so-called Generation Y – a cohort defined here as born between 1981 and 1994 – has spent their entire lives using digital technologies and, in many ways, has redefined how marketing information is shared and consumed. Customer-generated content in the form of product or service reviews posted on platforms such as Facebook or TripAdvisor is now often the defining factor considered by prospective customers prior to purchasing.

Technology experts and stakeholders project that Generation Y will continue to be liberal in their information disclosure and sharing as they go up the career ladder and mature in their personal lives. As their spending power increases, knowing how they engage in electronic word of mouth (eWOM) is crucial for brand revenue. Dr. Tingting (Christina) Zhang (Rosen College), Dr. Behzad Abounia Omran (Ohio State) and Dr. Cihan Cobanoglu (University of South Florida) set out to explore what makes members of Generation Y most likely to share in their 2017 study published in *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*.

GEN Y – WHO?

In the hospitality sector, Generation Y currently represents a priority market segment. Between 24 and 35 years of age (at the time the article went to press), in most developed countries, members of Generation Y eat out twice as often as the remaining part of the population and they're anticipated to become significant spenders within the lodging industry.

Proficient users of social media, members of Generation Y use digital technologies to stay connected with family and friends and, overall, they're positive about the influence of technology on their lifestyle whether at home, work or leisure. Overall, they're more susceptible to peer influence through social media than they are to brand marketing. It is therefore important to understand what motivates them to share positive and negative experiences about products and services as these reviews can determine brand survival, especially in case of service failures.

> *CUSTOMER-GENERATED CONTENT IN PRODUCT OR SERVICE REVIEWS IS NOW OFTEN THE DEFINING FACTOR CONSIDERED BY PROSPECTIVE CUSTOMERS PRIOR TO PURCHASING.*

WHEN SERVICES FAIL

Service failures – situations when customers are dissatisfied with the service they've received – cannot be avoided, but must be handled appropriately to prevent loss of patronage. Many industry managers have implemented service failure recovery strategies, which are especially important in sectors that rely on repeat purchases, like beverage establishments. It's a well-documented phenomenon that unhappy customers tend to inform their friends and family, but also acquaintances and even strangers, if they've had a particularly negative experience. This can damage brand reputation, revenue and even employee morale, which is why it's important to understand how recovery packages influence eWOM.

ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH

Electronic word of mouth – eWOM – is an effective marketing strategy appealing because of its ability to overcome customer resistance, lower costs and deliver quickly, especially through social media and mobile technologies. It allows customers to share their views online and to favor or go against specific products. eWOM includes all informal communication between customers about features of products and brands, and comparisons of lived experiences to promises made in mass media campaigns. Companies that create bespoke platforms for customer interaction are generally seen favourably and tend to enhance customer experience and engagement.

Nevertheless, as eWOM spreads rapidly and can be negative or positive, it can influence customers to a considerable degree and be difficult to counteract. It is especially difficult to counteract by companies themselves, as customers tend to trust each other more than they trust brands.

As technology has become the "third hand" or "second brain" to many members of Generation Y, who use email, text and social media daily through their smartphones, they have unprecedented impact on a product's or service's success. The study by Zhang, Omran and Cobanoglu sheds light on some factors that influence Generation Y's likelihood to share positive or negative service experiences through eWOM.

SURVEY DETAILS

An electronic, self-administered survey was distributed to a convenience sample of 21–35-year-olds representative of the demographic. The sample was randomly divided into three groups and each presented with a specific scenario. The group was then asked to keep this scenario in mind as they answered questions about engaging in eWOM. Scenarios included a positive and a negative

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Social media has changed 'holiday snap' sharing.

Undrey/Shutterstock.com

A beautiful meal might prompt a photo share.

DisobeyArt/Shutterstock.com

eWOM and online reviews can be just as important as a friend's recommendation.

Comparing online feedback and reviews is a key part of decision making for Generation Y.

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Positive and negative experiences both prompt sharing.

View Apart/Shutterstock.com

experience at a restaurant, as well as a negative experience followed by successful delivery of a failed service recovery package. Participants were also asked to rate their self-assessed technological abilities and to score the influence their peer group and their family members had on their eWOM behaviours.

A total of 600 members of Generation Y took part in the survey and 583 sets of responses were included in the final analysis. There were slightly more females than males (53:47%) in the sample and the average age of respondents was 25. Although most respondents achieved advanced levels of education (beyond high school), they represented a range of jobs and professions from low- to high-skilled. The number of participants assigned to each scenario was approximately the same. Factors examined as influences included whether someone was an active user of social media (AUSM), whether they were tech savvy (TSMT), and the level of family as well as peer influence.

WHEN THEY SHARE

The results showed that Generation Y members who are AUSM were equally likely to engage in eWOM regardless of whether their experience was positive or negative. Peer influence made a difference when considering sharing positive experiences and it was a significant determinant of sharing negative experiences. Younger (21–24) but not older (25–35) cohort members were influenced by their family when deciding whether or not to share a positive experience. Family members also had a significant influence on the younger cohort when deciding about sharing negative experiences. When service failures occurred and were followed by satisfactory recovery packages, Generation Y members seemed motivated to share their experience through eWOM.

The results of this study suggest that whether an experience is positive or negative has no real impact on the likelihood of Generation Y members sharing their opinion through eWOM. Well-educated Generation Y consumers in most developed countries engage actively in discussing their daily lives through digital platforms, especially if they're technologically sophisticated. The influence of family on the likelihood of engagement with eWOM remains unclear as the results were mixed with family holding a greater sway over the younger members of Generation Y. It is likely that cultural background and family values impact the decision to engage in eWOM, particularly among the younger cohort more likely to still live with their parents. At the same time, peers appeared to have a sweeping influence on motivating Generation Y consumers to engage in eWOM.

> *MARKETERS MUST BECOME MORE DIGITALLY SAVVY IF THEY WANT TO ENCOURAGE POSITIVE REVIEWS OF SUCCESSFUL FAILED SERVICE RECOVERY PACKAGES.*

ACTIONS FOR INDUSTRY MANAGERS

Generation Y plays a growing role in the global economy, but how brands can best engage with them is still being explored. Understanding how technology is used to absorb and transmit information is important, especially since the behaviours of Generation Y are likely to have the most significant influence on market behaviours in the future. More research is needed, but as we wait for further insights, some practical strategies emerge to be implemented right away.

First, managers in the industry should learn to use online reviews. In platform design, they should consider strategies that encourage sharing of positive experiences. In addition, managers could also look for solutions that use key influencers (family and peers) to mediate the kind of reviews that get posted. Marketers must also become more digitally savvy if they want to encourage positive reviews of successful failed service recovery packages. Even if recovery packages are well received, they're less likely to be shared than opinions of the negative experience at initial service failure. As such, companies need to develop bespoke ways of dealing with complaints. Importantly, the hospitality industry must use social media as part of their marketing strategy, including creating specific fan pages and developing apps that allow their young customers to connect and exchange opinions and comments.

RESEARCHERS IN FOCUS

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This research examines the implications for the hospitality industry of Generation Y's use of social media to share positive and negative experiences.

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PERSONAL RESPONSE

What is the best way a brand can deal with a complaint to ensure that a positive experience of a failed service recovery package is shared as quickly and as powerfully as the original negative experience?

" The proliferation of peer influence through the social networking platforms/communities is the top solution for a brand to promote the positive electronic word of mouth when processing a complaint followed by a happy recovery experience. Second consideration should be the smart leverage of social media and mobile technologies. Active engagement with customers over social media and mobile technologies makes customers feel empowered and thus establishes a positive brand image. "

What first inspired your work in this area?

" I started this field of research when I began my Ph.D. studies at The Ohio State University in 2013. As a member of Generation Y cohort, I have observed and experienced the massive obsessions of social media usage and mobile technologies at work and life. This is a valuable progress of times when people become more empowered by virtual technologies and online communities, and thus have a powerful voice as consumers. This is a crucial opportunity for companies to engage with and obtain active loyalty from their target customers if they wisely leverage the transformational tools and trends. "

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Dr. Tingting Zhang

Dr. Tingting (Christina) Zhang is an assistant professor at Rosen College of Hospitality Management, University of Central Florida, FL. U.S.A. Her research interests include co-creation, social media marketing, mobile technology, smart technology, and customer engagement. Dr. Zhang holds a Ph.D. and master's degrees in Consumer Sciences from the Ohio State University, OH. U.S.A. And a bachelor's degree in Tourism Marketing from Beijing International Studies University, Beijing, China.

A: 9907 Universal Blvd. Orlando, FL 32819
E: tingting.zhang@ucf.edu **T:** +1 (407) 903 8195
W: https://hospitality.ucf.edu/person/tingting-zhang/

Dr. Cihan Cobanoglu

Dr. Cihan Cobanoglu is a McKibbon Endowed Chair Professor of the College of Hospitality and Tourism Leadership (CHTL) at the University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee (USFSM), who also serves as the Director of the M3 Center for Hospitality Technology and Innovation and Coordinator of International Programs for the College of Hospitality and Tourism Leadership.

A: 8350 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, FL 34243
E: cihan@sar.usf.edu **T:** +1 (941)359 4200
W: http://usfsm.edu/academics/faculty-listing/dr-cihan-cobanoglu.aspx

ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT [...] MAKES CUSTOMERS FEEL EMPOWERED AND THUS ESTABLISHES A POSITIVE BRAND IMAGE.

Rosen Research Focus | Dr. Bendegul Okumus

FLORIDA'S FOOD TRUCK INDUSTRY:

Tackling the food safety challenges and health risks

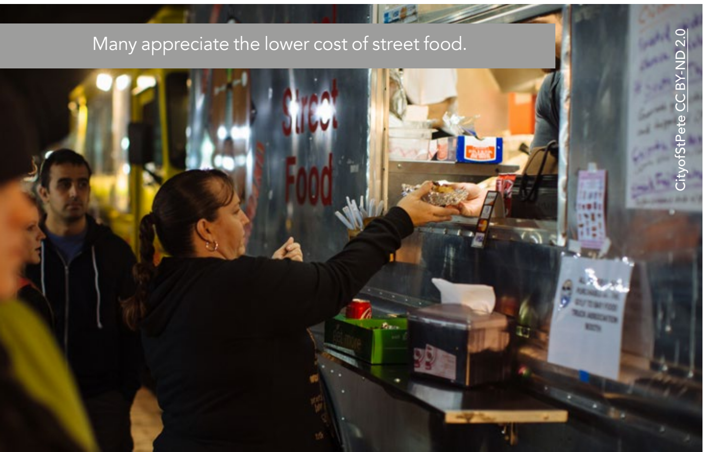
Food trucks contribute to a thriving local culture.

Jose Luis Carrascosa/Shutterstock.com

Street food is a popular part of daily life, with a vast variety of vendors and food trucks around the world. It is easily available and well-known foods contribute to the local economy. Despite these strengths, many cultures don't highly regard street food. In particular, it's often perceived as unhygienic compared to restaurant food. These concerns around standards are indeed upheld by research in some countries. Researchers Dr. Bendegul Okumus at UCF Rosen College of Hospitality Management and Dr. Sevil Sönmez at UCF College of Business analyze the inspection challenges street food faces and review the gaps between food safety regulations and practices.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines street food as 'food or beverages prepared and/or sold by vendors in streets and other public places for immediate consumption or consumption at a later time without further processing or preparation'. The consumption of street food has been growing in both industrialized and developing countries. As it has become more popular, so the number of food trucks, as providers of street food, has also grown. Food trucks provide quick, economical, tasty and diverse foods compared to restaurants which are often closed during late or early hours.

However, research has highlighted concerns in some countries about whether street food complies with safety, quality, environmental and regulatory standards. Despite food trucks having regular inspections, safety concerns are still high for the general public. Like developing countries, developed economies are experiencing a rise in foodborne illnesses. Are the concerns around street food valid? Why is there a gap between food safety regulation and implementation? And what can be done to tackle the public health challenges of the food truck industry? To answer these questions, Okumus and Sönmez focused their attention on the food truck industry in Florida.



Many appreciate the lower cost of street food.

CityofStPete CC BY-ND 2.0

The researchers initially selected the Florida Department of Health (FDOH) food safety regulations and inspection facilities as a standard to review the gaps between food safety regulation and practices. To this, they added peer-reviewed articles and additional non-academic articles from media sources. Focusing on one state enabled the researchers to conduct their review in detail. However, as Okumus and Sönmez point out, 'while regulations can sometimes vary between states, primary safety regulations and inspection practices remain the same at a local level in each state'. The conclusions from this study can therefore be extrapolated to other states.

SAFETY ISSUES AND REGULATIONS

One way to tackle food safety risks is through regulation. Developed countries, like the UK and US have a level of regulation and licensing to minimize food safety risks. For example, in Florida, all food trucks require a license to operate and these licenses are only granted once several conditions (clean water supply,

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Street food has become more and more popular in developed countries.

suhendri/Shutterstock.com

Hand washing is an essential hygiene practice.

Gary CC BY-ND 2.0

Just some of the options available at one truck.

waste disposal facilities, separate wash sinks etc.) are met. However, while regulation may exist in the US, compliance is still a concern. The localization of rules, established by local authorities, could be a reason for lack of compliance. If regulations on food preparations, permits, parking and inspection processes, for example, differ according to region, it can be difficult for a vendor to keep on top of them all and for consumers to know what to expect. Indeed, increased regulatory pressure from the authorities may well have political motivations or be fought against by those who seek out the lower cost meals offered by food trucks or who celebrate a thriving local food culture.

The FDOH states that the lack of sanitation practices is the main cause of foodborne illnesses in Florida. Local health departments have tried to reduce the rate of foodborne illnesses by increasing recruitment onto their training programs and providing information around best practice. These activities have not been successful in reducing the rate of foodborne illness. Therefore, attention turns to the food safety inspection regime.

CHALLENGES WITH INSPECTIONS

Routine inspections are carried out at a rate that corresponds to the food outlet's risk level

DESPITE FOOD TRUCKS HAVING REGULAR INSPECTIONS, SAFETY CONCERNS ARE STILL HIGH FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC.

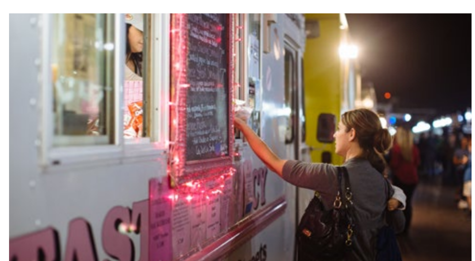
– high risk outlets are inspected more often than low risk outlets. Outbreaks or complaints around food safety will also trigger inspections. These, and routine inspections, are carried out with no prior warning. However, the researchers note that, while regulations and inspection regimes are in place, poor food hygiene still occurs and food vendors are still issued with 'unsatisfactory' certificates. Why is this?

While inspections are carried out with no notice given to the vendor, they are often not scheduled during the food truck's hours of business, especially at night. This means many unsatisfactory practices, like a lack of hand washing or poor temperature control, go unobserved. In addition, the inspections use a checklist structure. The authors highlight that a checklist does not provide a high enough level of observation and investigation.

There are clearly gaps between the food safety regulations and their related inspections.

Food trucks provide a wealth of choice.

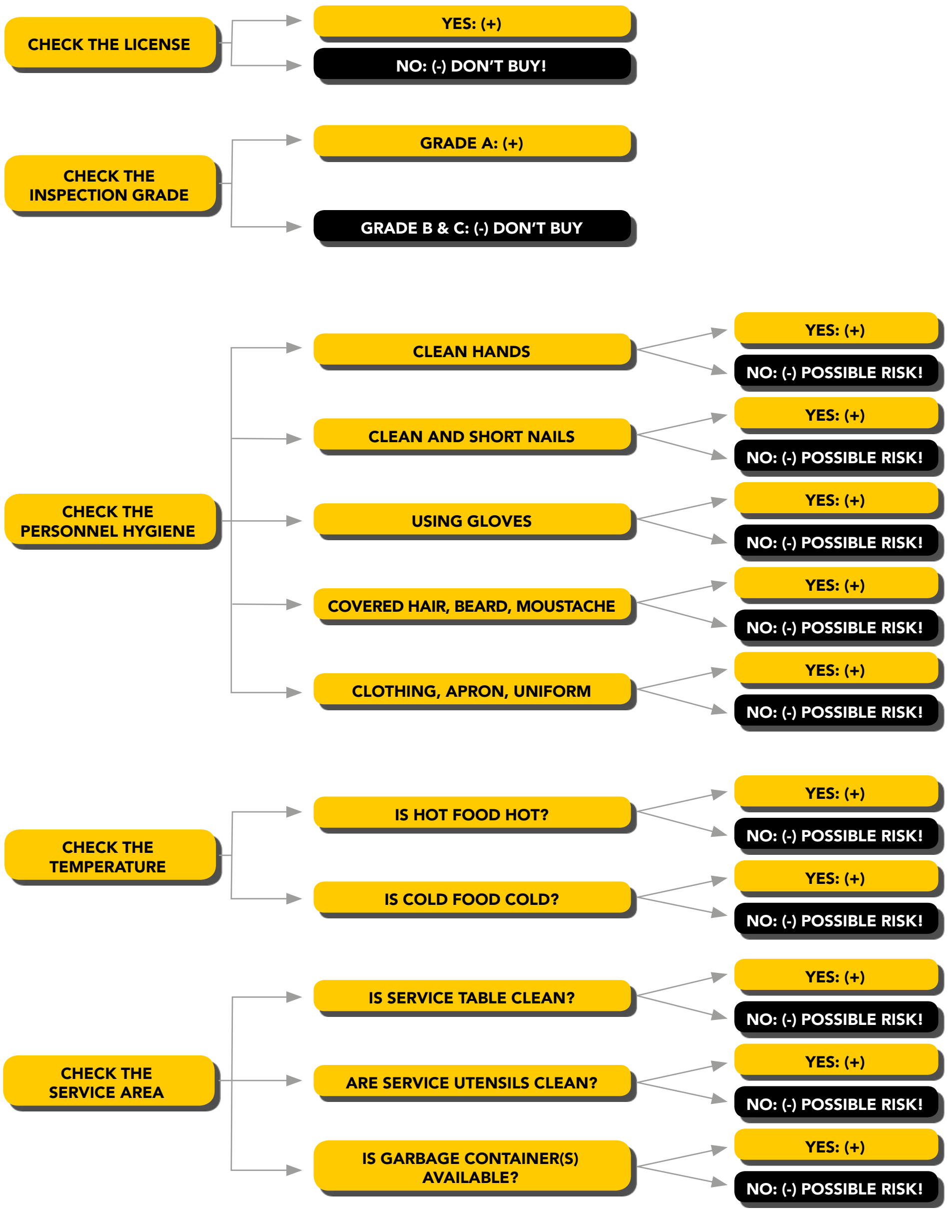
Bob B. Brown CC BY-ND 2.0



Street food is quick and convenient.

CityofStPete CC BY-ND 2.0

Critical Observation Points for customers.



As Okumus and Sönmez explain, improvements are needed to bridge these gaps.

LICENSING ISSUES

Licenses for food trucks have become increasingly costly in some successful street food hubs. As a result, many vendors are choosing to operate without a license. In addition, rather than purchase an eye-wateringly expensive food truck ($55,000 to $180,000), many choose to self-convert an existing delivery truck. This means that there is an increasing number of unlicensed food trucks, which have been built by similarly unqualified builders. With the food truck offering a relatively inexpensive and easy route into the industry, it is an appealing option for those lacking experience and the requisite food safety knowledge.

And food safety is not the only area of concern for unlicensed trucks. Okumus and Sönmez cite The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA): 'Approximately 540 vehicles caught fire between 2007 and 2011 because of propane, causing $8 million loss in property damage'. These fires can be explosive and cause damage to property and serious injury.

Food truck violations have increased in recent years as the trend for street food strengthens. And while authorities remain proud of their regulatory activities, inspectors continue to issue warnings to consumers.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Okumus and Sönmez provide several key points for improvement. Importantly, they suggest that one way to approach the problem is to increase consumer awareness and encourage consumers to follow a series of checks. These are detailed in the Critical Observation Points figure to the left. First, all food trucks and vendors should be required to clearly display their licenses and latest inspection grades for consumers' information. At present, policies and practices differ on this point. Second, consumers should be encouraged to look at the food preparation area. They should ask themselves – does this look hygienic? Is best practice being followed? Third focuses on the vendor's undocumented illnesses. Excellent hygiene (no skin contact with ready-to-eat food, hand washing, not working after stomach sickness) is required to avoid the spread of major diseases such as hepatitis A. Fourth, food should be kept at appropriate temperatures – hot should be hot and cold, cold. Any exceptions to this should be reported immediately by consumers. Fifth, food trucks' mobility can make it difficult to locate them for inspections. Despite this, inspections should not be carried out during slow periods. Frequent monitoring, knowledge sharing and communication will help improve standards.

The authors acknowledge the wealth of information that can be provided by consumers. Indeed, they recommend consumers draw on the reviews provided on online sites and apps to check whether food safety concerns have been raised by previous patrons as well as to gather information on pricing and menu items. With so much information generated from customers on social media, the authors highlight that food standards bodies in countries like the UK, Australia and New Zealand have active social media presences in order to make use of this.

From this literature review, Okumus and Sönmez are clear that while the responsibility for food safety regulation lies with the authorities, consumers have huge power to affect this. Reporting from consumers, combined with improved inspections and communication between vendors and regulators could go a long way to improving the current food safety of food trucks.

RESEARCHERS IN FOCUS

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Dr. Bendegul Okumus and Dr. Sevil Sönmez conducted a review of food safety practices in Florida's food truck industry.

FUNDING

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Dr. Bendegul Okumus

Dr. Bendegul Okumus is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Food and Lodging at Rosen College of Hospitality Management within the University of Central Florida. Her research areas include food safety/hygiene, culinary tourism, food waste, and health and wellness.

E: Bendegul.okumus@ucf.edu
T: +1 (407) 903 8020 **W:** hospitality.ucf.edu

PERSONAL RESPONSE

What other areas require further research, based on your review?

" Strong communication between county health departments and food truck /street food vendors are necessary to minimize safety gaps. Future research may focus on how to reduce unlicensed food truck numbers since these trucks can easily escape food inspections due to their mobility. Also researchers need to focus on developing bilingual food truck vendor training programs with county health departments to improve personal hygiene practices of vendors. "

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WHILE THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR FOOD SAFETY REGULATION LIES WITH THE AUTHORITIES, CONSUMERS HAVE HUGE POWER TO AFFECT THIS.


Rosen College of Hospitality Management boasts a 97 percent job placement rate upon graduation.

Photo by Nick Leyva '15

UCF'S ROSEN COLLEGE RANKS AMONG WORLD'S TOP 5 AGAIN

The hospitality management school was recognized among the best schools for the third consecutive year.

By Susan Vernon-Devlin

For the third consecutive year, UCF's Rosen College of Hospitality Management is ranked among the top five best hospitality and hotel management schools in the world by *CEOWorld* magazine.

Although the college opened just 15 years ago, it managed to be ranked among decades-old programs such as Switzerland's Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne and the School of Hotel Administration at Cornell University, which ranked No. 1 and No. 2, respectively.

"We are extremely proud to hold the honored position of being one of the top programs in the world," says Youcheng Wang, Dean of the college. "Rosen College's unique approach to education and the integration of our curriculum into the communities we serve is making a distinctive impact on future generations globally and for decades to come. We're educating the future hospitality leaders and it's evident."

Located in the heart of hospitality in Orlando, Florida, Rosen College is the only hospitality program in the United States to offer a bachelor's degree in event management and a doctoral degree in hospitality management. The college values its relationships with academic institutions and industry, which can be seen in partnerships such as its two-year-old culinary medicine program with UCF's College of Medicine.

The program welcomes fourth year medical students and teaches them how to help manage their patients' care through nutrition and healthy diets. The hands-on program places the soon-to-be doctors in the kitchen to cook and eat what they prepare. This year the program brought staff from Rosen Hotels & Resorts with certain health conditions such as diabetes and high cholesterol into the kitchen with the students to learn side by side. Local farms and ranches are also at the table for the culinary medicine program providing fresh produce and beef for the recipes.

Rosen College has been an educational leader for more than 30 years. The continued recognition from CEOWorld magazine is testament to our internationally-recognized faculty, innovative academic programs, cutting-edge research and strong industry and community partnerships.

A ROSEN COLLEGE PUBLICATION

Rosen College of Hospitality Management
9907 Universal Blvd, Rm. 231D
Orlando, FL 32819
USA

UCF | Rosen College of Hospitality Management
UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Editors:
Dr Robertico Croes: Robertico.Croes@ucf.edu
Dr Mathilda van Niekerk: Mathilda.VanNiekerk@ucf.edu