Editorial: Futureproofing: Ensuring Tourism Does Not Become Obsolete

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Change has always been constant and one of the roles of research has been to understand change and futures research in particular is about "what is coming next" (Wigford, 2014; Yeoman *et al.*, 2020). Research is about the "how", "why", "when" and "what". In this issue, we explore a number of changes that are occurring in tourism whether it is transformative experiences to chatbots.

Nature and sustainable tourism

Within the past few years, a shift from the experience economy to transformative experiences has been increasingly noticeable (Yeoman and McMahon-Beatte, 2019), thus driving more meaningful experiences. This transformation, aligns with a stronger focus on sustainable and regenerative tourism with nature and communities at its heart. Wielenga (2023) uses architecture as a framing tool for nature thus stimulating transformative experiences among visitors in nature-based tourism. Pongsakornrungsilp and Pongsakornrungsilp (2023) study demonstrate's how the circular economy is employed to drive the sustainability of the tourism industry in Krabi, Thailand, through the concept of mindful consumption and service-dominant logic.

Rural empowerment

Briggs *et al*. (2023) present a case for geopark development, while at the same time exploring the socio-political reasons behind the lack of geopark implementation in Australia. The authors consider the future of geoparks in the global context and reiterate the point that geoparks are important for COVID-19 recovery of tourism and in regard to UNESCO's Sustainable Development Goals for 2030. Vukovic *et al*. (2023) starting premise is that women's empowerment is the goal for self-realization and that the support that comes from local tourism stakeholders represents an adequate base. The study analyzes the future potential in Serbia for tourism as a women's empowerment framework. Jena and Dwivedi (2023) explores the potential barriers affecting the growth of tourism in rural India, prioritizing the barriers in order to manage and overcome them.

Destination heritage

In an era of climate change, sustainability and the movement away from fossil fuels, Amirkhani *et al.* (2023) study seems counter intuitive in which she tries to find a future for a destination in which its primary industry is oil and is embedded in the destination's heritage. The authors discuss the potential for petroleum tourism within the context of an industrial heritage landscape and a merger with tourism. Large cities are and will continue to become important tourism destinations in the

foreseeable future as they are a driver of creativity. Lee's (2023) study examines the underlying motives of tourists for visiting large cities. The study identifies five underlying influencers, including shopping indulgence, urban commons, city icons, cultural lifestyle and personal advancement.

The chatbot

The tourism and hospitality sectors are experiencing radical innovation boosted by the advancements in Information and Communication Technologies. Increasingly sophisticated chatbots are introducing novel approaches, re-shaping the dynamics among tourists and service providers and fostering a remarkable behavioral change in the overall sector. Calvaresi *et al*. (2023) study sets out to highlight the academic and industrial standing points with respect to the current chatbots and to develop a proof-of-concept embodying the most prominent opportunities in the tourism sector. In particular the paper demonstrates how the potential of social interactions through conversational agents, exploiting synergies among different tourism service providers.

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