# Knowledge Management in Tourism: paradigms, approaches and methods

## Guest Editorial

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## Introduction

The Special Issue "*Knowledge Management in Tourism: paradigms, approaches and methods*" aims to provide a comprehensive collection of papers including new insights for traditional paradigms, approaches and methods, as well as more recent developments in research methodology how touristic destinations share and use knowledge (Cooper et al., 2005). The subject of research of the papers are the destinations as networks of connected organizations, both public and private, each of which can be considered as destination stakeholders (Scott et al., 2008). In network theory they represent the nodes within the system (Novelli et a., 2006; Valeri, 2016; Baggio and Valeri, 2020; Valeri and Baggio, 2020a; 2020b; 2020c; 2021).

The twenty first century tourism destinations have an imperative to innovate and remain competitive in an increasingly global competitive environment (Framke, 2002; Hovinen, 2002; Dwyer and Kim, 2003; McKercher, 2005). However, the majority of the knowledge management literature and applications are concerned with individual organizations rather than the complex amalgams of organization that characterize destinations (Hall and Butler, 1995; Amaral and Ottino, 2004; Da Fontoura Costa et al., 2007). The focus on the individual organization can be applied to tourism enterprises, destination management organizations and to government ministries and departments. However, if knowledge management is to be an effective tool in tourism innovation, then we also need to consider how it can benefit the destination level of organization (Baggio and Cooper, 2010).

The view of destinations as networks is amenable to analysis using techniques such as social network analysis (Dredge, 2006; Valeri, 2021a). Baggio and Cooper (2010) assert that a social network has been defined as a specific set of linkages among a defined set of persons, with the additional property that the characteristics of these linkages as a whole may be used to interpret the social behavior of the persons involved (Santos et al., 2021a; 2021b). Social network analysis delivers a number of useful outcomes. It provides a means of visualizing complex sets of relationships and simplifying them and is therefore useful in promoting effective collaboration within a group, supporting critical junctures in networks that cross

functional, hierarchical, or geographic boundaries and ensuring integration within groups following strategic restructuring initiatives (Pavlovich, 2003; Levin, 2003; Morrison et al., 2004; Shih, 2006; Obermayer et al., 2021).

A second concept that must be considered in understanding destinations as networks of organizations is that of the stakeholder (Aas et al., 2005). Stakeholders are the people who matter to a system. A stakeholder is any person, group or institution that has an interest in a development-sen activity, project or program. This definition includes intended beneficiaries and intermediaries, winners and losers, and those involved or excluded from decision-making processes (Freeman, 1984; 1994; Inkpen and Tsang, 2005).

Information and knowledge flows in a destination network are relevant mechanisms for the general behavior of the system. Productivity, innovation and economic growth are strongly influenced by these processes, and the way in which the spread occurs can determine the speed by which individual actors perform and plan their future actions at the destination (Cooper et al., 2009). In other words the structure of the network will be influential in determining the efficiency of the destination's attempts to share knowledge and innovate (Russell and Faulkner, 2004; Albattat et al., 2020; Chemli et al., 2020; Toanoglou et al., 2021; Valeri, 2021b).

Social networks are the main channel through which these phenomena unfold. A dense and well formed social network favors a stakeholder's attitude to search for new opportunities and to share experiences, particularly in the presence of dynamic unpredictable environments. This has a beneficial effect on the development of the community in which they are embedded (Baggio and Cooper, 2010).

## Presentation of the Special Issue

The special issue contains eight full papers written by twenty-three authors located in thirteen different countries and affiliated with eleven different universities.

In the first full paper titled "*Filling structural holes? Guanxi-based facilitation of knowledge sharing within a destination network*", Jiayuan Liu and Jianzhou Yan from China Pharmaceutical University (China) aim *to* study examines the relationships between structural holes, guanxi and knowledge sharing among groups of stakeholders within a Chinese destination network. The paper conducted surveys, social network analysis and semi-structured interviews to gather data from the stakeholders of a popular Chinese tourist destination to test its hypotheses. Knowledge sharing within the destination network was impeded by structural holes but facilitated by guanxi. Furthermore, the impeding effect of structural holes on knowledge sharing is alleviated by guanxi. The paper illustrates the ways that stakeholders exploit structural holes and guanxi to promote knowledge sharing, and thus offers novel insights into how destination network structures affect the efficacy of stakeholders when it comes to sharing knowledge and promoting their destination.

The second full paper titled "*Individual-level absorptive capacity and multidimensional work behavior in tourism*" is written by Hung-Yu Tsai from Nanfang College of Sun Yat-sen University (China). The paper aims to advance the understanding of employees' individual-level absorptive capacity by examining the mechanisms of three dimensions of their work outcomes: contextual performance, citizenship behaviors toward customers and service sabotage. The paper collected data from 334 subordinates from the hospitality industry in Taiwan over two time periods. The hypotheses were tested using structural equation modeling, the results of which indicated that employees' individual-level absorptive capacity was positively related to psychological ownership. Psychological ownership positively predicted contextual performance and citizenship behaviors toward customers; however, it was negatively associated with service sabotage. Finally, it was found to mediate the effects of employees' individual-level absorptive capacity on contextual performance, citizenship behaviors toward customers and service sabotage. This study contributed to understanding the relationship between individual-level absorptive capacity and shaping perceptions of service workers and provided several theoretical implications for absorptive capacity and tourism literature.

The third full paper titled "*The organizational impact of Covid-19 crisis on travel perceived risk across four continents*" is written by Michalis Toanoglou from Woosong University (Republic of Korea), Samiha Chemli from University of Deusto (Spain) and Marco Valeri from Niccolò Cusano University (Italy). The paper

investigates the influence of governance, media coverage, crisis severity, former travel practice and Covid-19 incidences on the perceived risk related to travel and tourism during the pandemic and in cross-countries. This research is based on a sample of 1845 individuals from more than 12 countries and four continents representing quarantined and most impacted areas in the world in March and April 2020. A multilevel linear model was applied to predict the perceived risk across countries as a level 2 research unit. The finding confirms the clustering in the data with media coverage, governance and crisis growth affecting the outcome. There are cross-level interaction effects, as the growth rate of the pandemic per country and media coverage impact tourists' perception of risk. Finally, there are lower-level direct effects, with lower-level variables affecting tourists' perceived risks. This research pinpointed the impacts of predictors, concerning the countries' level, during the crisis phase on the perceived risk. Therefore, it gives insights into professional bodies on future concerns to be considered during the recovery phase.

The fourth full paper titled "Investigating the determinants and process of destination management system (DMS) implementation" is written by Anh T. P. Le, Puvaneswaran Kunasekaran, S. Mostafa Rasoolimanesh, Neethiahnanthan AriRagavan from Taylor's University (Malaysia) and Toney K. Thomas from Mahatma Gandhi University (India). The paper aims to propose a comprehensive model to help understand factors influencing the intention to participate in a destination management system (DMS) amongst tourism stakeholders in Vietnam which are considered as the determinants of the successful implementation of the system. A survey was conducted to investigate key stakeholders' opinions of participating in a DMS. In total, 301 questionnaires were used for analysis. Partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was used to assess the measurement and structural models of the study. The results identify the important predictors of the tourism stakeholders' participation in the DMS including information quality, DMS operator readiness, government regulations and technology awareness. Interestingly, technology awareness was ascertained as a significant mediator for the relationship between performance expectancy, social influence, technology competency, competitive pressure and the intention to participate in the DMS. This study has a unique theoretical contribution by developing a comprehensive model to predict the intention to participate in a DMS amongst tourism stakeholders with the modification and combination of three theoretical models and frameworks: the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT) model, technology–organisation–environment (TOE) framework and updated DeLone and McLean information systems (D&M IS) success model. It is expected to be a useful reference source for tourism management departments that want to develop DMSs in Vietnam. This model also can be used as an initial investigation for DMS implementation studies at other destinations.

In the fifth full paper titled "*Empowering leadership and knowledge management: the mediating role of followers' technology use*" Zafer Türkmendağ and Muharrem Tuna from Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli Üniversitesi (Turkey) aim to investigate the role of empowering leadership in intraorganizational knowledge management practices and to reveal how followers' acceptance and use of the hotel management system affect this role. A serial multiple mediation model was evaluated and tested using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). The database was created from the results of a structured questionnaire obtained from 401 employees working in hotels in Turkey. The findings of the study reveal that empowering leadership has a significant effect on followers' knowledge creation, sharing and application. It was also found that the acceptance and use of the hotel management system were partially complementary to the impact of empowering leadership on followers' knowledge management practices. This paper gives an insight into the empowering leader's role in gathering useful knowledge, which is self-managed within the organization, by encouraging, motivating, providing autonomous and supportive conditions and making it beneficial and easier for their followers to adapt to the organization's technologies. The efficient management of knowledge in organizations through the use of technology is possible by distributing power to subordinates through expanding the theory of knowledge management, leadership and the acceptance and use of technology. Furthermore, this study contributes to the literature by establishing the theoretical foundation of the relationship between empowering leadership and knowledge management practices based on Dalkir's knowledge management model and by discussing the mediating effect of the core variables of the UTAUT model.

The sixth full paper titled "*Towards a framework for the global wine tourism system*" is written by Vasco Santos from ISLA Santarém and CiTUR (Portugal), Paulo Ramos from Fernando Pessoa University (Portugal), Bruno Sousa from Polytechnic Institute of Cávado and Ave and CiTUR (Portugal) and Marco Valeri from Niccolò Cusano University (Italy). The paper aims to develop a new framework strictly applied to the global wine tourism system, taking into account emerging and future constructs and dimensions that precede and consequence it. The systematic mapping study (SMS) was adopted as the selected research methodological approach, both to analyze and to structure a broad research field concerning methods, designs and research, focuses on the papers published in reliable academic databases such as Emerald, ProQuest, Sage, Science Direct, Scopus, Wiley, Web of Science, Taylor and Francis and Wiley were properly selected and analyzed. The following four dimensions were found to comprise the global framework of the wine tourism system: (1) support features (governance, public policies and economic investment; supply development; physical and capacity conditions; requirements of health safety; opinion makers and leaders: managers/stakeholders/players/marketers and benchmarking and value chain); (2) innovation ecosystem (profile of the new generations of wine tourists; virtual and augmented reality: digital and hybrid wine events; smart wine tourism companies; digital channels and platforms: blogs, websites, applications; wine tourism creative activities for all [from kids to seniors] and sustainable and ecologic wine tourism practices); (3) wine tourism experience dimensions (storytelling; involvement; winescape; attachment; emotions and sensory) and (4) behavioural intentions (satisfaction, loyalty, and WoM). This framework is a useful tool and becomes vital to their continued success, as a key reference of wine tourism management and marketing. As a wine tourist's visitation frequency plays a role in his/her travel motives, product and service quality of tour packages must be improved and monitored. The paper is the first research study to demonstrate the combined use of the main domains forming the wine tourism system within a global perspective, covering of the most critical aspects.

In the seventh full paper titled "*Sustainability engagement's impact on tourism sector performance: linear and nonlinear models*" Amina Buallay, Jasim Al-Ajmi from Ahlia University (Bahrain) and Elisabetta Barone from Brunel University London (UK) aim to investigate the relationship between the level of sustainability reporting and tourism sector's performance (operational, financial and market). Using data culled from 1,375 observations from 37 different countries for ten years (2008–2017), an independent variable derived from the environmental, social and governance (ESG score) is regressed against dependent performance indicator variables (return on assets (ROA), return on equity (ROE) and Tobin's Q (TQ)). Two types of control variables complete the regression analysis in this study: firm-specific and macroeconomic. The findings elicited from the empirical results of the linear models demonstrate that there is a significant relationship between ESG and operational performance (ROA) and market performance (TQ). However, there is no significant relationship between ESG and financial performance (ROE). Furthermore, the results of the nonlinear models suggest that the relationship between sustainability performance and firm's profitability and valuation is nonlinear (inverted *U*-shape). The models in this paper presents a valuable analytical framework for exploring sustainability reporting as a driver of performance in the tourism sector's economies. In addition, this study highlights the tourism sector's management lacunae manifesting in terms of the weak nexus between each component of ESG and tourism sector's performance.

The eighth full paper titled "Understanding the relationship among factors influencing rural tourism: a hierarchical approach" is written by Suneel Kumar from University of Delhi (India), Marco Valeri from Niccolò Cusano University (Italy) and Shekhar from University of Delhi (India). The aim of this paper is to analyze the interrelationship between factors conducive to rural tourism development. This touristic segment has enormous potential but still lacks consistent means and measures to ensure rural tourism's holistic development in India. The study identified 14 factors, of which nine are from the literature review and five are from interaction with the experts, which influence rural tourism development. The research design comprises three segments, i.e. identifying factors from the literature and expert opinion, conducting interviews with the academic experts and managers, and analyzing the responses recorded. Interpretive structural modeling (ISM) technique is used to determine the interlinkage between the factors and develop a hierarchical relationship. The results indicate that infrastructure development, growing environmental conscience, support of local government and community, availability of funds with the government and

participation of the private sector are the primary factors channelizing rural tourism development. Also, attitudes of locals to adapt, tourist travel motives, marketing of the destination, destination characteristics and recommendation by others are the major dependent factors identified. The findings broaden the knowledge on suitable channels for rural tourism development and provide vital information for the formulation of flexible strategies for developing rural tourism in India. This paper's originality lies in providing information to clarify the relationships between factors conducive to rural tourism development, an area where limited research has been done

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