
EDITORIAL

This edition of *Research in Hospitality Management* contains an interesting array of papers submitted by colleagues from the Stenden School of Hospitality Management, and externally. It is satisfying to note that this issue also includes papers from colleagues at other universities, including three from Africa. Giving voice to researchers across the globe is one of the aims of the journal. For this reason the contributions from Miranda Cornelisse, Esla Fathy, and Edwin Chigozie Nwokorie, and Judipat Nkiru Obiora, together with Belsoy Josphat Sawe, Damiannah Kieti and Bob Wishitemi are particularly welcome.

Although specifically focused on hospitality management education, **Conrad Lashley's** paper, "What To Do About How To Do: reflections on the future direction of hospitality education and research", makes observations and recommended actions that apply equally well to vocational programmes in "leisure tourism and events", as well as to all vocational provision. Vocational programmes, across all sectors and at all levels, are jam-packed with content deemed relevant to the future career needs of those successfully completing the programme. Educational and industrial inputs are primarily concerned with ensuring that course content is dedicated to perceived industrial relevance. I argue that the educational needs of students as critical thinkers should be paramount, and that the predominant concern for industrial relevance is ultimately counterproductive. Critical thinkers will be more personally empowered and better able to manage future workplace contexts in an ever-changing and dynamic environment.

"My generation: A review of marketing strategies on different age groups", authored by **Emilie Slootweg and Bill Rowson**, reports on on-line marketing strategies aimed at age segmentation and is informed by Emilie's master's dissertation research. The paper asserts that different age group segments employ different search instruments when making reservations. The research identifies three post-1945 age groups: Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y. The data shows that Baby Boomers have a tendency to prefer more traditional marketing methods, while Generation X and Generation Y consumers have a tendency to prefer more online marketing strategies.

Miranda Cornelisse's paper, "Understanding memorable tourism experiences: A case study", explores tourists seeking authentic experiences at the Finnish Lapland resort of Ylläs. The paper investigates the perception of authenticity by Dutch tourists as a case study of visitors to the region. This case study strengthens the notion that the increasing search for authentic tourism products in the experience economy does not imply a search for authenticity related to genuine artefacts alone. It also implies the search for constructed authenticity in existing, genuine places such as Ylläs. Visitors are therefore involved in constructing definitions of what is authentic in their experience.

Agrotourism is the focus of **Sawe, Kieti and Wishitemi's** paper entitled "A conceptual model of heritage dimensions and agrotourism: Perspective of Nandi County in Kenya". Agrotourism differs from agritourism because, it is a direct expansion of ecotourism, which encourages visitors to experience agricultural life at first hand. Agrotourism is gathering strong support from small communities as rural people have realised the benefits of sustainable development brought about by similar forms of nature travel. Visitors have the opportunity to work in the fields alongside real farmers and wade knee-deep in the sea with fishermen hauling in their nets. The paper is a discussion that suggests a model that can be used by local planners to support the local community in a way that produces an added economic benefit for rural communities.

While these last two papers relate to marketing issues related to hospitality and tourist visitors, the following papers are concerned with the management of people working with hospitality and tourism organisations. "Retention of festival volunteers: Management practices and volunteer motivation" by **Diane Zievinger and Frans Swint** is a paper informed by Diane's master's dissertation research at Stenden Hotel Management School. The retention of volunteers in the festival organisations echoes some of the problems that beset all hospitality organisations. High staff turnover rates create a range of problems for all organisations. The paper provides a different insight because many of these organisation members under investigation have volunteered to join the organisation for a variety of reasons that extend beyond employment as would be the case in most hospitality industry settings. Volunteer training is a particularly important factor in determining volunteer retention. Ultimately, management sensitivity to their needs and circumstances are key – treating volunteers with respect and dignity goes a long way to help retain volunteers.

Eslam Fathy's paper, "Issues faced by hotel human resource managers in Alexandria, Egypt", also deals with people management issues, though in a hotel context. As with the earlier paper, employee recruitment and retention are key problems. Interesting that many of the issues relating to perceptions of hotel work and the need for more organised relationships both within the hotel sector and with industry leaders as well as with educators are common experiences in

Europe. I have long been an advocate of closer links between the industry and education. At root, much management practice is ill considered and shaped by a poorly trained and educated management workforce. Being licensed to practise as managers and as owner-managers would lead to more professional practice that would resolve many employee and quality management problems that would ultimately result in lower costs and increased profits.

Chigozie and Nkiru's paper, "Sustainable development practices for the hotel industry in Nigeria: Implications on Ilaro area of Ogun State", explores the adoption of sustainable development practices of 15 hotels in Nigeria. Result shows that hotels in the area have not embraced sustainable development practices in the host community. The study recommends that corporate social responsibility and sustainable development practices should be enforced by these hotels in the community through a systematic approach, which includes creating a synergy between hotels and the host community with a view to improving the well-being of the local people. Fundamental to managing sustainability in tourism is to recognise that there is ultimately a point that local communities become opposed to tourism numbers and further growth.

"Investigating the factors of achieving and encouraging environmental certification: Driving and restraining forces" by **Ching and Cavagnaro** also explores sustainable business practice in the hotel sector, though in this case, the Netherlands is the setting. In both cases, small firms constitute the majority of hotel operators, yet only a small number are certificated. Voluntary certification is dependant on the perception of the value of certification by owners. Their own personal values, together with the barriers that exist for small and medium enterprises wishing to be certified, limit voluntary take-up. The paper provides valuable insights for those aiming to expand certification among these firms.

Thea Nordeloos's paper, "Sustainable tourism development in Amsterdam Oud-West", advocates the development of a tourism strategy that is aware of the potential positive and negative impacts of increasing tourism numbers on a local community. Her paper discusses the consequence of the increasing popularity of Amsterdam as a major tourism destination. In particular, the paper explores the potential overflow of visitors to the Oud-West area of the city, and the views of various stakeholders to the prospect of more tourists in the area. Perhaps not surprisingly, industry and local government respondents are enthusiastic about the potential economic and job creation benefits. Local residents were a little more ambivalent. The paper points out that research in other cities suggests that uncontrolled visitor growth can result in local resident opposition, and in some cases open hostility to tourists.

Losekoot, Lasten, Lawson and Chen report on the work placement experiences of students on industrial placement. Their paper, "The development of soft skills during internships: The hospitality student's voice", is informed by insights from student diaries kept during student experiences of working in the industry as an element of their hospitality training programme. The paper provides a host of rich insights that confirm the value of work experience to the development of programme graduates who will be more job-ready when they enter full-time employment. Those commenting on hospitality management education rarely discuss these "soft skills", yet comments from these research participants suggest soft skill development is fundamental to the learning experience and job-readiness.

Finally, this edition of *Research in Hospitality Management* is the last to be edited by me, as my contract as professor in the Academy of International Hospitality Research has now come to an end. I have enjoyed the last five years being involved as co-editor of the journal and I think my colleagues have much of which to be proud. We have created a publication that has a deliberate editorial policy that, in addition to disseminating academic colleague's research outputs, gives voice to student research work undertaken for their dissertations on both first degree and master's programmes. In this edition, the papers authored by Emilie Slootweg, Diane Zievinger, Thea Nordeloos and Stephanie Ching are informed by their excellent research work for their master's programme dissertations. No other academic journal has a similar mission and the Hotel Management School at Stenden/NHL should be proud of its unique contribution to research in the field by giving high-quality student research a voice.

Conrad Lashley