Bridging Tourism Theory and Practice
Volume 11

Delivering Tourism Intelligence

Bridging Tourism Theory and Practice

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Recognizing the increasing gap between what is researched in academic community and what is practiced in industry, this series aims to bring together academic and industry leaders in their respective fields to discuss, exchange, and debate issues critical to the advancement of tourism. The book series intends to not only create a platform for academics and practitioners to share theories and practices with each other, but more importantly, to serve as a collaborative venue for meaningful synthesis.

Each volume will feature a distinct theme by focusing on a current or upcoming niche or "hot" topic. It shows how theories and practices inform each other; how both have evolved, advanced, and been applied; and how industry best practices have benefited from, and contributed to, theoretical developments. Volume editors have both strong academic credentials and significant consulting or other industry engagement experiences. Chapter contributors will be identified through professional conferences and trade conventions. In general, the book series seeks a synergy of how concepts can inform actions, and vice versa. The book series will inspire a new generation of researchers who can translate academic discoveries to deliverable results valuable to practitioners.

Bridging Tourism Theory and Practice
Volume 11

Delivering Tourism Intelligence: From Analysis to Action

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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Preface

Many tourism researchers from around the world want to make a difference with their studies. This volume offers a rich international selection of studies that seek to deliver on this aim. The topics covered are diverse, as befits an economic, social, and environmentally influential sector that finds different forms of expression across the globe. The inspiration for this book derives from the enthusiasm of the largely European cohort of scholars and supporters who developed the *tForum* conferences. As documented in more detail in the first chapter, this book is not one reliant on conference proceedings. Three chapters were developed from conference presentations, but more was expected of authors than might normally be delivered at a quality academic conference. Rather, it is the spirit of the tForum conferences which infuses these pages rather than the immediate contributions.

The stated mission and objectives of the conferences held in Naples (2015) and Mallorca (2018) were as follows: The *t-Forum* is a global institution with the core mission of bridging tourism theory and practice by transferring knowledge (t-Intelligence) to and within tourism sectors. The objectives of the *t-Forum* are to identify sources of t-intelligence in destinations, businesses, and knowledge institutions, to foster, support, and create platforms for the dissemination of t-intelligence; to facilitate the transfer and use of t-intelligence in destinations, businesses, and knowledge institutions; and to nurture t-intelligence programs or actions for innovation in tourism. The present volume hopefully delivers these kinds of insights and ideas to readers. Authors were invited to consider and embrace these analyses to action aims pertaining to tourism intelligence. At the very least, it is hoped that the resulting volume provides examples of achievements and actions built on scholarly activity in many diverse settings.

The authors wish to thank all the contributors for delivering manuscripts to the deadlines we have imposed upon them. The timely return of edited chapters and the other necessary documentation needed to write a scholarly chapter has been much appreciated. To reflect the global tourism

community, the authors come from many countries and most are not native English speakers. It is a pleasure to see these diverse voices establishing the case that research can have consequences and deliver on the *t-Forum* objectives. The editors would like to thank Emerald and Professor Jafar Jafari for offering us the opportunity to work on this project. His continuous involvement in the project and associated diligent commentary have been appreciated. We would also like to provide an acknowledgment to the late Eduardo Fayos Sola whose work in the development of tourism policy and tourism research was a part of the background for this volume.

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September 2019

Chapter 1

THE VALUE OF TOURISM INTELLIGENCE

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Abstract: A summary statement of the meaning of tourism intelligence is built in this chapter by considering multiple sources. Tourism intelligence is then cast as the sum of the resources available to a decisionmaker coupled with their interpretive ability to use it. Academic researchers can contribute to this resource base but need to deal with the likely use of other inputs by decisionmakers. Tourism intelligence can be a bridge between academic inputs and broader influences provided that concerns about credibility, trustworthiness, and accessibility of the scholarly work are well managed. The tourism intelligence concept has value for all stakeholders and the chapters in this volume follow a structure to assist the transition from analysis to action. **Keywords**: Tourism intelligence; interpretive ability; accessibility; trustworthiness; analysis; action

INTRODUCTION

For many years, tourism researchers have grappled with two different kinds of demands. First, they seek academic respect within their institutions by researching and writing about topics in a way that generates credibility

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for themselves and their study area. Such demands are not trivial and they shape the lives of scholars. Second, those who sit outside the academic world place another set of demands on the scholars. Those who work in tourism, including owners, managers, and policymakers ask how the research is useful, and what relevance it has to the wider world of making money, supporting communities, and enriching lives. In this chapter, an understanding of how these two forces can and do interact is assessed by reviewing the topic of tourism intelligence.

Academic voices have considered these issues of impact and influence for a long time. Jafari (1990) outlined a number of styles or platforms characterizing the kinds of work researchers conduct. One of these platforms, which is tied to advocacy and largely economic analyses, was most directly linked to industry and policy needs. Other platforms were, however, more aligned with building a scholarly base and offering insights from such foundations for wider application. In a bold statement, Clare Gunn, another tourism research pioneer, declared that the purpose of tourism research should always be linked to industry and management needs. "Tourism research, while no substitute for superior management practices, provides objective, systematic, logical and empirical foundations for such management" (1994, p. 3). Twenty-first-century discussions on the tensions between academic progress in tourism study and work serving business have expanded upon the contributions of earlier decades. Contemporary ideas illuminating the older discussion have stressed the multifaceted needs for sustainability (Bramwell & Lane, 2011), the context in which academic studies are conducted (Tribe, 2008), and a critical awareness of power and privilege in shaping research (Pritchard, Morgan & Ateljevic, 2011).

The aim of this chapter is to define and articulate the value of the concept of tourism intelligence, bearing in mind these previous contributions and views. The intention is not to reiterate the older arguments but instead to use a specific term which offers some opportunities for the integration of different types of knowledge. That term is intelligence, specifically tourism intelligence, and the key discussion develops and appraises this concept. The chapter will track the contributions to the meaning of tourism intelligence and then preview the application of the approach in the remaining chapters.

TOURISM INTELLIGENCE

The term intelligence is used in multiple ways, some of which are readily understood, while other uses are rather specialized and technical. The expression can

be applied to individuals, or organizations. It has mixed connotations. For the purposes of this chapter and this volume, the general meaning of intelligence is often surrounded by a kind of mystique. It can even be viewed with a degree of suspicion or mistrust. These undercurrents of meaning can be understood by considering three themed areas where the term intelligence is applied.

One use of the concept of intelligence lies in the world of politics, security, and international affairs. In the United States, this use is manifested in the title of the security arm of government, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The role of this body is to gather and analyze materials from other countries germane to national security (Lowenthal, 2016). The US president does have the power to authorize the members of CIA to carry out covert international action based on this intelligence. A suite of signature events involving efforts to destabilize or support specific regimes has flowed from these powers and decisions (Gill & Phythian, 2018). In contemporary times, the CIA works on both counterterrorism and cyber-security issues. One way to conceptualize this kind of intelligence activity is to see it as principally concerned with the evaluation and reduction of risk. The definition of risk here is to the interests of the country collecting the intelligence rather than to regional or global security. Lowenthal stresses that intelligence is a subset of the more general term information but differs from that term in that intelligence is tailored information for a select and restricted audience. Further, the information is often gathered in covert operations using techniques that may contradict the laws of some countries. Herein lies one part of the mystique, even the distrust, of the term intelligence. Unlike academic inquiry and research which is open to the scrutiny of others and must pass ethical requirements, research and information gathered in the military-political-spy world of intelligence has none of these characteristics.

The distrust of the political/security use of intelligence is fueled not only by its methods of collection and its restricted access but also by serious questions about its success. There is now a widely acknowledged failure of intelligence stemming from such well-publicized events as the supposed existence of weapons of mass destruction. Further, the inability of global intelligence agencies to anticipate the terrorist acts of September 9, 2001, the Madrid train bombings in 2004, attacks on the London underground in 2005, the killing of citizens and athletes at the Boston marathon in 2013, and the fatal shooting and bomb attacks on police and citizens in Paris in 2017 are all events, together with others, that contribute to the need for further security-related intelligence but raise questions about its accuracy and power.

The literary genre of spy and action fiction also plays a role in providing insights about the world of intelligence. Partly because the real-world tools of the CIA, MI6, Mossad, the KGB, and many other national security operations are secret, the fiction writers have been able to create characters and events to illuminate the hidden intelligence world. For many readers, one component of their understanding of the terms intelligence and intelligence agencies may be linked to the ways such writers as Ian Golding, John le Carre, James Patterson, Lee Child, and other highly successful authors who have portrayed the intelligence community and its protagonists.

A second use of the term, and one strongly related to the present interest in tourism, is that of business intelligence. This version of the concept covers the kinds of information that are made available to individual entrepreneurs, managers, and decisionmakers from both government sources and through the work of private consultants. At times, academic researchers may contribute select resource material to this body of information. Some business intelligence is widely available and is built on the reports of public sector bodies and financial institutions. By way of contrast, other business intelligence is rather more like that in the political/security world; strictly limited to those who pay for and direct the work. For example, confidential reports provided by consulting houses and specialist advisers are rarely available for wide scrutiny. Executive summaries of such reports may be available if the report has been to a government body but the methods and procedures of the groups providing such reports are commercially sensitive property and not released.

Reports and written resources are only one part of the full composite of business intelligence. There are also more intangible contributions. In a powerful series of papers, books, and analyses, one cohort of business researchers developed a language and identified some distinctions in the world of business intelligence (Senge et al., 1999; Slater & Narver, 1995). These authors observed that while the reports and factual data represent one contribution to the body of business intelligence and the ability of organizations to learn, so too the personal memory, skills, and subjective appraisals of business operators are contributors to decision-making. Several labels are associated with this set of judgments; some call it intuition or entrepreneurial know-how, while others label it as "gut feel" derived from experience (Branson, 2008). It can be linked to much older divisions in the study of knowledge and human prowess.

In an early assessment of these issues, McKeon (1947) noted that Aristotle made a lasting contribution to identifying components of knowledge and intelligent action. In Aristotle's system, praxis was defined as the

practical reasoning needed for action. He also distinguished three types of knowledge relevant to praxis. In Aristotelian terms, academic understanding of a topic is *episteme*, the skills and craft abilities to perform an action is *techne*, and *phronesis* is the wisdom to anticipate the impact of an action. Business intelligence is, then, not just a matter of accumulating information from reports and studies (*episteme*) but also involves the use of intuition and an awareness of consequences (*phronesis*) as well as the capacity to act effectively (*techne*). While this language may seem a little obscure to some, the total set of business intelligence related skills to decide and act (praxis) can be remodeled in contemporary times as the knowledge about what to do, an awareness of what might happen, and the skill to carry out those actions.

A third but rather different use of the concept of intelligence has evolved in the disciplines of psychology and education. Approaches to intelligence among psychologists and educators have been evolving for more than 100 years. The early ideas were that intelligence is a tool of the mind; a general skill which can be honed; a specific set of abilities which fluctuate with settings; and an inherited way of dealing with the world (Lantz, 2000). A major distinction emerged from the numerous factor analytic studies conducted on test items used to assess people's abilities. The distinction is known as the difference between fluid and crystallized intelligence, the first reflecting a general overall ability across domains, while the latter stresses specific skills in some areas (such as mathematical ability or spatial awareness skills). The major approaches of the 1930s and beyond led to the development of IQ tests and, despite the failings and biases inherent in this approach and its testing procedures, the concept retains a popular currency. It has often been misused and abused in discriminating among those who grow up in different cultural circumstances than did the test designer (Gould, 1996).

In the last 30 years, debates about the meaning of intelligence have been stimulated by the emergence and the popularity of the concepts of multiple intelligences including emotional, successful, and to a lesser extent ecological intelligence (Gardner, 1983, 2008; Goleman, 1995, 2009; Sternberg, 1988). For the present interest in the application of intelligence as a construct applicable to tourism studies, the wider interpretation of intelligence offered by Gardner (multiple intelligences), Goleman (emotional and ecological intelligence), and Sternberg (successful intelligence) are of interest when married with the twin concepts of fluid and crystallized intelligence in these proposed domains. For example, the psychology work directs attention to the individual's skill and ability in extracting meaning from information. In this important sense, tourism intelligence cannot be neatly

separated from the intelligence of the user of that information. There is therefore a connection here to praxis and the skilled dynamic use of the resources for action in decision-making.

Specifying Tourism Intelligence

Building on these three somewhat interrelated uses of the term intelligence, it is now possible to construct a specific view of its formulation in tourism. Tourism intelligence is the sum of the resources available to a decisionmaker coupled with their interpretive ability to use that information. This definition recognizes that multiple inputs might contribute to the tangible resource base. For example, the material available from public documents, consultancy studies, strands of ideas accessed through social media and academic work, can all be influential for specific uses at a specified time. Additionally, the definition suggested also proposes that it is the vision, understanding, and experience of the individual tourism professional that shapes the tourism intelligence informing their actions. Cooper (2006), among others, referred to these inputs as tacit knowledge and sees it as deriving from the personal perspectives of employees. In suggesting this approach to tourism intelligence, it is notable that some residual connotations inherent in the three earlier meanings of the term are likely to persist. These concerns include whether the source material is trustworthy, how it was obtained, whether it relates well to other sources, and whether it is consistent with personal intuitive understandings of the user for identifying ways forward and actions to be undertaken.

By following the definition articulated for tourism intelligence, it can also be appreciated that academic tourism work is one input into the resource material. Further, it is apparent that the value of academic material is likely to be appraised in different ways than the criteria used by referees in the assessment of submissions to journals, book chapters, and conferences. In the academic settings, high standards of ethics, careful treatment of data, and the conceptual and theoretical richness of the work are typical assessment benchmarks. These criteria are not irrelevant to many tourism business professionals, at least to the extent that they are familiar with the subtleties of the research tools and processes. They are, however, also likely to appraise the work in terms of its fit with other sources of unpublished information and their own understanding derived from the special context in which they work. Judged in these ways, some academic studies may lack the ability to make a difference to tourism business thinking.

Two examples drawn from the personal experiences of the authors can be used to illustrate the challenges for academic studies to "make a difference." In a series of studies, an academic research team from James Cook University, Australia, surveyed tourists' needs for a new information and interpretive center in the spectacular wildlife setting known as Kangaroo Island in South Australia. The report from the work recommended more information about how, where, and when to see animals as well as advice about themes of interest which could be deployed in the center. The core of the work is summarized in Pearce (2013). Some of these suggestions materialized in the final presentation of the interpretive center but the advice was filtered heavily through the involvement of multiple other individuals and organizations providing their versions of "intelligence" about the tourist experience. Quite a few of the recommendations centered around logistics and tour advice were ignored, even though the tourists rated their inclusion as very important. The other stakeholders included the people who actually designed the exhibits, architects given the contract for the building, the national park staff who worked in the region (both at the local and regional administrative level), and the vision of the government which provided the US$6.5 million for the construction. Arguably, to have made something of a contribution is not a failure, but the case illustrates that multiple voices are usually involved and those with controlling financial power will dominate the final decisions for most projects in which academics are involved (Flyvbjerg, 2001).

In another case, the authors have been researching the motives and characteristics of outbound Chinese tourism markets. The publications about the Chinese tourists have been building for some time and in combination represent a knowledge base which is reasonably well-cited and sought after in academic circles (Pearce & Wu, 2017; Pearce, Wu & Osmond, 2013). Additional work about tourists from Indonesia and Malaysia has helped clarify the distinctive characteristics of separate Asian markets (Oktadiana, Pearce, & Chon, 2016; Oktadiana, Pearce, Pusiran, & Agarwal, 2017). The academic value of this information resource can be contrasted with its reception by others. A personal story indicates this contrast. Quite recently, the authors were introduced to the parents of a future daughter-in-law. The encounter was cordial and friendly but the gap in the style and basis of knowledge made for some awkward conversational moments. The introduced couple worked on a major cruise boat operation taking tourists to Australia's Great Barrier Reef. For 10 years, they had been dealing with Asian and Chinese tourists. They had spent much of their working life watching and managing Asian behaviors on board the vessels, in the water,

and at the lunchtime provided by the cruise. The importance of Chinese tourists to the Australian tourism industry was a point of agreement; far less consensus was reached on the behaviors and needs of the market. The suggested needs of the Chinese from the academic research were frequently rebutted with local examples and illustrations from the reef tourism context. It was perhaps a jaundiced view from the reef business personnel as their encounters were largely with mass package tourists who were unused to the conditions and requirements of behaving sustainably in the ocean setting. The example represents the likely clashes between levels and styles of knowledge. Tacit and personal appraisals generated through direct contact in a specific situation may differ substantially from insights about interests and motives from a broader survey and academic analyses. Hofstede (1995) once classified these kinds of misunderstandings as some looking at the leaves while others look at trees or forests. There is, though, more to the clash of views than the issue of focus. The differences mask issues of accessibility and perceived trustworthiness from both sides of the encounter.

Accessibility

A repeated theme in the discussion about the usefulness of academic work lies in the methods of reporting (Cooper, 2006; Jafari, 2005; Tribe, 2008). The way academic studies are phrased and produced represents a formidable barrier for many would be users of the academic research (Shaw & Williams, 2009). It can be argued here that some tools used to conduct research do in fact lend themselves to relatively easier reading. In this category, the documentation of specific cases, the use of storytelling, and both biographies and autobiographies can be employed to deliver accessible material. Nevertheless, the more formal publishing outlets favor complex, polysyllabic text, sometimes dependent on statistical analyses that are not transparent except to a well-informed, specialist audience.

Cooper (2015) proposes that the transfer of knowledge, thus effectively making academic studies a credible component of tourism intelligence, requires an understanding of destinations as networks. This kind of analysis specifies who is connected to whom, who leads the way in innovation, and who is seen as likely to be right or successful as the industry changes. Further, Cooper stresses that the characteristics and diversity of tourism businesses need to be appreciated by all who seek to build a tourism intelligence base. Such contextual considerations help address how current