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HIGHER EDUCATION & TOURISM: Post Pandemic Trends

Circle International

SVEUČILIŠTE »VITEZ« UNIVERZITET VITEZ

ITS INSTITUTE OF TOURISM STUDIES
IN ACADEMIC AFFILIATION WITH THE EMIRATES ACADEMY OF HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT

CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

How new sustainability typologies will reshape traditional approaches to loyalty

Neil Richardson | Leeds Beckett University, UK

Abstract

The benefits of segmentation and loyalty programmes are well established however Business -As-Usual (BAU) models, whether online or traditional, largely focus on customers' contributions to the 'bottom line'. Sustainable Development (SD) is inextricably linked to consumers and whilst some studies allude to 'green' segmentation, there are no loyalty ladders or frameworks predicated on Elkington's Triple Bottom Line (TBL). This presentation aligns with those who think the TBL should be the thread that runs through sustainability research. It looks beyond the question of why firms adopt sustainability and instead consider how they do so by investigating the changes needed for loyalty models and frameworks.

The research is positioned in the overlap between the SD and Marketing domains. It facilitates conceptualisation by addressing some of the terminological confusion inherent in sustainability studies. It provides a working definition of Sustainable Development (SD) and a rationale for (and definition of) the preferred term Sustainable Marketing (SM). Assuming marketers want to work in a more sustainable fashion, they need to adapt existing models or adopt new versions. With adaptation representing a smaller change to marketers' modus operandi, it is deemed more likely to be adopted than a radical change. This is conceptualised using two Schools of Thought, namely the Developmental and Critical Schools. This research is positioned in the Critical School as it posits that the traditional models are no longer fit for purpose and need adapting or replacing. This approach provides better understanding of why sustainability models (or frameworks) are needed and the need to shape practice, thus going beyond academic theory.

Keywords

Loyalty, Stakeholders, Sustainable Marketing, Ladders, Segmentation

I loved you yesterday - Factors prompting a decrease in brand love

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Abstract

Due to its close relevance for marketing in terms of ever closer consumer-brand relationships, the construct of brand love has recently gained much popularity. In spite of its significance, the research in the field of brand love, however, requires higher levels of thematic diversity (Langner & Kühn, 2010). In this context, the majority of models concerning brand love are static and do not investigate the dynamics of the construct longitudinally (Palusuk et al., 2019). Whilst reviewing mainstream brand love literature (Carroll & Ahuvia 2006; Batra et al. 2012; Palusuk et al. 2019; Martin et al., 2020 und Khan et al., 2020), this work follows the guidance of two seminal theories of triangular brand love and triangular love by Shimp and Madden (1988) and Sternberg (1986) respectively. This exploratory case study aims at investigating whether the constructs of brand love and brand hate are located on the same continuum and which factors lead to a decrease in the three dimensions of brand love. The authors conducted a qualitative case study using 14 semi-structured interviews with German Masters students to validate a preliminary conceptual framework. The qualitative data were analysed and categorized applying content analysis embracing both an inductive qualitative as well as a deductive qualitative analytical approach according to Mayring (2015).

This study revealed that brand love and brand hate form part of the same continuum. Importantly, however, an intermediate stage, called indifference emerged. While all three dimensions of brand love exert influence on the decrease in brand love, the dimension liking was the most significant one. Within this dimension, ethically reprehensible events were of paramount importance, as they could turn brand lovers to brand haters at once, whereas minor offenses had to occur repeatedly. Hence, practitioners should not only be interested in gaining new brand lovers but also retaining present ones and appease brand haters via an intermediate stage of indifference.

Keywords

Brand love, Brand hate, Indifference

The pandemic's influence on consumer decision-making towards mHealth applications

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Abstract

Preventive healthcare is proven to be highly important to stay in good health. One of the major pillars for preventive care is technology, where eHealth and mHealth (electronic and mobile health) are enhancing patient empowerment and medical literacy, hence giving the user more control over their own health. Though the interest in those technologies was rising, the actual use for preventive care in Germany was moderate up until the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic. But how are decisions towards mHealth applications made and what influence does the pandemic have on them?

This paper aims to identify, analyse, and discuss key literature in the field of consumer behaviour and decision making towards e- and mHealth.

This paper is based on secondary research where first a systematic literature review is done by structuring the given literature in three fields: health, consumer decision making and external influences such as a pandemic. This literature review reveals that most research is investigating decision making towards mHealth from a technological perspective, which does not take external influences such as a pandemic into account. Therefore, an own conceptual framework for understanding the pandemics influence on the decision-making process towards mHealth applications is developed by synthesising the key literature on the pandemics influence with well-known decision-making models such as the EKB (Engel-Kollat-Blackwell) and the SOR (Stimulus-Organism-Response) model.

This synthesis yields the result that theoretically the pandemic influences the decision-making process towards mHealth applications at two points: 1.) The input or stimuli phase, i.e. the initial decision to use an mHealth application and 2.) in the process itself, when it comes to choosing between mHealth and a face-to-face alternatives.

Keywords

pandemic, decision-making, consumer behaviour, mhealth, covid-19

Subscription services boom, but so does churn – a macroanalysis on reasons why customer decide to leave and effective strategies to recover them

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Abstract

Subscription-based businesses have exponentially outperformed traditional product-based companies since 2012 with a revenue growth rate seven times higher than S&P 500 companies' growth in 2020. Their rise has additionally been accelerated by the pandemic, as also many traditional rather product-based businesses have successfully initialized the shift towards subscriptions. At the same time, however, churn rose considerably, too. Subscription services have reached immense churn rates between up to 22 and 41 percent in 2021. Although most researchers agree it is smarter to increase efforts in customer retention than in new customer acquisition, the relevance of customer retention and recovery strategies has been underrepresented for years. Churn dynamics and the further increasing acquisition costs, however, have emphasized the strong need of retaining customers who decided to leave. The renaissance of customer retention strategies requires both an understanding of why customers decide to leave and how they can be recovered. Accordingly, a macro view on most influencing factors of both clusters is taken:reasons to churn, and marketing activities for customer recovery. While reasons to churn such as, poor service, low value for money, high prices, low usage of service, variety seeking, or competitors' offers seem obvious, there is not always consensus about the most efficient activities to recover a leaving customer. These variables are divided into marketing-mix- and customer-relationship-related variables and expected to vary in their effect. A comprehensive macroanalysis of qualitative and quantitative research aims at identifying most powerful influencing factors on a customer's decision to stay with a subscription service provider. Even though, there is broad empirical evidence on repurchase situations, subscription services are still poorly explored. Thus, the article pays special attention to the matching of widely stated variables to the specific setting of subscriptions, additionally to the significance of these variables. To achieve that, both a systematic literature review and a survey of retained subscription customers are conducted.

Keywords

customer retention, customer recovery, churn, subscription services, contractual settings

The effect of branding on consumer purchasing behavior: a study of Cadbury Nigeria PLC.

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Abstract

Branding has a critical part in improving the performance of any organization, and it is an implied tool that has the potential to influence people's purchasing decisions in a good way. The study of Consumer Behavior has grown increasingly important in today's marketing environment. Consumers are the undisputed rulers of the market. Consumers are essential to the operation of every commercial organization. Consumers and consumer satisfaction are at the heart of all commercial enterprises' actions. In addition to product, distribution, pricing, and location, branding is possibly the most significant aspect of any company's operations. A company's brand has a definition in the world, and it is the term that distinguishes it from its competitors and the general public. An organization's brand serves as a concrete description for customers and competitors alike, serving as a moniker for a product or service that distinguishes it from anything else in the market. The primary goal of this study is to determine the impact of brand recognition on customer purchase behavior in the context of Cadbury Nigeria Plc. A questionnaire was utilized to collect primary data from 169 Cadbury Nigeria Plc. Distributors. Findings show that brand awareness affects the consumer buying behavior of Cadbury Nigeria Plc, Brand association affects the consistency of customer patronage of Cadbury Nigeria Plc. and brand loyalty affects consumer purchasing behavior of Cadbury Nigeria Plc. The study recommends that customer relationship management be given the highest priority. Their brand must significantly impact their behavior to develop a strong relationship between their brand and consumer buying behavior. It also recommends that continuous improvement be maintained at all times on brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand association, product quality that meets consumer buying behavior, and that Cadbury Nigeria Plc. Managers are moved devoted to this issue.

Keyword:

Branding, Consumer Purchasing Behavior, Brand Equity

FASHION

Post-pandemic new solutions for fashion designers activity in the context of industry 4.0

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Rui Miguel | University of Beira Interior, FibAndTech, CIAUD, Portugal
Nuno Oliveira | CITEVE; Portugal
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Manuel Gonçalves | Têxteis Manuel Gonçalves, SA. Portugal

Abstract

The digital transformation in pandemic situation progress seven times faster than in a matter of months. The crisis in non-essential goods sectors such as retail and fashion industry were devastating in micro companies and recent graduates of Fashion Design that did not have a previously developed digital strategy.

Digitalization also known as Industry 4.0 is the act of implementing digital technologies and development to transform available business models and generate new revenue and value creation opportunities. However, the correlation between economic and digital development is not linear (Cruz-Jesus et al., 2016).

Fletcher and Griffiths (2020) pose the question: how to rebuild a post pandemic business, to maintain agile and continuously learn the lessons from the past? It's a good question that we all need to answer in different areas of the business. In this research, we will contribute for the answer considering the Portuguese textile and clothing industry (ITV).

Being Portugal a country that in the last 10 years has had a growth in the textile and clothing sector and in the training of fashion designers. Portugal was export 5.2 million euros and 5,3 million euros in 2021[1]. The industry and the scientific and technological system developed digital solutions that allow the connection of the creative, productive, and retail components, right down to the consumer.

The aim of this research is to present a study of the main projects and platforms existing on the market and define the criteria and characteristics regarding a model for the creation a new digital platform that will allow the interaction of the ITV productive sector with fashion designers, brands and retailers, in global world. As a methodology, a review of existing national and international platforms for textiles and clothing industry and their success will be carried out.

Keywords

Fashion Designers; Industry 4.0; Digital platforms; Fashion business; Portuguese Industry

[1] https://www.jornaldenegocios.pt/empresas/industria/detalhe/exportacoes-texteis-vao-ultrapassar-os-53-mil-milhoes-de-euros-em-2021

EDUCATION

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on students' learning at the Institute of Tourism Studies (Malta)

Martin Debattista | Institute of Tourism Studies, Malta
Charlotte Geronimi | Institute of Tourism Studies, Malta
Mr David Pace Senior | Institute of Tourism Studies, Malta

Abstract

Introduction:

This paper presents and discusses the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the learning experience of students at a VET (Vocational Educational Training) Higher Education Institution in tourism education, namely the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS) in Malta (EU).

Context and Research design:

A sample of students who attended ITS between March 2020 and January 2021 will generate the primary data. This will reveal the students' experience in terms of their academic performance, their personal well-being, and their perceived evaluation of the educational institution during the emergency caused by Covid-19. The academic performance covers both theoretical knowledge and practical skills within the context of VET education, and there is particular emphasis on e-learning / remote learning and the challenges of conducting school-related practical work, going on work placement or work in the tourism industry (both part-time and full-time) apart from their studies. The data analysis will reveal local trends and compare them to international trends.

Limitations:

The major limitation of this research is that it is being conducted in a volatile situation with ever-changing Covid-19 conditions, restrictions and challenges that have a direct impact on education.

Practical implications:

Administrators, education leaders and academics in VET Higher Education Institutions in tourism education will have reliable research to inform their strategic decisions and academic decisions during Covid-19 and more importantly for the post Covid-19 scenarios.

Originality/value:

Research on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on education is widely available but the authors have located little research focused on VET and Higher Education in Tourism, especially the experience of learners.

Keywords

Covid-19, post-pandemic, higher education,
e-learning, tourism education

What makes Students happy in times of the Pandemic?

Dorothee Brauner | Esslingen University, Germany

Abstract

Purpose- The pandemic hit us all very hard. People across all age groups struggle with the extraordinary situation. The nature of the challenges varies strongly according to the phase of life a person finds himself or herself in: While young parents have to juggle working from home and childcare, elderly people are alone and isolated. The pandemic also influences the life of students intensely; instead of meeting friends on campus, going out at night and enjoying life, they are forced to spend most of their time behind their screens and listening to online lectures. A social life (in the traditional sense) has been temporarily impossible. This paper tries to understand what affects a students' state of happiness in general and in particular in times of the pandemic, with a special focus on social media usage behavior. Furthermore, the paper considers whether students who are in a partnership or have pets can deal better with this exceptional situation. Finally, differences in the perception of happiness between male and female students are analyzed.

Design/methodology/approach- Data was collected in two quantitative online surveys, using the same questionnaire to enable comparisons. The first survey was carried out in July 2020 with a sample of n=72. The questionnaire was sent to all bachelor students of the Faculty Management and Technology of Esslingen Hilltop Campus. The second survey was conducted in October 2021 with a sample of n=40. The questionnaire was sent to all 4th semester bachelor students of the Faculty Management and Technology of Esslingen Hilltop Campus. Data is analysed applying uni-, bi- and multivariate Statistics.

Contribution to the body of knowledge- Most of the current surveys are snapshots as they are only conducted once. Due to data collection in both 2020 and 2021, this survey allows valuable insight on how the pandemic situation effects the groups of students over time.

Research limitations/implications- Obviously the database is significantly restricted to a special group of students and therefore the survey makes no claim to representativeness. Only when we are able to collect data in non-pandemic times with the same questionnaire, can the results be evaluated correctly.

Keywords

Happiness, Students, Pandemic, quantitative Analyses, year-on-year comparison

A framework to illustrate the potential demands of Industry 4.0 on higher academic education

Manuel Maier

Abstract

Industry 4.0 is not only changing the production sector decisively, but it also places great demands on the quality of product data, which has a significant influence on many areas in the company. Industry 4.0 is not possible without constantly updated data that accurately represent the product in all views. In order to have a clean data structure, the discipline of configuration management (CM) is necessary. Due to the rapid development in the field of Industry 4.0, the question arises of how far these complex requirements are already reflected in academic education. The study is data-based. Interviews with education experts from universities are used to methodically collect data. The interviews are analysed for their core statements. Finally, these findings will be combined in a framework to be developed. The article aims with a constructivist approach to clarify which university faculties are particularly affected, which new subjects would make sense, and what should be adapted in existing subjects. A further aim of the study is to create a framework that represents the necessary adaptation of the curricula in terms of both structure and content. Special consideration is given to the didactic demands as well as the ideas and requirements that are brought to the education from the industry.

Keywords

Industry 4.0, higher education, internet of things, configuration management, digitalisation

Locked down: performance gains and policy puzzles in the post-pandemic university

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Abstract

This paper explores how performance gains resulted from a pandemic response that was in many respects improvised. Those gains ran counter to expectations formed by pedagogic literature and were welcomed in the context of an institution with acknowledged weaknesses in attainment, engagement and retention. This autoethnographic research is framed by a senior leader, operating at the meeting point of strategy, operations, and policy. It explores the ways that research framed operational responses, and how subsequent policy shifts further changed operating parameters, removing some of the improvisations that had proved effective. It proposes changes in practice aimed at improved student outcomes and institutional performance.

The literature of online learning chronicles a taxonomy of exclusion and disengagement, ranging from marginalised learners (Ball et al 2002) to demotivated ones (Chen and Chang, 2010), among learners who may be more or less self-directed (Chu and Tsai, 2009), or underestimate the nature of the engagement required to learn (McQuaid, 2009). Added to which there may be social factors such as learning environment (Evans, 2009; Summers 2003) and the expectations of the 'digital native' vs those of the 'digital immigrant', among both learners and teachers.

Such concerns framed many of the operational responses, and the subsequent analysis of performance against engagement, retention and attainment. The paper reflects both on the unforeseen gains, and the subsequent losses as policy interventions denied managers' agency and records their struggle to sustain the improvements they improvised under duress, once stability and constraint were reasserted.

Views about whether poor performance is the result of internal deficit, or policy misdirection, are not mutually exclusive; such tension contributes to the consequent re-problematisation of managerial influence and student-focussed learning, in the post-pandemic UK university.

Keywords

policy, university, management, leadership, engagement

Conservation education as a zoo mission – global perspective

Barbara Mroz-Gorgon | Wroclaw University of Ecomonics
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Abstract

Conservation education is an important step towards inspiring people to protect wildlife from extinction. It is one of the most important tasks of modern Zoological gardens, apart from endangered species conservation and scientific research. Today, zoos play a crucial role in global conservation and sustainability.

The aim of this article is to present and analyse the main issues in the field of conservation education within the zoo sector. The purpose of the research was to indicate the problematics of the education on zoo organizations examples and to understand its complexity. As a result of the research, it has been proven that conservation education can be considered as one of the main pillars of zoos strategies and image creation.

Keywords

conservation education, zoos, zoo sector, research, marketing, management.

HOSPITALITY

The Perspectives of Front-Line Hospitality Employees on Emotional Labour and Authenticity

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In affiliation with The Emirates Academy of Hospitality Management

Abstract

Guaranteeing service with a smile is one of the biggest challenges service organisations face in the 21st century. Front-line hospitality employees who are in direct contact with guests are expected to always serve their guests with a genuine smile. For several reasons, this is not always possible. An analyses is done as to whether or not this unseen hidden form of labour is recognized by these employees and by management in some of the top 5 * Hotels in Malta.

Hotel owners need to appreciate their front-line employees and treat them as their key assets. It is these employees that are constantly in direct contact with the hotel guests. Exceeding a guests' expectations cannot be achieved by having employees forced to do something, as this will never lead to outstanding service. Hiring front-line hospitality employees through recruitment agencies in top Maltese 5* hotels is becoming a norm. These are filling up jobs for the short-term and are not providing long-term solutions.

Successful careers in hospitality should exist at different levels, and such careers should not only include managerial positions, but also for front-liners. The following recommendations were attained to illuminate what may be done:

- Strong connections between the Hospitality Industry and Hospitality Institutions
- Prioritize Customer Care
- Services are as important as Tangible Products
- Training Solutions
- Emotional Displays included in Educational Systems
- Upselling Monetary Schemes
- Recruitment Processes

The Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated the importance of the face-to-face interactions of human beings. Less individuals in the future might wish to be around people. An appreciation of the mental efforts on this topic is essential for the success of the human touch within the hospitality industry in the future.

Keywords

Front-line hospitality employees; Hospitality Industry; Emotional Labour; Surface Acting; Deep Acting.

The Covid-19 Pandemic and its' Impact on the Meal Experience in Casual Dining Restaurants

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Abstract

This research-oriented paper draws from the author's studies related to the quality of the service given in Maltese restaurants. The main objective of this study is to empirically examine the present situation and quality of the meal experience given in casual dining restaurants in Malta and the aftermath which the pandemic is leaving on one of the country's most important economic pillars.

The literature review is broken down into four parts. The first- and second-part deal with customer experience as well as the various facets and forms pertaining to the restaurant experience; whilst the third part focuses on the service quality and customer satisfaction. Lastly, the fourth and last part analyse the impact which the pandemic has on the catering sector during its different phases, the new consumer needs, and parallelism between the evolution of supply and demand.

For this research paper, two research methodologies are used for data collection. A total of 23 casual dining restaurants around Malta were chosen for the participative observation, whilst the survey questionnaire had a total response from 763 participants. This exercise, which was focused on the meal experience was carried out prior to the pandemic, and the data gathered from the two research methodologies was amalgamated for interpretation and conclusions.

The author started his first research on the restaurant sector in 2016, when he was writing his bachelors' thesis on the food and beverage service in Malta; this research paper is a continuation of his work, and it gives a glimpse of information of what is happening in the Maltese casual dining restaurants. Therefore, it would be of significant value to this industry if further studies are conducted; not only in the catering sector, but also in other vital sectors which form part of the tourism and hospitality industry.

Keywords

Meal Experience, Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction, Consumer Needs, Foodservice Sector

TOURISM

Post-pandemic challenges and recommendations: What is the future of Tourism Studies in Malta?

Ruth Azzopardi | Institute of Tourism Studies, Malta

Abstract

In 2020-21, the tourism industry was negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and led to policy and logistical changes in various sectors. Amongst the sectors that were affected by the pandemic, some that are directly associated with tourism include global flights, guest numbers in various countries and employment in services and retail, accommodation and food services. This has led some researchers in the field to call for the need to reconsider the entire global tourism sector and not return to pre-pandemic practices once the crisis is over (Gőssling, Scott & Hall, 2020). The United Nations (2020) have proposed a roadmap for the transformation of the tourism industry in the near future, in order to foster more sustainable growth, advance innovation, mitigate the impact on livelihoods and coordinate the transformation of the sector. National authorities, including the Government of Malta (2021), have also published post-pandemic strategies to counteract current challenges associated with the crisis.

This paper will focus on three areas of research associated with the pandemic, tourism and the field of higher education (HE), combining a literature review with recommendations for the local HE sector in Tourism Studies. The first part of the paper will analyse key texts in recent literature that highlight challenges that the tourism sector is facing due to the pandemic. It will also seek to understand how perceptions about the impact of the pandemic changed from early 2020 to 2021/2. The second part will focus on literature that studies how the pandemic has affected HE, especially Tourism Studies, in different contexts (for instance, Schmitt, 2020; Sigala, 2021). The last part of the paper will turn to the local HE sector in Tourism Studies, highlighting challenges as well as proposals for positive change during the pandemic, such as Malta Tourism Authority's scheme to offer online courses to persons working in the tourism industry. The paper will finally elicit recommendations for the Institute of Tourism Studies in Malta, reflecting about the institute's need to reinvent itself in the context of the pandemic.

Keywords

higher education, tourism studies, sustainable tourism, post-pandemic strategies.

The future of travel? Understanding the factors that lead to acceptance or rejection of hyperloop technology

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Abstract

Increasing air traffic on short to medium distances for business as well as touristic purposes is a major source of CO_2 emissions. While there are many concepts currently discussed as substitutes for airplanes on these shorter routes within Europe, hyperloop has gained most media attention. The idea of hyperloop is based on vehicles designed to transport people in low-pressure tubes accelerated by a magnetic levitation belt. This allows the vehicles to reach high speeds of up to 1.000 kilometers per hour, thus considerably reducing travel times compared to trains. Since hyperloop is currently under development, overcoming technical and economic challenges as well as increasing its acceptance in society will decide the success of this innovative mode of transport. Currently, research on hyperloop user acceptance is limited. This study aims to identify users' willingness to use this mode of transport and factors that determine support or rejection for hyperloop. Therefore, an acceptance model was proposed and then tested in an empirical study based on a sample consisting of N = 387 participants in the Netherlands. The results indicate that performance expectations (e.g., high speed, comfort, environmental advantages) support the acceptance of hyperloop, while safety concerns (e.g., technology failure, low-pressure environment) were identified as reasons for rejection. Based on these results recommendations can be derived for both, business and touristic use cases.

Keywords

hyperloop, acceptance, rejection, performance expectations, knowledge

Jewish tourism in Portugal

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Abstract

Portugal has had a long and interesting History with the Jewish people, however this History is little known. The growth of the Jewish tourism segment is helping to better understand the heritage / resources related to the presence of Jewish communities in Portugal, mainly in the central region of Portugal.

This article aims to show that for Jewish groups it is not only important to have interesting resources related to their culture, but it is also essential to have other supply elements such as hotels and restaurants (among other items) specifically adapted to this tourism segment, more particularly to the Orthodox.

The case study is the possibility of building itineraries for organized Jewish groups in the central region of Portugal.

The methodology used was, on one hand, to establish the difference between memory and heritage tourism, and on the other hand, to list the Jewish heritage / memory elements which could be inserted in the programs / itineraries. The interviews with agents related to this tourism segment helped to understand the needs of the Jewish tourists and at same time to realize their opinion about the possibility of creating specific programs for Jews coming from different parts of the World.

The conclusions of this study indicate it is possible, in the central region of Portugal, to welcome organized secular Jews groups but there is still a long way to go before being able to receive organized orthodox Jews groups due to the lack of mainly hotels and restaurants adapted to the needs of those tourists.

Keywords

Jewish tourism, Memory tourism; Resources, Itineraries; Central Portugal

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Skills as a conundrum in entrepreneurship development of small to medium tourism enterprises (SMTEs) sector in East London, South Africa

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Siyabonga Mxunyelwa | Walter Sisulu University, South Africa

Abstract

The Tourism sector currently faces challenges in education, training and skills development which causes an impediment to entrepreneurship development. Given the size of this sector, skills development plays a critical role in transforming an enterprise and drive entrepreneurship. This study sought to investigate the problems in skills development among owners and managers of Small and Medium Tourism Enterprises in East London. The researcher applied both qualitative and quantitative research methods to analyse the skills as a conundrum to entrepreneurship development in the small to medium tourism enterprise sector. An analysis of variance test (ANOVA) was undertaken to ascertain if there were any significant differentiation with regard to skills and educational qualifications. Questionnaires were distributed to tourism entrepreneurial ventures in order to collect data. The respondents were selected by drawing a sample randomly. The study elucidates that some of the owners and managers that manage these businesses are lacking the required education and skills to manage businesses to perform optimally and provide impetus to entrepreneurship development. Therefore, it is recommended that the business owners and managers must invest in skills development initiatives to enable them to improve performance and create sustainable enterprises. Furthermore, it is recommended that government should provide an effective training support programme by fostering the performance and growth potential of the businesses.

Keywords

Tourism businesses, skills-development, entrepreneurship, East London, South Africa.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Social entrepreneurship and Crowdfunding Model: From Social Entrepreneur Perspective

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Hans Rüdiger Kaufmann | Mannheim University of Applied Management Studies

Abstract

Many research studies show that social entrepreneurship plays a very significant role in supporting societies to move forward in the direction of sustainability. Social entrepreneurship provides sufficient and self-sustainable solutions for social purposes beyond personal wealth pursuits. The gap that arises is the lack of funding for the social mission and its financial sustainability. In this context, Crowdfunding could play a crucial role. The process of crowdfunding starts with peers, family, and acquaintances eventually leading to massive funds. The social entrepreneurs, a group of individuals who opt to pledge funds to support the initiative, and the platforms that mediate between them are the major participants in the process. The platforms help catalyse social entrepreneurs pledge funds according to their requirements as monetary funding models or non- monetary funding models. Hence, this paper first reviews the extant literature on social entrepreneurship, crowdfunding, and intermediaries (Maehle et al., 2020; Rey-Marti et al., 2019; Testa et al., 2019; Mosakowski & Calic, 2016). The theory of Value-Attitude-Behaviour (VAB) by Kim & hall, (2021) is used to understand the participation of the crowd funders in sustainability initiatives. The authors explore the development of a framework of the social entrepreneurial and crowdfunding ecosystem. The qualitative research design applied the research method of a case study and the technique of semi-structured in-depth interviews of eight social entrepreneurs. Based on the findings, this study contributes to the literature by developing an initial holistic behavioural conceptualization with the social entrepreneurs and the funders coming together to help a business sustain for resolving social sustainability issues. Furthermore, the result shows social entrepreneurship and crowdfunding can overcome the sustainability issues by emphasising the factors recommended for each funding model. It is suggested to differentiate donation-based and reward-based funding models as non-monetary funding models from equity-based and lending-based models as monetary funding models. Future research recommendations are to develop the interaction model from the perspective of intermediaries and investors are provided.

Keywords

Social Entrepreneurship, Crowdfunding, Sustainable Ventures

EDUCATION

Lessons learned from launching a course during the pandemic: Innovation or Adaptation?

Simon Caruana | Institute of Tourism Studies, Malta
Glen Farrugia | Institute of Tourism Studies, Malta

Abstract

In spite of all the contingency planning that takes place, the advent of Covid-19 has caused a thorough re-think when it comes to course organization, interaction between students and academics, modes of assessment and quality assurance. The Bachelor course in Dive Safety Management run by the Institute of Tourism Studies in collaboration with DAN Europe is no exception.

Learning outcomes were devised, together with learning activities and assessment tasks as originally conceived by Biggs and Tang (2011), Tuning (2017) and at the same time heeding the warnings of Hil (2012).

A blended learning approach was already being envisaged given the aim to reach out to international students. When the course was launched in September 2020, various contingency measures were implemented within a very short time frame to adapt to the changing circumstances arising from the pandemic itself. Assessment tasks had to be implemented keeping in mind the learning outcomes posed yet there was very little time to test out these new assessment tasks. The course designers had to rely almost exclusively on either previous experience acquired in other courses or fellow academics who may have tried them in other academic courses of study.

Yet, course designers and administrators had to ensure that whatever changes were implemented, these remained within the approved learning outcome framework. Otherwise, the entire course description would need to be re-approved by the relevant quality assurance agencies, effectively putting the course on hold.

This paper aims to serve as a self-reflection on the implementation of this new study programme and outcome, particularly from a curricular, logistical, pedagogical and technological perspective. It also attempts to provide a framework for a programme review model to be used to improve the curriculum.

Keywords

Blended Learning, Learning Outcomes, Course Design, Assessment, Scuba Diving

Post pandemic education – a look at the mature student enrolment at ITS

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Stephanie Mifsud | Institute of Tourism Studies, Malta

Abstract

Mature students enter higher education with different goals and objectives in mind, when compared to younger students. They also have more complex needs, but also bring a large pool of experiences and qualifications to the classroom. Another point to mention is their motivation: this can be social, financial or educational, whichever it is, mature students have a different mindset to their younger counter parts. The University of Sheffield's department of lifelong learning have seen an increase in mature student applications (Camilla Priede, 2020).

The aim of the present study is to examine whether there has been an increase in the number of enrolled mature students at the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS) due to the pandemic. The research methodology used for this study will be quantitative, carried out through the published statistics at ITS and through online questionnaires directed towards mature students. The research will focus on the enrolment of mature students, using the statistics published by ITS for the years 2018, 2019 and compare them to the years 2020, 2021. Once the questionnaire has been completed by the students in question we will analyse and look into the factors and motivation behind the increase or otherwise in enrolment of mature students at ITS. The research will therefore provide valuable information ITS can use to continue to attract mature students.

Keywords

Mature student; enrolment; higher education; post pandemic; ITS; lifelong learning.

A Post-pandemic approach towards Quality Assurance in Higher Education. The way forward for Tourism and Hospitality Education.

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Abstract

The best way to define quality is by describing quality assurance as a continuous developing and enhancement process in upgrading towards excellence. This paper contributes to better understanding the development and application of quality assurance in higher education and highlights areas to address from a theoretical and practical perspectives of tourism and hospitality education. Quality culture is something that must be kept alive, through various inputs from different stakeholders both internally and externally.

It is essential for educational institutions to remain competitive with their counterparts which are competing in the same field. This is also important to have good quality programmes of study on offer with various opportunities to all stakeholders involved even at institutional level. The change in students' attitude towards their learning process evolved to a level, that nowadays students are eager to know what they are going to learn and how they can continue to advance in the career path which they chose.

Policies, procedures, and processes backed up with a quality assurance manual are all an integral part of successful quality assurance practices and culture within an educational institution at all levels. Both academic and non-academic staff within an educational institution must be aware of what is required to maintain and foster a good quality culture in place. Through quality, responsibility is shared at various levels within institutions. The importance of engaging as many as possible stakeholders is to have new ideas in enhancing quality assurance initiatives culture. Quality Assurance increase transparency and comparability of standards between and within qualifications and educational institutions achieving greater credibility and utility and act as points of reference for establishing and assessing standards.

Keywords

Quality assurance, Higher Education, Educational Institution, Stakeholders, Tourism and Hospitality.

Current and Post Pandemic Hybrid Lecturing - Process, Challenges and Possibilities

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Fleur Griscti | Institute of Tourism Studies, Malta
Aaron Rizzo | Institute of Tourism Studies, Malta

Abstract

The Covid-19 Pandemic has necessitated the usage of amongst other processes, that of hybrid instruction. Much has been studied in relation to its benefits in learning and its accessibility for students. However, little has so far been researched in relation to the demands this instruction process has on the educator in general and more specifically on the professional post-secondary academic. Hence this paper is set up with the intention of gaining an in-depth understanding of the academics' experiences and thoughts on the 'imposed' usage of hybrid lecturing.

This will be tackled through the identification of the Hybrid lecturing process and how it distinguishes itself from Blended lecturing. Furthermore, the investigation of the academics' experiences and thoughts on the usage of this process, the examination of the pros and cons of Hybrid instruction, as well as the appraisal of the lecturers' usability of this process in the current and post pandemic stages will also be dealt with.

This study will be based on peer reviewed articles with the intention of establishing what has been dealt with and identified to date. While the analysis of the selected method of primary research to be performed with a sample of post-secondary lecturers, is targeted at giving lecturers a voice in their usage and handlings of Hybrid lecturing.

Keywords

Hybrid lecturing, Hybrid lecturing challenges, Blended lecturing, Post-secondary academics, Post-secondary education solutions, online teaching

COVID-19 as a wake-up call-in higher education: A review of literature through a SWOT analysis

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Aldo Vella | Institute of Tourism Studies, Malta
Lucienne Vella | Institute of Tourism Studies, Malta

Abstract

The modus operandi of the education system, from early years to higher education, has been deeply shaken with the Covid-19 pandemic which also disrupted the daily activities of all businesses across the world, including the tourism and hospitality industry. It seems that this pandemic is not leaving us any time soon, despite some sporadic periods of optimism.

Due to strict social distancing measures, educational institutions used various platforms and applications to convert their traditional face-to-face teaching methods to contactless instruction. However, the shift was too rapid, and most educators and students were taken by surprise.

Digital knowledge sharing may provide a number of advantages for students, lecturers, and educational institutions. Yet not everyone was in a position to embrace the full potential of online learning, and instead engaged in emergency remote teaching. Proper reflection on how the stakeholders have experienced the transition from traditional to online instruction may act as a catalyst for improvement in creating and delivering knowledge.

This document aims to explore, via an integrative literature review, the impact of emergency remote teaching and learning by identifying the experiences of students, lecturers, and the educational institutions. A SWOT analysis has been identified by the researchers as an appropriate tool to assess higher education in terms of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. The study also presents recommendations for the post-pandemic era.

Keywords

education, SWOT analysis, online learning, emergency remote teaching, Covid-19 pandemic

Group Work Perceptions and Practices in Post-Secondary Hospitality Education: A Case Study at the Institute of Tourism Studies

Lucienne Vella | Institute of Tourism Studies, Malta

Abstract

Group work has pedagogical as well as pragmatic benefits and these occur to varying degrees, depending upon the perceptions of educators and students, as well as the type of work undertaken in a group setting. When the notions of cooperation and collaboration are introduced in group work, it becomes a valuable enterprise with distinctive cognitive aims.

The aim of this study is to explore group work perceptions and practices in post- secondary, vocational, hospitality education, during the Covid-19 pandemic. The participants are lecturers and students at the Institute of Tourism Studies. The lecturers were interviewed, while the students took part in an online survey. Additionally, a group of students were observed while carrying out a group task.

Lecturers consider group work to be an efficient teaching and learning tool which enables them to cover more quality content, besides enhancing transversal skills in students. On the other hand, when students are assigned a group task, it does not necessarily mean that they are working together. They usually divide the task among group members who work independently and then convene to assemble the final output, with minimal interaction. Both lecturers and students must 'learn by doing' as neither of them receive any training about group work.

After gaining an insight into existing practices and causes for apprehension, a model is presented which may be used to enhance the understanding and applicability of group work in post-secondary, vocational education, both during as well as after the Covid-19 pandemic.

Keywords

group work, collaborative learning, teamwork skills, hospitality, Covid-19 pandemic

TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Will history repeat itself? The story of swiss watch making

Nikola Draskovic | Rochester Institute of Technology, Croatia
Milivoj Markovic | Rochester Institute of Technology, Croatia

Abstract

This paper aims to provide a historical overview of the Swiss watch industry's main challenges and responses over the past fifty years and how the industry maintained its leading position until recent times. Back in the 1970s and 1980s, the whole industry reached the point of near extinction due to managerial stubbornness and failure to respond to the disruptive technological threat. East Asian producers flooded the market with inexpensive watches based on the quartz movement (a technological innovation at the time), creating a massive challenge for the Swiss watch industry and its traditional approach to the production and marketing of watches. Building on the vision of entrepreneurially minded outsider Mr Nicolas G. Hayek, the Swiss watch industry responded to the challenge confronting it by accepting the disruptive technology (quartz movement) in a range of watches, next to keeping the traditional ones. Out of the crises, a new watch brand Swatch emerged, along with a radically new business model. The following decades were the years of growth, but the global crisis in 2008/2009 took another toll on sales of Swiss watches. As the global markets recovered, the sales recovered again. The déjà vu feeling is pervading in Swiss watch industry executives again these days as the Swiss watch industry is confronted with a new set of challengers, armed with a new type of disruptive technology. In the early and mid-2010s, smartwatches appeared on the market as the latest technological innovation. In 2016, the smartwatch shipments exceeded the whole Swiss watch exports, while in 2019, Apple watch sales outperformed the entire Swiss watch industry output. Despite several smartwatch models introduced by Swiss brands, the customers turned away from traditional producers. They embraced new players in the market, such as Apple, Samsung and various other low-price competitors. This paper explores the options that Swiss watch industry has in responding to new challenge(r)s, especially drawing from the lessons learned throughout the previous disruption cycle.

Keywords

Swiss watch industry, business history, market dynamics, competitiveness, strategy

Barriers to implementing information communication technology (ICT) in managing Small to Medium Tourism Enterprises (SMTEs): the case of Hogsback, Eastern Cape, South Africa.

Siyabonga Mxunyelwa | Walter Sisulu University

Abstract

Information Communication Technology is recognised worldwide for its contribution towards SMTEs development and the economy. However, the level of ICT implementation as a management tool, its contribution and the extent of benefits on SMTEs is a debateable phenomenon. The purpose of this study was to investigate the barriers to the implementation of ICT within the context of small and medium tourism enterprises in Hogsback. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were applied in this study. Questionnaire interviews were conducted with owner/managers in Hogsback. The stratified sampling method was utilised to collect data. The study indicates that (46.2%) of the business respondents were operating the accommodation establishments. The findings of the study underscores that (25.6%) of the business owners identified the barriers of ICT appears to be high costs. Further (23.1%) stated that accessing technology was also an impediment. Moreover, the study elucidates that (94.9%) of the SMTE concur that implementation ICT as a management tool helps to meet objectives of the business for the daily operations of the business. It is therefore recommended that ICT be implemented as a management tool for small and medium tourism enterprises. Furthermore, the study recommends that the managers/owners should invest in technology to ensure the success of the SMTEs in all aspects. Furthermore, the study serves as the basis for future studies in the area of ICT within the SMTE sector.

Keywords

Information Communication Technology (ICT), Small to Medium Tourism Enterprises (SMTEs) , Hogsback, South Africa

A Criteria Framework for the Evaluation of Cloud-Based Machine Learning Services

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Dennis Schlegel | Reutlingen University, Germany

Abstract

Artificial intelligence (AI) is one of the most promising technologies of the post-pandemic era. Cloud computing technology can simplify the process of developing AI applications by offering a variety of services, including ready-to-use tools to train machine learning (ML) algorithms. However, comparing the vast amount of services offered by different providers and selecting a suitable cloud service can be a major challenge for many firms. Also in academia, suitable criteria to evaluate this type of service remain largely unclear. Therefore, the overall aim of this work has been to develop a framework to evaluate cloud-based ML services. We use Design Science Research as our methodology and conduct a hermeneutic literature review, a vendor analysis, as well as expert interviews. Based on our research, we present a novel framework for the evaluation of cloud-based ML services consisting of six categories and 22 criteria that are operationalized with the help of various metrics. We believe that our results will help organizations by providing specific guidance on how to compare and select service providers from the vast amount of potential suppliers.

Keywords

Machine learning as a service; MLaaS; Artificial intelligence as a service; AIaaS; Cloud AI

E-Commerce Channel Strategy: An International Comparative Survey

Mitsunori Hirogaki | Kyushu University, Japan

Abstract

Since the outbreak of the COVID19 pandemic, e-commerce use increased in many countries. To meet the increasing demand, building an efficient distribution channel while satisfying the needs of consumers has become a very important issue, not only for companies but also from a socio-economic perspective.

This study aims to clarify the service factors consumers value in e-commerce, and the extent to which they are willing to pay for them (i.e., Willingness to Pay). We selected three countries in Europe and Asia, where e-commerce is an important part of the market, and conducted a structured questionnaire survey of consumers. The results revealed that customers in each of the three countries prioritised some common factors when using e-commerce services, though consumers in each country also prioritised distinct factors as well. The results of this analysis not only provide useful information for managers of e-commerce companies but also clarify the optimal channel structures for policy decision-makers.

Keywords

E-Commerce, Channel Strategy, Consumer preferences, Europe, Asia

MARKETING

Public Relation planning and open dialogue through social media in Tech Startups

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Hans Rüdiger Kaufmann | University of Applied Management Studies Mannheim (HDWM)

Abstract

Social Media networks provide an efficient and cost-effective way of building relationships for young startups. Employing social media technology in entrepreneurial PR can foster long-term relationships. According to Pakura & Rudeloff (2020), establishing connections through social media by having an open dialogue leads to trust and long-term relationships. Yet, this activity of tech entrepreneurs in their initial phases remains understudied. Furthermore, startups do not sufficiently exploit the dialogic participation in nurturing relationships with their potential stakeholders through social media. Hence, this study aims to identify the entrepreneurial activity for long-term PR planning in the initial phases of tech start-ups and to investigate the barriers encountered in understanding dialogic participation.

To fill this gap, we consider 'environmental scanning' and 'developing key messages' as long-term planning activities for building public relations. Validating an initial conceptualization, an exploratory qualitative case study was chosen as the research method. 8 semi-structured interviews were conducted with founders of Tech Startups with max. 8 years of existence. Content analysis using the software of MaxQDA was used to analyse and categorise the data.

The findings reflect that "Environmental scanning" activity is considered by each entrepreneur at the initial phase of the startups cycle. The key factors driving this activity are 'motive of entrepreneurs', 'establishing a thought leadership role', and 'considering correct parameters'. 'Developing key messages' is considered as a communication objective by entrepreneurs until they reach the Product Market-fit phase. Product related obligatory needs of customers after having defined the minimum viable product are causal for this activity. Explicitly, 'Value Proposition' and 'Social phenomena' were found as innovative factors in planning and implementing key messages. For establishing relationships through social media and understanding open dialogue of potential stakeholders, LinkedIn was regarded the most productive platform due to its interactivity potential and different analytical tools. Drawbacks for identifying the potential of dialogue with stakeholders through social media was a lack of 'willingness to participate' and 'subjectivity' such as rumor-driven behavior.

Keywords

Public Relation, Tech Startups

Pricing Models for the Software as a Service (SaaS)

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Hans Rüdiger Kaufmann | University of Applied Management Studies Mannheim

Abstract

Context: Software as a Service (SaaS) is an evolving business concept developed over the last decade and bound to continuously grow. Hence, pricing strategy of a SaaS provider plays a paramount role in business strategy and tactics as it is closely related to revenue, profitability, and customer satisfaction. After conducting a multivocal literature review, Salten and Smolander (2021) concluded that SaaS pricing is a growing and major area of research that requires further investigation.

Research Gap and Research objective: As little research was elicited in pricing tactics, organizational processes, and practices as to SaaS pricing, this paper aims to investigate the factors of a pricing strategy to package SaaS features and professional consulting effort. We analyzed the key cost factors in a SaaS solution infrastructure, maintenance and support labor and their impact on the system.

Research method: A qualitative case study was applied with 10 semi-structured expert interviews with entrepreneurs, consultants and executives with more than five years of experience in the SaaS industry as the chosen research technique. An initial conceptualization was validated having applied content analysis and categorization supported by the qualitative analytical software MAXQDA.

The analysis revealed the main infrastructure cost drivers such as CPU, memory, and storage with other relevant cloud services to be additionally selected. SaaS providers are recommended to focus on their maintenance effort to be competitive in the market and on covering the costs with their base price. Furthermore, basic support service should also be covered within this base price whereas extended support to be charged additionally. As a guideline for pricing SaaS we propose to differentiate between B2B or B2C and consider the value creation. Finally, even if it's profitable to generate revenue through offering specific professional service, it should not be included in the standardized packages but be charged based on negotiation when serving niche or unique market segments.

Keywords

Software as a Service, Pricing

Implementation of Internal Marketing As A Smart-Cost Strategy

Atif Mahmood | The University of Lahore
Razaq Raj | Leeds Beckett University

Abstract

This study highlights the cost-effective internal marketing techniques in banks to foster affective commitment and customer-oriented citizenship behaviour among front-line employees. The impact of internal communication, management support, and vision on customer-oriented organisational citizenship behaviour is examined for the first time in context of Pakistani banking sector. Furthermore, social exchange theory and self-efficacy theory are integrated simultaneously for the first time to draw connections between these constructs. Empirical time-lag approach is outlined in this study for data collection through self-administered questionnaires. Smart PLS 3.0 was used for hypotheses testing. Results of this research reveal that affective commitment mediates the relationship of internal communication and management support with customer-oriented citizenship behaviour. However, vision fails to augment affective commitment and customer-oriented citizenship behaviour. Furthermore, self-efficacy moderates the relationship between affective commitment and customer-oriented citizenship behaviour. This study recommends how banks can implement internal marketing elements to stimulate affective commitment and customer-oriented citizenship behaviour of front-line employees in order to improve the external service quality.

Keywords

Internal marketing, internal communication, management support, vision, affective commitment, customer-oriented organisational citizenship behaviour, self-efficacy

ACCOUNTING AND FINANCE

Holistic investment appraisal approach based on the triple bottom line

Bernd Britzelmaier | Pforzheim University
Sebastian Steindl | Pforzheim University

Abstract

Until now, classic investment appraisal approaches have exclusively focused on financial success. However, with the rising interest in and need to deal with sustainability, social and ecological aspects have to be considered in investment decisions. The aim of this paper is to present a systematically developed and applicable investment appraisal model, that will not only include financial aspects, but will cover sustainability issues as well by applying the concept of the triple bottom line.

Thus, eight controlling and sustainability experts coming from backgrounds of academia and departments of small to medium sized companies in Germany were questioned in semi-structured interviews regarding their perceptions and requirements for a sustainability driven investment calculation model. As a result, there was no common consensus about how to integrate sustainability into an investment evaluation. Even though, sustainability is anchored in the strategy of many companies, clear guidance on planning and control are often missing. The interviewees expressed a need for a simple calculation model adoptable to each company's strategy making it flexible in terms of inclusion of sustainability factors and in weighing up between economic success and sustainability.

Literature review and interview results lead to a systematic four-step framework. A materiality analysis will be used to detect relevant financial, ecological, and social features addressed by a potential investment. These features will be listed, measured, and ranked. By applying this approach, a multi-dimensional investment strength profile can be created for each investment alternative. This will then be forming the base for the ability to make solid investment decisions based on the triple bottom line. This paper presents an approach that needs to undergo further testing in practice for it to be verified as a generic framework. Further research is also needed to develop instruments particularly for social features to allow a more precise measurement.

Keywords

holistic investment appraisal, corporate sustainability, triple bottom line, sustainable investment controlling, sustainability controlling

Addressing real estate finance gaps in Nigeria using REIT (Real Estate Investment Trust) as a vehicle.

Abiola I Olanrewaju | The University of Vitez

Abstract

Globalization has necessitated the increasing sophistication of global markets heightened by the introduction of novel investment special purpose vehicles such as Real Estate Investment Trusts(REITS).

REITS are businesses that invest, develop or operate income generating landed properties ranging from residential housing units, office accommodation, shopping malls, industrial parks, short lettings, hotels, conference centres and warehouses whose stocks are traded in stock exchanges.

Since the United States of America congress passed the REIT Act in 1960 as a means of expanding the traditional investment world beyond stocks and bonds, the investment space of REITS has witnessed a phenomenal growth over the past twenty years.

Nearly 70 percent of $1 trillion global real estate equity market capitalization of public real estate as of mid-2012 is believed to be constituted by REITs(FTSE, 2010, Goodchild, 2008).

However, there has been little discussion about the empirical nature of Nigeria's REIT. The rather limited knowledge of the dynamic nature of secondary property market investment vehicle like REIT is believed to have contributed to the relative low deployment of Nigeria's capital market tool aimed at strengthening the country's property market, investment sector and addressing the country's N60 trillion housing finance deficits (Zyl, 2010, Moghalu, 2011).

Investigation shows that as at 2018, Returns on Investment (ROI) in Nigerian REITs was below what comes back to investors in this instrument compared to other economies. Despite its large-size market, return on investment in REITs in Nigeria is 7 percent as against 15 per cent in South Africa and 9 per cent in Kenya.

It is against this backdrop, that this study sought to appraise the performance of REITS in a developing economy like Nigeria and how this special investment vehicle could help to address funding gaps that will ultimately improve the housing deficit in Nigeria. The research project is still ongoing.

Keywords

REIT, housing finance, capital market, investment, housing deficit. real estate, global market, special investment vehicle.

Tokenization and tokenoeconomics - education sector perspective

Anna Andrych | Wrocław University of Economics and Business
Barbara Mróz-Gorgoń | Wrocław University of Economics and Business
Łukasz Pacek | Wrocław University of Economics and Business

Abstract

We are living in a hyper-fast changing world that changes the financial market. Centralization whether in the form of governments, financial institutions, enterprises and organizations is simply being challenged because of the lack of trust associated with data governance often experienced in the form of data breaches or simply a monetization of our data without our permission and/or incentives to participate in this emerging decentralization of structures [Morrow, Zarrebin, 2019]. A decade after the introduction of the Bitcoin protocol, an increasing number of art-tech startups and more or less independent initiatives have begun to explore second-generation blockchains and the emergent practice of tokenization (i.e., the issuance of new cryptoassets primarily to self-fund decentralized projects) as a means to intervene in the structures and processes underlying the rampant financialization of art [Lotti, 2019, p. 287]. In the literature studies, possible scenarios for using blockchain technology in the field of education are considered [Shmatko, Borova, Yevseiev, Milov, 2021]. In this paper, the authors address the significance and complexity of tokenization, the beginning step of NLP in the context of the academia sector. This study aims to develop a smart contract system and blockchain tokenization in universities. The method used in this research is critical literature review analysis and qualitative research (focus groups). The tokenization implementation can replace third parties as security guards of transaction data with all Blockchain users paying attention and ensuring the integrity of the entire process and activity. This can avoid problems that arise from the presence of third parties in the transaction process [Gunawan, Lutfiani, Aini, Suryaman, Sunarya, 2021]. The implementation of smart contracts and Blockchain tokenization might be seen as the future solution to be process within the higher education sector and called as a manifestation of the agile approach to the strategy.

Keywords

tokenization, tokenoeconomics, education, blockchain, marketing, agile

Financial literacy; a banking sector corporate social responsibility agenda in Nigeria.

Joseph Albasu

Abstract

The role of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Promoting Financial Literacy has recently become a topic of scholarly debate in academic literature. Few researchers that attempted to study Financial Literacy failed to investigate the integration of financial literacy as a potential CSR agenda in the Nigerian Financial Institutions. This study investigates how banks in Nigeria could potentially use Financial Literacy as intrinsic construct to integrate CSR as a Mainstream agenda and philosophy for knowledge-based acquisition to improve Financial Literacy in the Nigerian Society. The study therefore, presents Financial Literacy as an adopted CSR agenda in the Nigerian banking sector that creates shared value for the banks and the Nigerian society. Data are sourced through the engagement of CSR Directors of selected banks operating in Nigeria using semi-structured interview to identify the viability of adopting Financial literacy as CSR agenda. The underpinning theoretical Framework adopted in this study is stakeholders and social exchange theory. Stakeholder is defined as any individual or group that can affect or be affected by the realization of the organisation's objectives. They are individuals or group, that have a legitimate interest in the substantive aspect of the corporate activities; whose interest are of intrinsic value. Social exchange theorist posits that, human behavior is an exchange of rewards between the actors-the investing public and the banks. These theories are used to present argument for the banking sector in engaging in CSR using Financial Literacy. Findings revealed that, the Nature of the Nigerian Economy being a cash-driven, the lack of readiness of institutions and government agencies to support CSR agenda of the banking sector and lack of obligatory instrument for the implementation of CSR is highlighted to be the major challenges faced by banks for the implementation of financial literacy programmes in Nigeria. Also, the need for socially conscious leadership in the banking sector, shared responsibilities by stakeholders and willingness for change in CSR narratives from philanthropic gestures to a more sustainable business model is highlighted as challenges.

Keywords

Corporate Social Responsibility, Financial Literacy, Shared Value, Financial Inclusion, Socially Conscious Leadership.

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The importance of recruitment processes in Maltese Accommodation Establishments during the Pre and Post Covid-19 Pandemic.

Lorraine Farrugia | Institute of Tourism Studies, Malta

Abstract

The provision of good services for guests relies on the recruitment and selection process of a company. Good recruitment process is important as it helps the Human Resources' department select the ideal person for the company. Ideally the person chosen needs to be motivated and perform their work as per company standards. Recruitment is therefore a good investment to consolidate and invest in human capital.

Recruitment is an important asset for accommodation establishments. Locally, there are a lot of job opportunities within the hospitality industry. It is difficult to find good and enough personnel to satisfy the various available work positions since a lot of foreign workers decided to move back to their country when the pandemic started and remained in their country until now. The aim of this research is to explore the recruitment processes in various Maltese accommodation establishments. Additionally, this research focuses on the challenges that Human Resources' departments are facing in recruitment. What kind of help are Human Resources' departments obtaining from the Government of Malta and Government-related entities to tackle the issue of lack of applicants? Another aspect of this research is to see what kind of professional qualifications are deemed important by the hotel industry.

The qualitative analysis of recruitment in this research is conducted by interviewing various Maltese accommodation establishments. The results suggest that there are a lot of similarities between the properties interviewed and the recruitment practices and they struggle to find personnel that can work within their property. This research suggests that the higher the star category of the property, the more intense the recruitment process seems to be. All establishments interviewed seem to give priority to employ people that are motivated and willing to work even if they don't have experience in the field. Accommodation establishments are willing to invest and train these people.

Keywords

Recruitment process, Recruitment challenges, Professional qualifications, Motivated employees, Investing in Training, Pre/Post Covid-19 practices

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