



FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT
«MASTER IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION»

MASTER DISSERTATION

**Tourism marketing
the role of the internet
Tourism destination: Greece**

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DECEMBER, 2019

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my deep and sincere gratitude to my parents for their love, caring and sacrifices for educating and preparing me for my future. I am extremely grateful to my husband and my daughter for their love, understanding and continuing support to complete this research work. Finally, my thanks go to all the people who have supported me to complete the research work directly or indirectly.

Vasiliki Panagiotopoulou



Mythical Greece



Abstract

The specific dissertation investigates the broad concept of tourism and how it has been shaped in recent years with reference to the types, forms and characteristics of the tourism product. Furthermore, the study analyses the marketing communication mix of the tourism industry and tries to emphasize the significance of applying e-marketing practices for the promotion and advertisement of tourism destinations and services as well as for their management. The ultimate goal is to highlight the necessity of standardization as well as the integration of all tourism services under one unique online-standardized trustworthy platform, certified by the United Nations World Tourism Organization.

A number of hypotheses were formulated in order to perceive the objectives. It must be stressed out that the online platform has been developed to better understand the nature of online tourism as well as to carry out as many test cases as possible for the collection of the marketing results. The online platform is still in progress of development not to mention that it constituted the trigger for the creation of a startup tourism company with fully automated procedures.

A proposal, in terms of marketing and management, is presented for the beneficial cooperation between the private and the public sectors in the tourism industry, which is scalable, flexible, totally adjustable and applicable to all the countries worldwide. This study contributes to the field of tourism by testing Greece as a destination marketing success model that can definitely be applied internationally.

Keywords: tourism, marketing, communication marketing mix, management, sustainability, economic growth, standardization, internet marketing and integrated online tourism.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Travel and tourism have attracted humans' interest from the very inception of life. The insatiable desire to explore new places & hidden landscapes, discover unique cultures and reach the edges of the world, constitutes an inextricable part of the social nature of human beings since time immemorial. This endless craving for exploring more, lead tourism in one of the world's most promptly evolving industries. Clearly, the constantly automated travel services as well as the growing amount of information that any potential traveler can find via the internet, fueled this rapid growth of the tourism industry.

The Internet facilitates travelers by providing online booking systems, information concerning the accommodation, the local food, the weather forecast and much more for the chosen tourism destination not to mention that the internet even connects all travelers instantly, in order to exchange personal experiences. This new trend became very challenging for the tourism industry and obviously improved customer service. All travelers are seeking to increase the rate of return on their investment while all tourism providers upgrade continuously their skills in order to be able to respond to global standards and requirements.

Tourism is no longer just developing products. To the greatest degree, tourism must reflect the quality of human-centric services around the world where the satisfaction of the traveler is the number one goal. Thus, the fundamental obligation for each country must become the vertical and accurate integration of the various components of the tourism industry under a unique online-standardized trustworthy platform for the traveler's convenience as well as for the optimal tourism products' promotional worldwide. In the end, the necessity of the tourism market to globalize under a general framework of regulations, which in turn will be segmented and modeled for each country separately via the internet, will be fully perceivable during the analysis.

1.1. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this research study is to state the types of academical and philosophical prospects and perspectives regarding tourism marketing as well as to present the alternative integrated marketing communications via the internet to influence the attitudes and the behavior of tourists for a tourism destination (test case: Greece). Specifically,

several alternative research philosophies were examined as well as quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods were applied, in order to determine the most appropriate approach concerning the internet marketing communications mix and all of its individual elements.

The objective of this research study is to define tourism origins and classifications and identify the concept of integrated internet marketing communications. Furthermore, this research study presents the necessity of standardization in the tourism industry under the unambiguous beneficial cooperation between the private and the public sectors via an online integrated and standardized marketplace. It is for granted that the tourism industry is constantly expanding enclosing the providing services of the transport companies, the tour operators, the tourists' attractions, the local municipality and the government as well as the preferences and expectations of tourists. Governments and private companies serve both the residents and tourists. It is, therefore, important to study tourism from the perspective of the administration, as it has to combine the needs of the tourists with the needs of the local inhabitants, as well as in terms of marketing using the internet as the main tool, so that the tourism services and destinations are properly structured online and conforms to country regulations, in order to be promoted to the greatest extent with the optimal results.

1.2. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

1.2.1. General Hypothesis

Internet marketing communication is the leading branch of every modern marketing strategy and prevails over traditional marketing communication methods.

1.2.2. Specific Hypotheses

- ❖ The Internet provides multiple benefits in the tourism industry constituting the driving force behind the economic growth of a country as well as the development of sustainable tourism.
- ❖ The online integrated marketing communication methods provide a more accurate association between a tourism organization and its target market.
- ❖ E-tourism platform is the key to standardize, audit, moderate and promote tourism destinations and services in the most efficient way.

- ❖ E-tourism platform subserves the tourism providers to emphasize more on the improvement of their tourism services.

1.3. METHODOLOGY

The research study was conducted using a qualitative in-depth research design for data collection and analysis by assessing available academic and scientific literature concerning tourism as well as marketing strategies. Additional relevant data were reviewed using a range of information sources such as numerous books, bibliographic databases, conference proceedings, tourism and marketing journals as well as publications not to mention internet search engines, in order to explore the tourism industry. To aid the searching technique, specific keywords were used with terms related to tourism, marketing, communication marketing mix, management, sustainability, economic growth, standardization, internet marketing and integrated online tourism, for the proper completion of the research. In addition, an online tourism marketplace developed in order to facilitate the appliance of these marketing strategies in real-time. After the conduction of the test cases, all the results gathered, analyzed and are included in the specific research study, followed by their explanation. The test case tourism destination is Greece. The developed methodology may include business processes, always, with the intent and purpose of marketing in the tourism industry. The entire stratified implementation revealed the real picture of domestic tourism marketing, especially the weaknesses, as well as the areas of improvement. The significant contribution of the specific research study is the fact that the proposal is potentially adjustable on multiple and scalable tourism marketing strategies worldwide.

1.4. LITERATURE REVIEW AND RELATED WORK

Various academics have repeatedly strived to evaluate the significance of tourism and classify it. According to Buhalis (2000), tourism is a merge of tourism integrated services offering various experiences to travelers. Howie (2003) insists that tourism presents complex management and marketing challenges in order to satisfy the broad range of travelers' expectations as well as to relate them with the tourism industry. Nevertheless, Kasimoglu and Aydin (2012) try to analyze the complexity of tourism by distinguishing it in two levels, the micro-level, where independent tour operators are located and the

macro-level, where governments and other official authorities are placed. It must be stressed out that Faulkner and Valrio (1995) mention that governments in the early '90s had already started establishing official independent organizations to promote their tourism destinations abroad. However, there was still a gap between tourism and tourists' expectations. Many scholars during the last 90s outlined the positive relationship between travelers' satisfaction and loyalty which can be measured as the intend of post-purchase behavior (Bearden and Teel, 1983; Szymanski and Henard, 2001). Kotler (1997) claims that keeping loyal visitors guarantee long-term success and enhance tourism destination sustainability. Based on his analysis, customer loyalty can be measured by the intention to continue purchasing the same tourism service or more of the same tourism services as well as the willingness to suggest the tourism service or the brand to others. According to Chen and Gursoy (2001), repeat visitation assesses tourists' loyalty and the degree to which they perceive the tourism destination as a recommendable place. Even so, Plog (1974) shows two different types of travelers, the "psychocentrics" and "allocentrics", insisting that the second ones are seeking novelty and cannot become loyal destination visitors easily. Kozak and Andreu (2006) agree that socio-demographic profile, as well as motivations, determine the willingness of a tourist to visit again a tourism destination, while Gunn and Turgut (2007) tried previously to develop a list of criteria to define tourists zones, classified as physical, social and cultural. However, Bramwell & Lane (1993, 2012, 2013), Sharpley (2000), Saarinen (2006), Lane (2009), Liu et al (2013), apply new concepts concerning loyal travelers and sustainable tourism, imprinting the need of corresponding tourism resources to the preferences and expectations of actual and potential travelers. Recent marketing approaches enriched this relationship with the contribution of the internet by obtaining instantly detailed information about tourists' preferences, needs, expectations, purchasing patterns in order to set promotional prices, adjust product features and customize the entire relationship with the potential travelers (Law et al, 2007). Moreover, Ritchie and Goeldner (1994) highlight the importance of marketing tourism activities as well as of the internal management, providing an analytical framework including its economic impact. Howie (2003) declares that control and coordination play a crucial role in tourism, emphasizing the important distinctions of tourism destination policy, planning, development, management and audit. Definitely, the

internet is the absolute means that could help tourism in terms of marketing as well as management. Coelho and Dias (2011) suggest interesting various solutions that could help tourists as well as tourism businesses, such as localization and online speaker-independent speech input with multiple user preferences. Zhang et al (2009), Kabassi (2010) specify the importance of information technology and services in the tourism industry while Werthner and Ricci (2004) mention that e-tourism may alter the structure of the industry as well as the process of creating new opportunities. Hinze and Malik (2006) present the way to create a platform that models, audits, evaluates and explores a good context concerning a tourism service. Thus, the above literature review demonstrates that tourism is multi-faceted encompassing an entire range of issues and challenges that need resolution and organization, especially via the internet for the benefit of marketing strategies.

2. BASIC CONCEPTS OF TOURISM

2.1. HISTORY OF TOURISM

The word "tourism" appears for the first time in the English Dictionary of Oxford in 1811, finding its roots etymologically in the Ancient Greek language by the word «τόπος», which means lathe, while at the same time the tourism phenomenon was indissolubly linked to Ancient Greek leisure and activities (Rabotić, 2014). Herodotus, 480 - 425 BC, who was a geographer and historian, is the first recorded traveler - tourist. During his tours, Herodotus paid great attention to the culture and traditions of the people and the places that he visited and according to modern concepts, he is classified as one of the "intelligent" tourists (Herodotus, 440BC; Redfield, 1985).

In Ancient Greece, the free time declared the origin and class of the citizens who were free of forced labor, dealing with the social, moral and political issues of the state. Work was the main occupation of the people and leisure was synonymous with noble occupations, the result of political thinking that not only explained but also delimited what freedom was. In this way, the social stratification and the concept of leisure time determined the tourist practice, the spatial dimension of which is underlined by Socrates' reports (Long, 2014).

It should be stressed out that the concept of alternative tourism has its roots in antiquity. A colossal paradigm is the Olympic Games that combined conveyance and accommodation, where travelers focused on local traditions. According to Herodotus (440 BC), another recorded type of alternative tourism is medical tourism. He recorded the balneotherapy as an incentive for escape, transportation, healing and recreation. At that time, the first public building complexes are being designed and developed, which aimed at mass tourism, providing baths for healing therapies by combining the theater as well as museum and library halls to cultivate the spirit and preserve the history (Redfield, 1985).

As it is universally known, Ancient Greece is completely interwoven with the hospitality not to mention that Xenios Zeus represented the guardian of both hosts and guests. Hospitality had the force of law and the inhabitants of the cities, where religious, theatrical and cultural events as well as sporting activities conducted, hosted the guests. In this way, a great wave of people's mobility began, with the perpetual pursuit of the different modes of recreation per time periods. This mobility had contributed to the rapid expansion of culture as well as to the development of significant infrastructure for the mass hospitality of tourists. About 170 AD the need for explanatory manuals arose and Pausanias, being a historian and geologist, issued the first tourist guide entitled "Description of Greece" (Pausanias, 170 AD).

At the time when the Minoan civilization developed, the trade flourished and expanded to other continents. Thucydides, 460 – 400 BC, mentions that Minos was the oldest person in the tradition, who acquired a large fleet and became the master of the seas. The first basic axes of trade between Greece and Egypt were recorded and the peoples' interaction is depicted till today in pictorial testimonies at the palace of Knossos. The palace became a focal point of visiting for religious and professional purposes, resulting in the first appearance of the modern concept of "business trip" (Moyer, 2002).

In the social structure of the Middle Ages, holidays and tourism, in general, were associated almost exclusively with religious reasons, from which the English word "holidays" (holy days) derived. The church adopted the ancient Greek tradition of hospitality and promoted its mentality in all of its actions, motivating people's movements

between continents for religious and cultural expansion. At the same time, the Crusades created a sense of curiosity and exploration of the Middle East to the Western people. In Europe, the Baltic and the Mediterranean traders represented the category of tourists, where their professional status coexisted with their cultural cultivation and cultural interests. Essentially, in the given period, real business tourism had been established and important cultural centers, such as Granada, Seville and Cordoba were created, especially, after the contact with Muslim culture and the Arab invasion. At the end of the Middle Ages, a new spirit had begun to emerge around the tourism development, which was even more developed during the Renaissance period. The forms of tourism were enriched and the motives of tourists' movement were multiplied. Tours for purely educational purposes, primarily to the Paris University Centers, made their appearance for the first time (Walton, 2005).

2.2. THE BEGINNING OF THE MODERN TOURISM

During the Renaissance, tourism consolidates the theoretical conception, the existence and the realization of the trip, mainly for leisure purposes. In just half a century, Europe creates state-of-the-art road and rail networks for that era. In the given period, there is a significant increase concerning the number of tourists, while the first tendencies of mass tourist movements are visible. In Europe, medium and low-end hotels are being built, which in the 1930s and 1940s will be the core for the development of mass tourism. After the end of the Second World War, the rapid growth of the means of transport and communications, the improvement of per capita income, the rise of the cultural level, the introduction of paid holidays and the development of social tourism have played a decisive role in shaping the current forms of tourism, which constantly are being enriched (Zuelow, 2015).



Figure 1 - Historical background of modern tourism (Independent, 2019; *The Traveling Public and Tourism Promoters*, 2019)

2.3. DEFINITION OF TOURISM

Since the beginning of the 20th century, several attempts have been made to clarify the definition of tourism. Eventually, the definition that prevailed and became universally accepted by the United Nations Statistical Commission was the one given by the World Tourism Organization (WTO) in 1993 at the 27th session. According to WTO (2008) "Tourism comprises the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes".

- By the term "usual environment", WTO excludes the trips within the place of residence, work or education, where local and daily activities are carried out.
- By the 12-month timing, long-term migration is excluded.

2.3.1 The definition of WTO identifies five key features on tourism

1. The movement of people and their stay in different destinations determine the concept of tourism and travel.
2. The key element in tourism is the entire experience of the journey combined with the accommodation, the transfer to the destination as well as the nutrition.
3. The journey takes place at a different destination than the usual place of residence, enabling the creation of optional local activities that designate different cultures and traditions.
4. The movement to the destination is short-term, within a few days, weeks and months, with the intention to return to the "usual environment".

2.4. WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION (WTO)

At the first International Conference of National Tourism Organizations, held in London in 1946, it was decided to set up a Non-Governmental Organization in order to replace the International Union of Official Tourist Propaganda Organization, established in 1934. The first sector was founded in 1947 under the name International Union of Official Travel Organization (IUOTO). In 1970, the IUOTO General Assembly adopted the WTO mission statement. The process of mergers between tourism operators resulted in the establishment of the World Tourism Organization on 27 September 1970, which was the

development of all the previous carriers in international tourism. In 2003 the WTO becomes a United Nations Special Service.

The United Nation World Tourism Organization is primarily responsible for the development, sustainability, viable and accessible tourism. Tourism, as a major driver of the growth of international economies, contributes the most to small and medium-sized economies. Through its actions organized worldwide, WTO strives to continuously develop innovative and environmentally friendly guidelines, promoting tourism as a tool for all countries-members to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Moreover, WTO praises the economies that embrace the Code of Ethics of tourism, minimizing the negative impact of inappropriate ways of promoting and selling tourism products. It develops innovative technologies and rewards those countries that their education in the field of tourism delivers the most through modern forms of viable and sustainable development. Competitiveness, sustainability, poverty reduction, capacity building, partnerships are the main goals of achieving responsible, sustainable and globally accessible tourism (UNWTO, 2019).

2.5. TYPES OF TOURISM

According to the World Travel Organization (1995), the most prevalent classification of tourism is its division into types, categories and forms. Specifically, the three core types of tourism according to the origin and the destination of visitors are distinguished as stated below, with distinctive features the external effects and impacts.

2.5.1. Domestic tourism is the tourism of resident visitors within the economic territory of the country of reference.

2.5.2. Inbound tourism is the tourism of non-resident visitors within the economic territory of the country of reference.

2.5.3. Outbound tourism is the tourism of resident visitors outside the economic territory of the country of reference.

However, new categories in the tourism sector generated from combined groupings, as follows:

2.5.4. Internal tourism (domestic and inbound) is the tourism of visitors, both resident and non-resident, within the economic territory of the country of reference.

2.5.5. National tourism (domestic and outbound) is the tourism of resident visitors, within and outside the economic territory of the country of reference.

2.5.6. International tourism (inbound and outbound) is the tourism of non-resident and resident visitors, within and outside the economic territory of the country of reference.

2.6. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TRAVEL AND TOURISM

Tourism, compared to travel, has a wider concept encapsulating much more than the travel alone, despite the fact that the words are conceptually synonymous.

Travel essentially includes all journeys that take place for any purpose, even for professional or educational, while tourism involves traveling and staying in a destination outside the usual residential environment, accompanied by activities and recreation.

The entire tourism encompasses some travels, yet, not all travels are tourism. For instance, people doing a business trip to a place other than their usual business premises may spend some of their time and visit tourist attractions. By this point of view, travelers are "potential" tourists and the tourism industry managers can turn these travelers into "actual" tourists by applying the right marketing (Laimer, 2010).

3. THE TOURISM PRODUCT

3.1. DEFINITION OF THE TOURISM PRODUCT

The tourism product is defined as the total physical and psychological satisfaction that confers on tourists during their journey to the destination, up to and including return. It focuses, mainly, on services and facilities that are composed to meet the needs of every tourist. The tourism product can be identified as a complex product, that includes transfer, accommodation, nutrition, tourists' attractions and additional leisure activities aiming the pleasure of tourists, where each component can be provided by different suppliers of the tourism industry (Smith, 1994).

The tourism product can be examined in terms of the four A, which are the Attractions, the Accommodation, the Accessibility and the Amenities.

3.1.1. Attractions

Attractions constitute the key components of a tourism product, due to the fact that they motivate tourists to visit a specific place. It is a fact that the more popular a tourist attraction is, the more determinant will be in the final choice of the tourism destination. Mainly, popular tourist attractions are all the sites that are recognized as international heritage by the World Tourism Organization (WTO) and are distinguished in cultural, natural, and mixed type. The cultural heritage sites contain areas of archaeological interest, historical buildings and town sites, monuments and monumental works of sculpturing and painting. The natural heritage sites demonstrate exceptional biodiversity with unique flora and fauna as well as all-natural phenomena that are rare, superlative with outstanding beauty. The mixed heritage sites include components of both natural and cultural significance.

Despite the fact that every tourist must visit the heritage monuments, there is fashion even in the tourism industry. Fashion affects preferences and demands for various attractions and amenities, which can play a key role in the final decision. Nevertheless, this is not considered a drawback but an opportunity for a tourism product to apply a cross-selling method by promoting heritage sites along with attractions that follow the current fashion trends.

Culture	sites and areas of archaeological interest, historical buildings, monuments, museums, political, educational and religious institutions
Tradition	national festivals, music, folklore, local customs, arts and handicrafts
Nature	national parks, wildlife, beach and mountain resorts, unique flora and fauna
Entertainment	events, sports, thematic parties, theatres, nightlife and cuisine
Health	health resorts or SPAs, thermal baths, mud therapy

Table 1 - Inventory of the most important tourist attractions based on type preferences

3.1.2. Accessibility

Attractions can be the driving force for choosing a tourism product, but accessibility does not desist to play an important role in the final choice. Accessibility is the means by which the tourist can reach the attraction as well as the key factor for the growth and

development of tourists' movements. If the place is not in great ease accessible, the attraction is degraded and loses the prestige, glory and value it would have in any other case.

At the same time, the distance factor, which is quite relevant to accessibility, also plays a role in the choice of the tourism destination. Long-distance tours' costs are more expensive than short-distance ones to the travel destination, determining the low or high arrivals to them. Specifically, Europe and North America are the main areas of generating and receiving international tourism, accounting for 70% and 20%, respectively. Therefore, accessibility and distance are key factors in the growth and development of tourists' movement.

3.1.3. Accommodation

Accommodation plays a central role in the tourist experience, completing the attractions in tourism destinations. It is worth mentioning that the World Tourism Organization in tourism definition has stated that a traveler must stay at least one night on the tourism destination visited, to qualify as a tourist.

In fact, in some cases, accommodation constitutes itself a tourism product and becomes the primary incentive for the tourism destination choice. Specifically, a large number of tourists, especially the "Free Independent Travelers" - FIT, visit a particular destination only because there is a luxury hotel or resort with excellent services, facilities and cuisine. However, the variety and type of accommodation has a wide range and has undergone significant changes in recent years, mainly due to the requirements of tourists as well as the fashion trends that prevail at time periods.

It should be noted that up until the beginning of 2010 the largest hotels increased significantly their share of holiday trade compared to smaller or traditional, especially in metropolitan areas and popular tourist spots. Nevertheless, as technology is developing at a very fast pace, an electronic registration, accommodation and rental platform developed in August 2008 attracting more and more hosts and guests all over the world, called Airbnb. In a decade, Airbnb conquered an extensive share of the accommodation industry worldwide by filling the gap between a private leaser and a tenant, hurting the hotel industry. While fashion trends tend to alter over the years, the stable presence in

the tourism industry could be maintained and be adapted to the current conditions, by the implementation of powerful globally adjusted regulations and strong marketing strategies and promotions.

LARGEST LODGING COMPANIES BY ROOMS (INCLUDING AIRBNB)

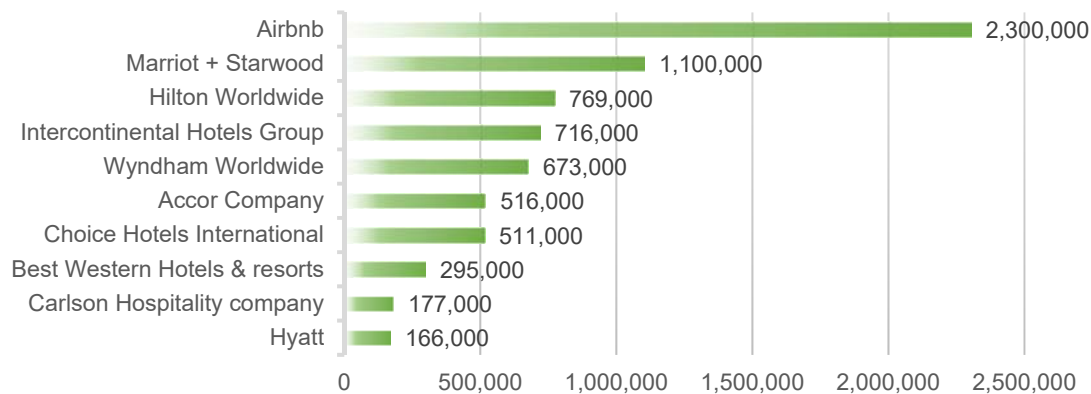


Figure 2 - Largest Lodging Companies by Rooms (Soeg Jobs, 2019)

3.1.4. Amenities

Amenities and facilities are mainly related to accommodation and constitute necessary assistance for the improved tourist experience. In recent years, hotels, especially resorts, have managed to create tourist centers that include and combine natural and human-centric amenities within their infrastructure, providing all-inclusive holiday packages.

3.2 FORMS OF TOURISM PRODUCT

According to professors Tureac and Anca (2008), tourism development begins with the investment decisions in the tourism sector, as well as the granting of special state incentives to individuals for the creation of private enterprises. As a rule, this obviously means that a country's tourism resources become accessible to international tourism, creating the ground for new investment incentives based on the degree of demand and supply. Theoretically, therefore, it is possible to develop all forms of tourism in each country. However, socio-economic and environmental factors generate significant limitations to such intentions and that is why some countries lag behind others in providing all forms of tourism to tourists.

The classification of the tourism product in forms is based on the incentives to better understand each of their particular characteristics so that they can be placed appropriately in the markets and attract as many targeted tourists as possible. There are various tourism products that are available to tourists today, whether traditional in nature like culture and pilgrimage or modern like adventure, conventions, conferences, health, medical, etc. The diagram below illustrates adequately the types of tourism and the forms of the tourism product.

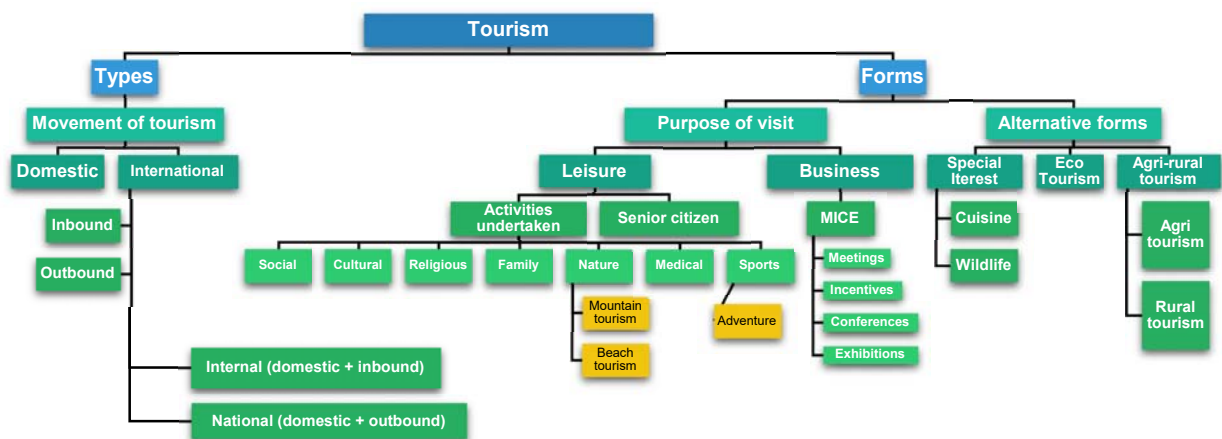


Figure 3 - Types and Forms of tourism

3.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF TOURISM PRODUCT

According to Albayrak, Caber and Aksoy (2010) the tourism product is considered heterogeneous by its nature not to mention that economists classify tourism as a tertiary factor in the economy. It can be entitled as a tourism product, however, essentially it is a mix of tourism services that compose an integrated "product" each time. Tourism belongs to the mixed sector due to the fact that it represents a complex product that is a mixture of material goods, such as accommodation, vehicles, superstructures, sea, beaches as well as intangibles like the sun, the climate, etc. Such particularity generates a number of tourism product characteristics, as follows.

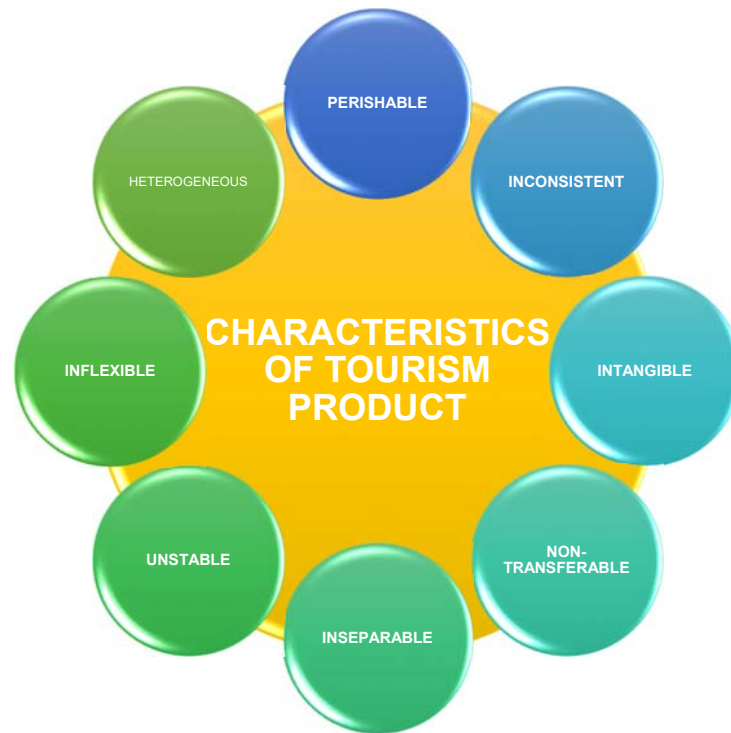


Figure 4 - Characteristics of Tourism Product

3.3.1. Perishable

Perishability is one of the most significant characteristics in the tourism industry. Every tourism product is consumed as it is produced and it cannot be repeated in the exact same way. Moreover, when the consumption of the tourism service begins, it cannot be stopped, interrupted or modified so that to be stored in a warehouse or an inventory for later. The opportunity for the tourism experience will be lost if not used at that time. For instance, once a tour bus begins a tour with some empty seats, the unused capacity cannot be sold afterward, hence the tourism company makes no profit on these seats. The exact same issue, concerning perishability, applies also to airline companies, accommodation companies, excursion companies and more. Therefore, almost all companies that provide tourism products vend at the peak when they sell at busy times in order to make profits. However, perishability generates a huge problem in the tourism sector. Due to the incertitude in tourists' demands, most of the accommodation companies as well as travel agents tend to overbook the available lodgings and seats. Statistically, the overbooking consequences are more economical for the companies but not for the tourists.

3.3.2. Inconsistent

Tourism products always differ and cannot be totally standardized due to various factors that interact throughout the tourism experience that derives during consumption. For instance, the same accommodation in the same week with the same weather can be perceived differently due to the mood of the personnel and alter the experience of the customer. Rational attributes like the price, the nights of stay, the view of the room and supplementary services can only be measured to a minor degree, due to the fact that the tourists' opinion is highly affected by uninfluenceable aspects such as the weather, the noise of the road, other customers, etc. The satisfaction of the tourist affects the psychological factor, which is the most significant adjudicator concerning the entire tourism experience with a great effect on the perception when receiving the tourism service.

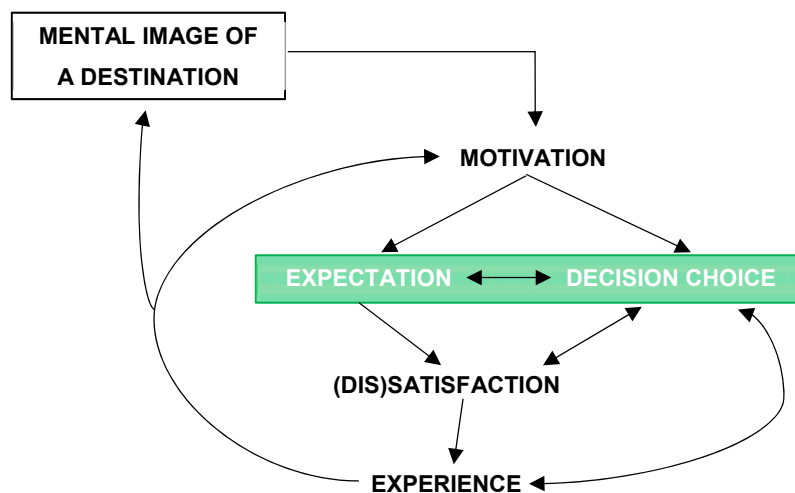


Figure 5 - Network of a relationship forming a mental image of a tourism destination/product/service

3.3.3. Intangible

Unlike a tangible product, the tourism product cannot have a real presence, while in parallel, it cannot be audited or inspected before its purchase. This makes it tricky for the tourist to evaluate the quality of service prior to consuming it since there are fewer attributes in comparison to a tangible product.

3.3.4. Non-transferable

The tourism product hasn't any transfer of ownership of its enclosed services, which means that it can be bought for consumption, yet the ownership remains with the provider

of the service. For example, when a tourist books an excursion, he purchases the right to be transferred to a predetermined destination at a predetermined fare, without owning the vehicle as well as the driver. The exact same feature is applied to accommodation, airline companies, cruise companies, sightseeing attractions, etc.

3.3.5. Inseparable

Tourism products are inseparable from the point they are consumed as well as from the provider of the service. The tourism product cannot be shipped to the tourist's place of origin and consumed there. On the contrary, it requires the movement of the tourist from the place of permanent residence to the premises of the tourism service provider for its consumption. It must be stressed out that the consumers are actually involved in the production process since they are purchasing the tourism product at the exact same time it is produced and consumed, for instance during a wine tasting excursion or a bungee jumping activity. This localization indicates that the consumption is inseparable from production not to mention that the tourism service provider and the service itself are conjoined. Of course, this feature has the huge benefit of instant feedback for service improvement, in order to create the ultimate tourism experience.

3.3.6. Unstable on Demand

Tourism demand is highly influenced by economic, environmental, political crises and other factors such as seasonal fluctuation. For example, in the case of terrorism, war or environmental pollution, the destination loses its demand directly. On the other side, there are certain seasons that encounter greater demand than others. At these periods of time, there is a higher pressure concerning tourism services to be provided at their best such as booking accommodation, transfers, tour guides, etc.

3.3.7. Inflexible

Tourism products are inflexible, in terms of fluctuation, due to the fact that the capacity cannot be altered quickly enough in order to react to spontaneous fluctuations in demand. For instance, hotels can not directly build new wards for weeks of excessive demand in order to serve the increased tourist flow and the same goes for restaurants. Transportation, namely airplanes and buses, could be considered a little more flexible in

case of excessive demand where additional flights and bus services could be added, however, it could only be adjusted if there was sufficient availability.

3.3.8. Heterogeneous

The tourism product relies heavily on the human factor and it is not classified as homogeneous due to the human involvement in the service provision, thus, it tends to vary in standards and quality over time. Tourism services tend to vary from one user experience to another because all individuals change over time and even the same individual may not perform the same every time. Unlike the tangible products where the customer will purchase specific features that determine the quality of the product, regardless of the interaction with the vendor, the perceived quality of the tourism product is indissociably linked to the approach of the staff to the tourists, embarking on with the information and booking process over the accommodation up to the journey back home. For instance, a tourist will remember a perfect vacation because of the food or the service, but simultaneously, the same tourist will remember the awful tour, which was included in the vacation package, because of the rude tour guide. It is for granted that all travel agencies cannot provide the same quality of service and even the same travel agent may not perform uniformly in the morning and evening, meaning that tourism services couldn't be totally standardized. Thus, tourists evaluate the level and nature of the service as well as it's quality, based on the complete tourism experience they received on the specific period of time.

Therefore, the marketing mix was extended and adapted to create the services marketing mix, also called the 7Ps or 8Ps or the extended marketing mix, in order to examine and standardize the nature and quality of services and grow economically in markets.

4. TOURISM MARKETING

Marketing is the customer-oriented management operation that organizes and manipulates all those commercial activities involved, in evaluating and converting consumers' purchasing power into effective demand, accomplishing in parallel customer-satisfaction. According to Kotler (1997), marketing is defined as “a social process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating, offering

and freely exchanging products and services of value with others”. Tourism marketing has fundamentally different approaches to all management functions, including marketing, due to the fact that the traveler purchases a series of services, while, very little concrete value remains until the travel completion. In essence, tourism marketing must give prominence to the value of the travel memories, make all information easily accessible, persuade travelers that they invest in good value for money and convince the potential tourists that all provided services will be as described and expected.

4.1. MARKETING MIX IN TOURISM

Marketing concepts had been initially developed in the framework of tangible products, where firms had to mix the ingredients in order to expand their marketing objectives and interact with the target market and its needs. However, the marketing mix in tourism examines all the positive facets of a service that a tourism organization has to address in order to meet travelers' expectations.

The main aspects of the marketing concepts in tourism are:

- ❖ the creation of the demand through various means
- ❖ the tourist orientation by generating sufficient services
- ❖ the integrated marketing with the contribution of other company's departments, for instance, finance, research and development
- ❖ the profitable sales volume through tourist satisfaction aiming in sustainability

4.1.1. 8 Ps OF MARKETING MIX

Marketing mix in the travel and tourism sector applies all the above marketing concepts including the entire range of components needed to accomplish profitable exchanges of services between the two parties, which are the firm and the tourist. These components, also known as the 8Ps, are classified as the main elements of a firm's services marketing plan as follows. The main key to success is to start always with the customer and end with the customer's satisfaction.



Figure 6 - The 8 Ps of Marketing Mix in the tourism industry

4.1.1.1. **Product:** What the company has to offer

The product is the collection of services that have features and benefits including the planning, availability, appearance, safety, warranties as well as experiences, being directly proportional to the quality of the service. Customary features and benefits in tourism marketing highlight the standard features and benefits such as the amenities of a hotel room, the convenient transfer of travelers, and more, aiming to the tourists' needs satisfaction. Since the tourism product is intangible, the only way the potential travelers can learn more about it is via an attractive website, where they can easily complete its purchase. The more branded a tourism product is, the more reliable the choice will be for the potential tourist to buy.

4.1.1.2. **Price:** What consumer will pay

The price has to conform to the tourism product and is defined by three key factors:

4.1.1.2.1. **Operating costs**

The operating costs of each tourism product include both fixed and variable costs. For instance, the fixed costs of a tour package remain the same independently of the sales enclosing the wages and insurance of the tour leader and the bus driver, as well as the

gas and the equipment expenses. The variable costs of a tour package encapsulate the nutrition, the accommodation, the entry fees, the tourists' insurance as well as the promotional and events expenses.

4.1.1.2.2. Profit Margins

The profit margins of the tourism product can be determined and escalate based on the competition's offers evaluation, thus preserving always a competitive advantage.

4.1.1.2.3. Commissions of Intermediaries

The tourism product combines more than one services, thus, commissions are a key factor for the promotion, distribution and vending of the tourism product among the intermediaries such as travel agents, wholesalers, outbound tour operators or online travel agents.

Professional tourism marketing can either be supplemented with additional special features, such as the free Internet, free breakfast or with discounts on ancillary amenities, for instance, spa therapies, etc. The most common pricing policies that can be applied to the tourism product are the following:

- ❖ Discount Pricing: percentage or cash discounts to tempt travelers to buy more tourism products, such as on the attendance of an additional number of people.
- ❖ Value-Based Pricing: price based on the perception of the value, not the seller's cost.
- ❖ Variable Pricing: price based on the variations of the tourism product.
- ❖ Loss Leader Pricing: the tourism service is sold lower than the actual price in order to settle the loss by massive purchases.
- ❖ Promotional Pricing: the promotional campaigns invest to advertise the free of charge product which can only be earned by purchasing the combined selling product, thus increasing its sale.
- ❖ Market Skimming Pricing: charging a high price for a newly released product and lower the price when the demand falls.
- ❖ Market Penetration Pricing: low initial price in order to enter the market and expand the tourism product in order to win a large market share.
- ❖ Seasonal Pricing: price escalate based on seasonal demand

- ❖ Last-Minute Pricing: discount to fill the gaps

4.1.1.3. Place: Where the travel experience is granted

The place refers to the actual location where the traveler receives the entire tourism service and experience. The destination is the most powerful component of the tourism product because it can attract the traveler in order to proceed with its actual purchase. Specifically, the accessibility, the nutrition, the facilities, the activities, the supplements, the aesthetical value, the auxiliary services, the amenities and the skilled workforce that a tourism destination provides can be the incentive to convert a potential consumer to a real one.

4.1.1.4. Promotion: How the firm sells its tourism products

Promotion, actually, is the creation of a specific image of the tourism product in the minds of tourists. The intention of the promotion is to inform the target customers about the tourism product's existence, communicating the content information as well as its cost and positioning it on the target market. There are several efficient ways of promoting a tourism product.

- ❖ Advertising the products through public commercials on television, radio stations, newspapers.
- ❖ Distributing promotional material such as brochures, notebooks, pens, USB sticks, diaries, purses, advertising magnets, keychains, etc.
- ❖ Setting Points of Sale (POS) such as souvenir shops, hotels, malls, public transportation stations, etc.
- ❖ Promoting tourism products in global fairs, or via sponsorships, or through affiliate alliances or via endowments to socially weaker human groups.
- ❖ Providing the tourism product as an incentive to companies that need to strengthen colleagues' relationships.
- ❖ Promoting tourism products with their attractive attributes on the website of the tourism firm with the ability of instant purchases.
- ❖ Advertising tourism services via social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, etc.

- ❖ Distributing tourism products via online travel aggregators such as Booking, Trivago, Expedia, Tripadvisor, etc.
- ❖ Promoting tourism products via campaigns such as Google Display Network, Cost Per Viewable Ad Impressions, Cost Per Click, Cost Per View, Cost Per Minus, Email, SMS & MMS marketing.
- ❖ Advertising tourism products with the mouth-to-mouth technique via tourism business or individual intermediaries.

4.1.1.5. People: The hidden strength

The tourism product is a collection of services, thus, the people who interact in the entire process play a crucial role. These people are the suppliers of tourism services, such as airline companies, cruise companies, accommodation providers, etc., the tour operators who combine these services based on market demands and the travel agencies who distribute tourism products to tourists. Tour operators must provide high-level services in order for the intermediaries to sell more easily and repeatedly the products to their customers, affecting the firm's position in the marketplace.

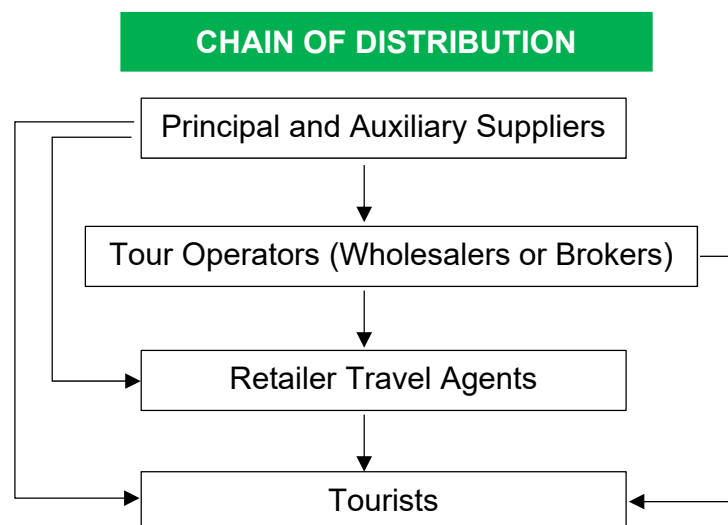


Figure 7 - Chain of Distribution

4.1.1.6. Planning: The entire process of tourism experience

Planning constitutes a key service component of the tourism experience because tourists expect that the experience will be equivalent to what they purchased. The firm must develop a well-tailored detailing process in executing the tourism service properly. The

planning could be applied to all business processing such as the sales funnel, the pay and distribution system, ensuring the effectiveness of the provided service.

4.1.1.7. Programming: Assistance to customers

Programming, also known as service marketing, is a practice that adds value to the standard tourism product/service via the choice of exclusive preferences facility. Specifically, tourists can purchase a tourism product that matches their interests, distinguishing it from competitors, thus, attracting additional consumers.

4.1.1.8. Physical Evidence

Physical evidence refers to the way firms' tourism products as well as the brands are perceived in the market. In terms of physical evidence, price, quality and facilities combined with the destination are the most significant factors that influence and determine tourists' perception. In terms of psychological evidence, visual merchandising has given great weight in emotions in order to excite tourists' senses by directly influencing the buying decision. The tourism industry invests a lot in professional photographers in order to capture and reflect the most magical experiences via images and promote them visually to tourists, motivating them to live these experiences once in a lifetime.

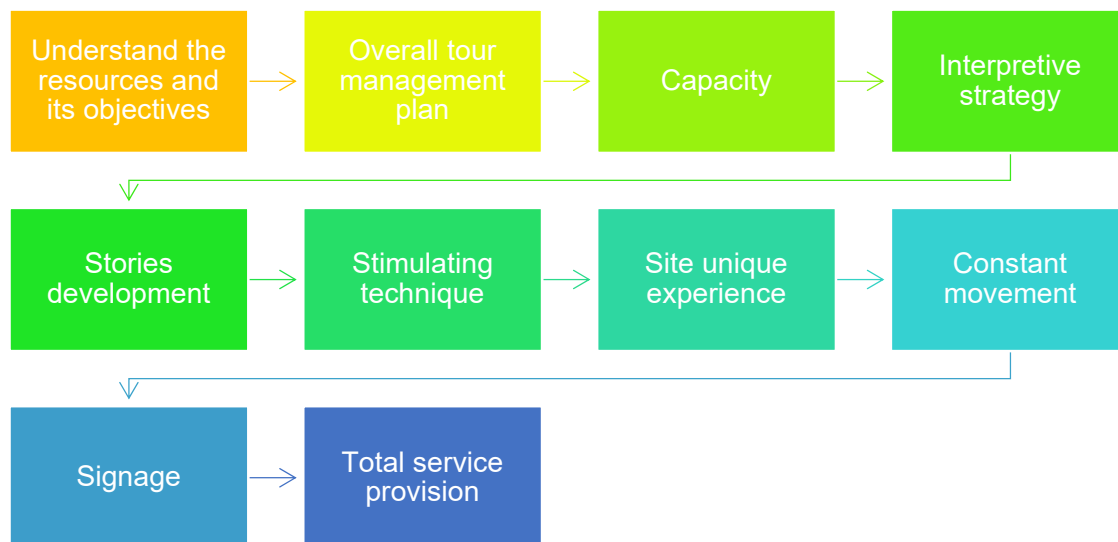


Figure 8 - Experience development process

4.1.2. MARKETING STRATEGY

Market research is the key element for an effective marketing strategy in the tourism industry, due to the fact that it provides base information related to supply and demand of the tourism product, leading in decisions about its objectives and policies. It is essential for all tourism companies to find answers to the following questions before building the firm's marketing strategy in order to map the company's direction and create a fundamental, valuable and actionable tool and achieve sustainable competitive advantage.

- ❖ Who are the potential tourists and where do they come from or live?
- ❖ What are their travel preferences and interests?
- ❖ What do they purchase and where do they stay, when traveling?
- ❖ What means of transportation do they use?
- ❖ What are their entertainment preferences, likes and dislikes?
- ❖ What are the competition trends?
- ❖ What type of marketing programs must be applied?

Along with all the above data, the marketing strategy must always develop a detailed analysis focusing also on the 3C elements which are the Customers, the Corporation and the Competition. Bose (2008) suggest qualitative and quantitative analytical techniques which vary based on the nature of the marketing problem, the availability of the data, the objective of the firm, the constraints and the opportunities.

4.1.2.1. Marketing objective

The marketing objective for Greek Tourism is to grow the incoming tourists, thus, increase the tourism industry's annual contribution to the economy. In the specific marketing strategy, the public and private sectors have to cooperate by extending the tourism season beyond the summer season, achieving long-term sustainability.

4.1.2.2. Constraints and opportunities

In general, the most significant constraints in the tourism industry are the travel distance, the access and the cost of the travel in association with the tourists' origin location not to mention the reduction of capacity in peak season. Despite these constraints, there are opportunities open to Greek Tourism.

Greece is the birth-place of Democracy, Philosophy, Mythology, Medicine, Geometry, Science and Mathematics, Architecture, Trial by Jury, Cartography, Zoology, Poetry, Library, the Theatre, the Historians, the Alarm Clock, the Alphabet, the Lighthouse, the Marathon and the Olympic Games. Apart from all this splendid history of unique culture and civilization that this country can demonstrate, Greece has magical islands for leisure and rejuvenation. Greece has unusual, unspoiled and mythical places that a tourist must experience once in a lifetime, which remain the key strengths together with all the Unesco's World Heritage sites and monuments.

The strategic planning is usually generated with the examination of the factors that constitute the internal, the external, the micro as well as the macro environment and significantly influence the quality of strategic decision-making.

4.1.2.3. PESTLE analysis for Greek tourism industry

The external environment, which is divided into two types –the Micro and Macro Environment- can be more powerful than the internal one. Specifically, any alteration, especially in the Macro environment, can create threats with aspects in the entire Greek tourism industry and as a range of powerful forces, can affect also the dynamic of microenvironment as a chain reaction. These threats could be economic instability, environmental change, political turmoil and more factors that affect tourists' attitudes and decisions. Therefore, PESTLE (**P**olitical, **E**conomic, **S**ocial, **T**echnological, **L**egal, **E**nvironmental) analysis is always applied before the SWOT (**S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities, **T**hreats) analysis with its goal to identify, measure and assess the tourism market in-depth, from the consumption to the service development process, to guarantee the proper functionality in all aspects for long-term brand reputation.

4.1.2.3.1. Political factors

After the beginning of the financial crisis, the political scenery of Greece during the period 2009-2019 turned out sorely unstable. During this decade, a national referendum and five parliamentary elections were held, resulting in the replacement of seven prime ministers and seven governments. This political turmoil, coupled with incidents of corruption, has led the country to mistrust the political system and the partner-countries to lose their confidence. The Greek landscape oozes a sense of political unreliability concerning the

government policy, the trade and foreign trade policy, the tax policy, the fiscal policy and the labor law. It is for granted that political instability hurts the revenues of the country, the funding or subsidies as well as the support for specific industries, such as the tourism industry and the trade agreements.

4.1.2.3.2. Economic factors

In 2009, Greece appeared huge spending deficits and increased government debt, thus, losing reliability on investors as well as citizens and leading to a deep economic crisis. During the period 2008-2013, more than 26% of the Crude Domestic Product of the country vanished. Moreover, Greece maintains the highest unemployment rate in Europe reaching almost 20%. The Greek tourism industry has not been directly affected by the financial crisis because the financial influx into the sector is mainly held with money outside the country. However, tourism industry suppliers have been directly affected by the 24% VAT rise and consequently the price increase in their services. The worst impacts of the economic crisis in the tourism industry are the inflation, the exchange rates, the seasonality, the tourists' nonconfidence and their purchasing power.

4.1.2.3.3. Social factors

Exactly as economic trends, also, the social trends shape the tourism industry in terms of tourists' preferences, as social influencers and role models can affect the demand for tourism products. For instance, with the rise of Airbnb, all Greek hotels have suffered a major financial blow in recent years. However, Greece is rich in culture, heritage and beautiful islands and will always be tourists' attraction because the country can satisfy, combined or not, a variety of interests. With the alliance of private and public sector, Greece can become Europe's first destination choice for its deep cultural and historical roots.

4.1.2.3.4. Technological factors

Despite the financial crisis, Greece maintains a well-developed technological infrastructure, including plenty of cell towers to reliable networks. This technological infrastructure facilitates the demand for the tourism industry constituting an enabler. All sectors of the tourism industry rely on the Internet for their business activities, from the airline firms to accommodation companies, which are making use of the Information

Technology infrastructure in order to serve their tourists better. However, a lot of Greek travel agencies and tour operators have not yet been aware of the powerful role of the Internet in the tourism industry. In the 21st century, technology is the main key to imprint the travel experience easier and promptly to a larger purchasing target audience.

4.1.2.3.5. Legal factors

The regulatory environment in the Greek tourism industry is complex and is inextricably linked to the Greek legislative framework. Greece is a Member-State of the European Union and has signed the Schengen Agreement. Although there are transnational agreements for the movement of tourists, Greek travel legislation is fully resilient, generating massive inflows of illegal immigrants to the country affecting the safety as well as economic, political and social stability.

4.1.2.3.6. Environmental factors

Greece, as a state member of the European Union, signed international agreements on environmental conservation, investing in sustainability and focusing on ecotourism. Following the international expectations, Greek environmental concerns apply to air pollution, waste and ozone layer damage. Most of the accommodation businesses adopted a recycling policy and tour operators generated ecotourism travels. It is for granted that environmental and ecological factors have a major impact on the tourism industry because the most cleaner the cities are, the more tourists will visit Greece.

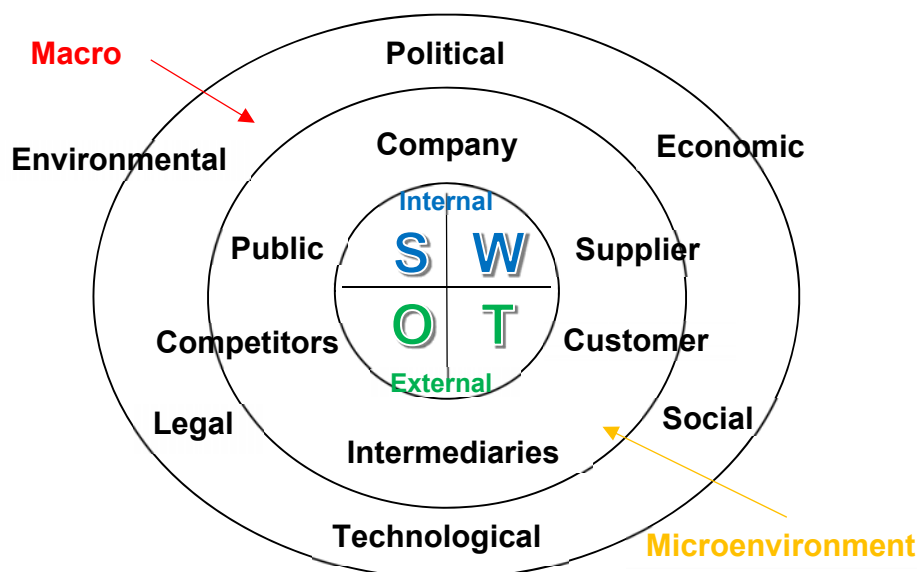


Figure 9 – PESTLE & Micro and Macro Environment diagram of the Greek tourism industry

4.1.2.4. SWOT analysis of the Greek Tourism market

SWOT is the strategic analyst of the inner and outer core of the strategic plan, where opportunities and threats are directly intertwined and influenced by the factors of the micro and macro environment.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 24 UNESCO World Heritage Sites for cultural and religious tourism 2. 2500 islands and 21 ski resorts for leisure and sport tourism 3. niche cultural attractions near Athens, the capital of Greece, for the excursion tourism 4. Huge all-inclusive hotels with conservative family value orientation for family tourism 5. Infrastructure for MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Exhibitions) 6. Mediterranean diet for special interest tourism such as cuisine 7. 132.049 km of Greek territory full of activities for eco and agro-rural tourism 8. Variety of types and prices concerning accommodation 9. Currency: Euro 10. Government: Unitary parliamentary republic 11. State member of the European Union 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of preservation of ancient monuments 2. Excessive taxation 3. Low level of tourism industry knowledge 4. Highly seasonal operation of facilities and workforce 5. Lack of marketing and promotion 6. Inefficient quality of services in the countryside compared to big cities 7. Absence of innovation and lack of high-quality statistics 8. Inflexibility to cope with changes in tourism demand
Opportunities	Threats
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Standardized online processes 2. Cultural tourism as the primary type of tourism to highlight the Greek cultural heritage worldwide 3. Integrated internet marketing 4. Investment in innovative tourism research and production 5. More characterful tourism products 6. Greater environmental awareness through ongoing actions 7. A strong alliance between the public and private sector 8. Develop more unique Greek experiences to attract new audiences 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not enough quality products development 2. Fragmented nature of tourism trade 3. High levels of worldwide competition 4. Lack of enriched educational programs 5. Bureaucratic difficulties in the regulatory framework 6. Insufficient finance to support the private sector grow 7. Climate change

Table 2 - SWOT Analysis

4.2. TARGET MARKETING PROCESS

After years of analyzing the different and unique preferences, needs, interests and consuming behavior, marketing has distanced itself from mass marketing and embraced target marketing as the number one tool that leads to the creation of niche markets by establishing the value for more targeted clients. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2017), target marketing is a customer-driven marketing strategy and provides all the essential information to develop the appropriate relationships with the correct customers through market segmentation, targeting and positioning, also known as STP analysis.

4.2.1. MARKET SEGMENTATION

Market segmentation aims to acknowledge distinct homogeneous groups of tourists with common needs, desires, preferences, characteristics and travel behavior increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the strategic marketing planning process. Hammonds (2001) mentions Michael Porter's phrase, "You can't be all things to all people" explaining that segmenting the market provides the opportunity of developing specialized travels for specific groups of tourists, thereby acquiring a competitive advantage in the tourism industry. A meaningful example in the segmentation of tourism could be the fact that extreme sports excursions cannot be sold to the elderly as well as family vacation packages cannot be vended to people without family obligations.

The benefits of market segmentation in the tourism industry are the following:

- Greatly facilitation for both the state and the tourism organizations concerning the development and the specialization of marketing policies and strategies.
- Easier and comparatively better labeling of tourism market opportunities for tourism product sales across different geographical segments.
- Implementation of niche marketing strategies and tactics to approach the different segments of the tourism market.
- Specialized overall programming and planning with regard to the essential differentiation of the tourism products in the unlike segments of the tourism market.
- Simplified performance evaluation of the tourism market segmentation, by the sellers and buyers of the tourism products.

- Easier identification of the obstacles or difficulties encountered by the tourism industry.

The strategy of market segmentation in tourism is to classify the present and the potential market based on specific characteristics and afterward adjust the pricing, supply and promotion to the target markets, achieving the highest ROI (Return Of Investment). The most usual characteristics of segmenting tourists' markets are depicted below.

Demographics	Geographic
✓ Age	✓ World region
✓ Gender	✓ Country
✓ Ethnic Background	✓ Country region
✓ Family life cycle	✓ City
Psychographic	✓ Physical Climate
✓ Lifestyle	Socioeconomic
✓ Personality	✓ Income
✓ Activities	✓ Education
✓ Interests	✓ Occupation
✓ Opinions	Benefits
Behavioral	✓ Consumer needs
✓ Frequency of purchase	✓ Product features desired
✓ Loyalty of consumers	

Table 3 - Characteristics of segmenting tourists' markets

The tourism market is usually segmented in terms of demographics, geographic, psychographic and socioeconomic criteria. For instance, targeting a group of people in the age between 40 to 60 years old, with an annual income over 200.000€ living in the United Kingdom in order to visit Greece, would be segmented based on the following criteria:

- ❖ Place of origin of tourists-target.
- ❖ Interests for new destinations & different cultures.
- ❖ Purpose of travel, such as vacations, sightseeing, cruise, history, etc.
- ❖ Economic status and spending tendencies.
- ❖ Accommodation preferences like traditional houses, luxury hotels, villas, etc.
- ❖ Preferences of means of transportation such as airplanes, rail, etc.

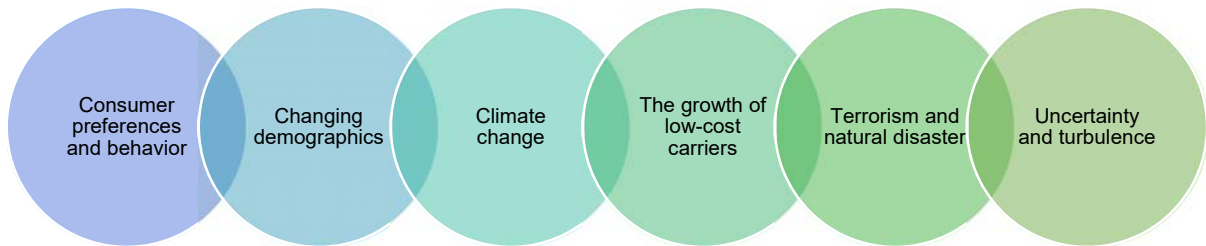


Figure 10 - Global Social and Economic Forces

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2017), Greek organizations should definitely apply the Intermarket segmentation where tourists are classified in groups with similar preferences and travel attitudes although they come from different countries.

4.2.2. TARGET MARKET

Target marketing is the next step of segmentation where a communication strategy is developed in order to help actual and potential tourists in making a proper decision. Various features of each segment must be evaluated such as the market size (number of tourists), the growth (sales and anticipated revenues), attractiveness (competitors, suppliers) in order to gain the know-how better and serve most profitably each segment. Consequently, the target audience defines the promotional campaign on what to say, how to say, when to say, where to say and who will say. Once the target is determined, four main pillars define the decision on the purpose and promotional activity, as imprinted below.

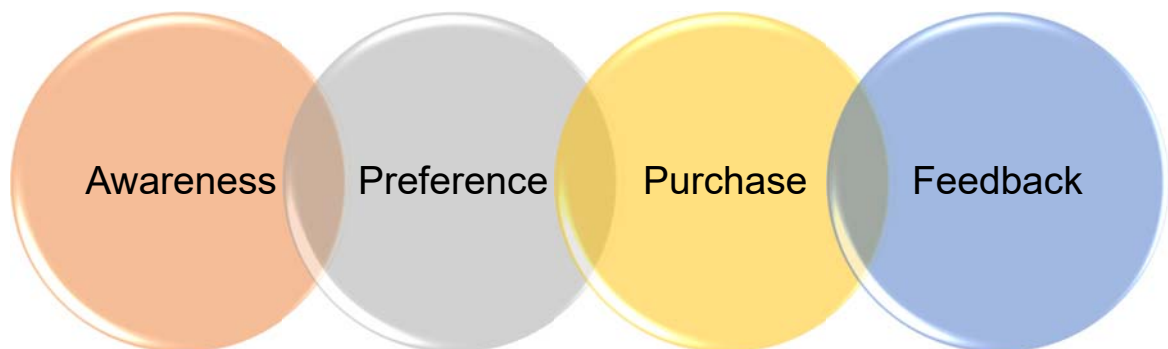


Figure 11 - 4 main pillars of consumers' buying decision

Awareness: Tourists-target might be totally unaware of the tourism services, destinations, tours and trips that Greece can offer. The target market must be totally knowledgeable in order tourism suppliers to conquer all actual and potential tourists.

Preference: Some targeted tourists might be aware of the tourism destination Greece but don't feel so likely to be favored. The communication process must imprint the values gained of the specific tourism service and present its uniqueness by promising the actual propitious advantages of choosing it.

Purchase: Some tourists-target might be convinced about the travel experience but they need some action to proceed to the purchase. Sales, promotional offers and other interactive actions will persuade them much easier to buy the travel service.

Feedback: Data are the most significant elements in every marketing plan. Through feedback, the firm can learn about the tourists' attitudes toward the service and the company, which facilitates targeted alterations on the promotional plan or the actual service itself. For instance, feedback could be the overall experience of the trip, the behavior of the workforce, if the experience was "value for money" and much more pitched information.

4.2.3. POSITIONING

The final step of STP concerning the market decisions on its value proposition to the targeted audience is positioning. In the tourism industry, positioning is a strategy whose main goal is to influence tourists' perception and occupy a unique and outstanding competitive position in their minds, compared to competitors' relative services. At this step, a complete image of the travel experience is created, enhancing the attractiveness of a tourism destination, delivering unique value and motivating the tourist to move from knowledge to purchase. Based on Trout and Ries (2001), positioning is not what firms do for the service but how they serve its communication method to cut through the clutter and invade into tourists' minds.

The tourism industry is spreading its tentacles in many areas and can be tailored based on attributes like personal benefits, psychological elevation, category, price, quality, facilities and destination. For instance, a tourism package could establish its position in the perception of the buying prospect if a celebrity first made use of it or if there was an actual benefit after its purchase. Specifically, Mykonos is a dream destination island for all people worldwide because a lot of celebrities or members of royal families have already visited. This is a motive itself for people who are searching for social recognition.

Moreover, a timeless loyalty card accompanied by the purchase of a package could be imprinted in the memory of tourists, knowing that they can always have preferential prices at all affiliated tourist shops throughout Greece. Last but not least, if each tourist had the ability to create a customized holiday package, name it upon his desire and be marketed under its designated name, the brand not only could easily establish a permanent position in tourists' mind but it could also be promoted via mouth-to-mouth and become viral.

It must be noted that market segments alter in relation to the composition, the size, the preferences, the purchase behavior and the competition. Depending on the situation, the positioning might readjust, enlarge or reshape the overall marketing strategy plan.

5. TOURISM AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Tourism dominance in the global economy is obvious because all countries involved in the tourism industry increase the nation's foreign exchange earnings as well as the government's revenues, leading to economic growth. In general, the development of tourism in a country contributes significantly to its national income, causing quantitative and qualitative changes, while its redistribution contributes to the reduction of income inequality between its different regions and between different social groups.

At the same time, tourism generates full or part-time jobs, however, their seasonal nature of operation usually affects the characteristics of this job which is largely seasonal, unskilled and occasional. Particularly important is the tourism contribution to enhancing self-employment. Frequently, tourism employment is combined with parallel employment in another sector of the economy, resulting in a general increase in family income. It must be noted that centralized tourism multi employment increases the proportion of the population.

Tourism has a direct and significant impact on the main macroeconomic figures as well as on the main categories of the economy (GDP, trade balance, employment, consumption, investment, imports, etc.) and the concomitant national and regional policies. Investments in the wider tourism sector and the capacity of tourism to dynamically support the generation of many tourism companies lead to increased tax revenues. Definitely, tourism is a factor for economic growth when it is balanced and in

line with the principles of harmonious regional development. Given this, tourism contributes significantly to the formation of national income, to unemployment reduction and especially to the current account balance. An outstanding example for Greece is the increase of the world GDP (Gross Domestic Product) over the last decade by more than 4.5 million and the total of direct and indirect employment over 230 million employees.

Greek tourism constitutes a horizontal activity of the social and productive unit of the country, which is defined by the demand side of tourism products and services, affecting many sectors of the economy, such as transport, accommodation, nutrition, entertainment and consumption in general terms. Moreover, in many cases, tourism has contributed to the development of de-industrialized and geographically isolated regions. The growth of tourism has increased incomes, employment, investment and expanded the productive base of the local economy, thereby, stopping the migration and improving the quality of life. Especially, in areas with rich tourism resources, growth is extremely dynamic at an annual rate.

Tourism is, among other things, a major source of revenue for the state and the local government due to the collection of taxes and fees, while, through the introduction of tourists' currency tourism brings about a substantial improvement in the current account balance as well as an increase in the host and foreign exchange reserves of the host country.

6. TOURISM SYSTEM

The tourism industry is the one that manages the resources for the formulation of tourism products and handles the tourists as consumers. It must be noted that the tourism system is a remarkably complex integration of many sectors, including multiple inter-related firm participants. The main pillars that compose tourism industry are Transport (Air, Surface, Water), Accommodation (Hotels, Villas, Apartments, Supplementary lodging), Travel enterprises (Travel Agencies, Tour Operators), Nutrition (Restaurants, Fast Foods) and Entertainment Institutions, which also correlate with diverse commercial and non-commercial activities over and above, making their services available to tourists.

Components of the tourism industry			
Accommodation	Transport	Nutrition	Entertainment Institutions
-Hotel Industry -Holiday Resorts -Supplementary Lodging	-Air Transport -Rail Transport -Road Transport -Water Transport	-Restaurants -Fast Foods -Cafeteria	-Provision of indoor and outdoor recreation and entertainment facilities

Table 4 - Components of the tourism industry

Tourism is a catalyst for the economic growth and development of a country as it derives resources from the economy, adds value and produces marketable services. In addition, the tourism industry affects diverse auxiliary (specific) and ancillary (general) industries not to mention that over the years is expanding awareness as a human activity.

6.1. INVOLVED PARTIES

Clearly, there are other stakeholders involved in the tourism system who have rights and obligations, contributing to the final image of the tourist destination. The given stakeholders are classified into 8 groups, as shown in the diagram below.

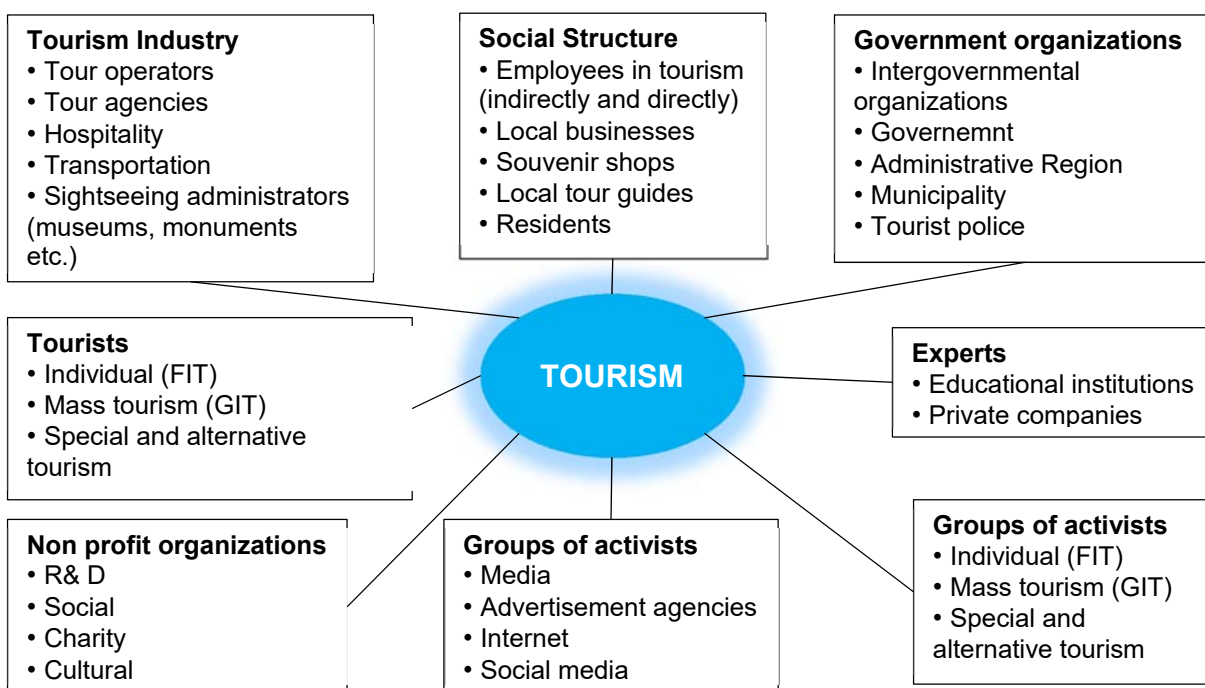


Figure 12 - Involved parties in tourism

The identification of the tourism system and the detection of stakeholders are quite complex because of the wide range of economic, social, political, environmental and other activities involved, which vary with the level of focus (region, county, municipality, etc.).

At the local or regional level, identifying and then coordinating the stakeholders is a key element in initiating the planning and development process. At this level, the main stakeholders consist primarily of members from government organizations such as the Prefecture and other Local Authorities, entrepreneurs active in the tourism industry like hospitality sector (hotels, villas, apartments, etc.), other key tourism services as nutrition, transportation, tour agencies, host societies and finally some supplementary services (suppliers, business consultants, etc.).

However, the leading role in the tourism circuit worldwide is owned by tour operators who exert a significant influence on tourists' decisions. Tour operators are companies specialized in the creation of tourist packages, which are promoted through travel agencies, proprietors or affiliates. Their main activity is to ensure the availability of accommodation, transport and other tourism and non-tourism services by depositing advances, thus, achieving low purchase costs. By acting as intermediaries, tour operators link tourism supply and tourism demand, thus, keeping the essential role of mediation in the marketing of tourism products and information between these two counterparties - and being the main source of information that contributes to the creation of the image through which tourists choose a destination (McLellan & Foushee, 1983).

Being the main channel through which information on consumer preferences reaches producers and services reach markets, tour operators are able to know and most of the times manipulate the levels and trends of tourism supply and demand for the tourism products/services and thus play an important role in the way tourism is developing in each region. But how would the entire tourism industry be shaped if the government played also the role of a tour operator?

6.1.1. GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IN TOURISM

Over the years, the government is much more active concerning tourism destination growth than it used to be in the past. This happens because only the government can establish the proper environment for tourism to prosper through the policies that can strengthen the attraction factors of the country as a tourism destination. Nevertheless, Greece does not play a crucial role in the global tourism industry even though the government has the essential legitimate power. The Greek government should balance supply with demand for sustainable and perennial tourism development in a two-speed management and promotion plan.

From the management perspective, the government should develop a framework that assures clarity, security, financial stability, implementation of fair legislation and state obligations to the private sector. For instance, a clean beach is important to the region's private sector profitability and success, because if it is not clean, it will prevent the tourist from visiting the particular destination, which eventually will have a direct impact on the tourism enterprises. Consequently, the tourism industry is highly dependent on the government's actions and thus the provision of public goods is essential for adding value to a tourism destination and influence the choice decision. In view of the above, the government should mobilize the private sector with incentives to enhance the quality, authenticity and viability of the tourism product. These incentives are the improvement and the bureaucracy simplification of the licensing framework, the taxation reduction, the tourism educational system upgrade, the rise of social and environmental awareness and the application of other vital measures.

From the marketing perspective, the government should play the role of tour operator for its own country. Specifically, the government should be the main channel through which information on tourist preferences reaches tourism producers, and tourism services reach markets. The Greek government must develop and use the marketing tools that provide the knowledge of the levels and trends of tourism supply and demand for the Greek tourism products, services and destinations. Furthermore, the state must influence the worldwide market with the Greek destination as a brand, particularly, in the directions towards which tourists and tour agencies worldwide will move. This can be achieved by

redesigning the tourist destination Greece as well as redefining its image and consequently the immediately restoring the competitiveness of tourism. Tourism is the heavy industry of Greece and improved competitiveness is closely-related to new job positions, income boost and opportunity for investments. All the above, open new horizons and new prospects for the country's interconnections that directly help in extroversion and strong partnerships with foreign countries.

6.2. STANDARDIZATION IN TOURISM

Standardization gives firms' the opportunity to differentiate through quality, innovation, specialization and transparency. Service quality management is a fundamental strategy for gaining a competitive benefit in the tourism industry. Moreover, firms orientation for the process and the traveler clearly affect consumers' satisfaction due to the fact that during the production process of tourism products and services, tourists are co-producers and promptly involved. Most of the tourism companies may have unambiguous vision and goals, however, they might apply wrong communication methods that are not so flexible to meet tourists' requirements.

Everything begins from the structure and the strategy where the outcome of the work process imprints the quality and the reliability of the tourism service. It is for granted that the perception of the tourism service differs between tourists based on the diversity of socio-cultural backgrounds, age, attitudes, characteristics and lifestyle. Thus, it is significant for the tourism companies to acknowledge tourists' perceptions of service quality in order to adjust all the marketing efforts to the highest level and ensure that consumers' expectations are met or exceeded. The outcome will be the awareness and the performance boost of quality throughout the value chain, especially to tourists' perspective, obtaining marketing competitiveness.

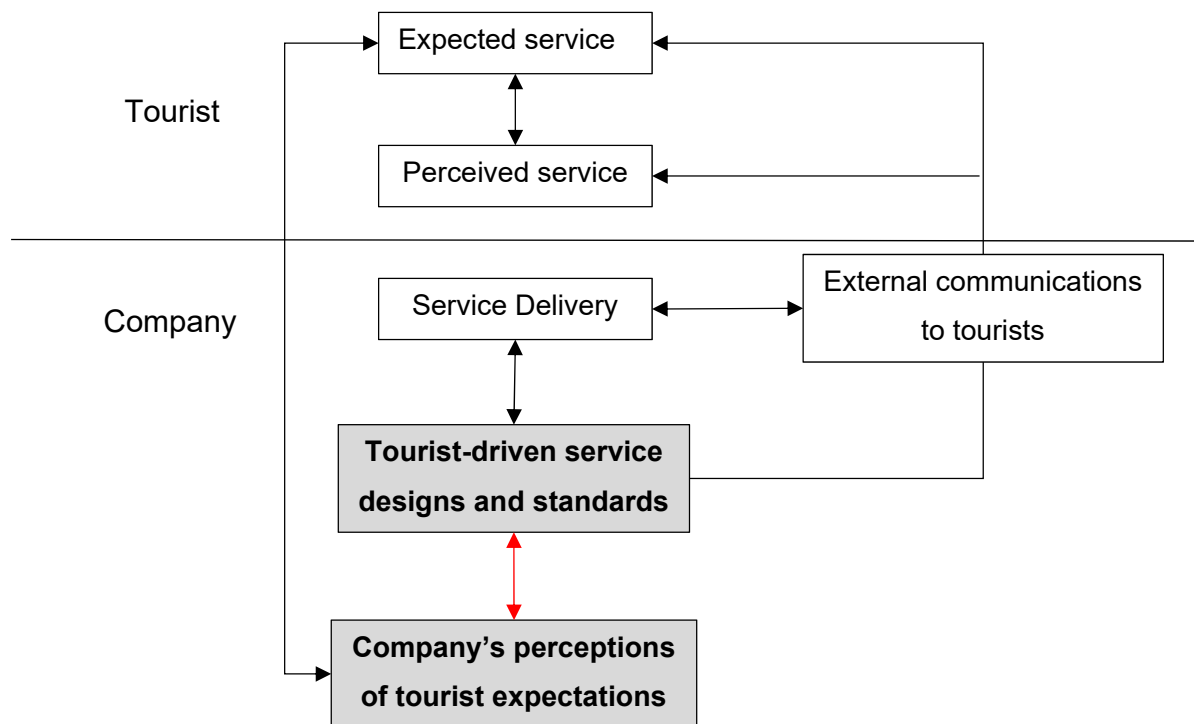


Figure 13 - Service Quality Model for Standardisation

The proper standardization of a tourism company can only be achieved by the correct match between strategy and structure which will vitally affect the internal performance and meet its tourists', workforce and financial stakeholders' requirements. According to Mintzberg and Waters (1990), there are eight types of strategies such as the planned (bureaucratic), the entrepreneurial (personal), the ideological, the umbrella, the process, the unconnected, the consensus and the imposed one. However, Miller and Prescott (2001) report only three types of strategies based on performance such as the differentiation, cost leadership and the focus (niche). Based on the characteristics of the tourism product in conjunction with the fact that the tourism industry rapidly alters and is fragile to the external impacts, the best strategy is the niche one. This strategy gives the firm the advantage to concentrate on the traveler itself, the tourism product and the geographic locale not to mention that it has the ability to react quickly in a flexible way on the demands modifications.



Figure 14 - Strategic standardization process

After the strategy follows the structure which is crucial for the prosperous trajectory of the organization. The proper structure establishes correct communication lines, the right cooperation between multiple sectors, accurate decisions and appropriate operational control. Based on Mintzberg and Waters (1990) there are six fundamental structures in which firms coordinate the internal and external processes such as the mutual adjustment, the direct supervision, the standardization of work processes, the standardization of process and outputs, the standardization of skills and the standardization of norms. Certainly, standardization of process and outputs is the most appropriate coordination mechanism for tourism companies because it specifies the results of the process with a great impact on tourist' satisfaction. For instance, a travel agency must provide exactly the same travel experience to tourists as it was described and promised initially and an accommodation supplier must create all rooms based on the same standards. It is a fact that the standardization of process and outputs can only be achieved with limited horizontal decentralization for process standardization as well as with limited vertical decentralization for the output standardization. The limited vertical decentralization relates to the dominion assignment over many decisions to the managers of market-based units and the horizontal decentralization concerns the standardization of internal and external processes for coordination.

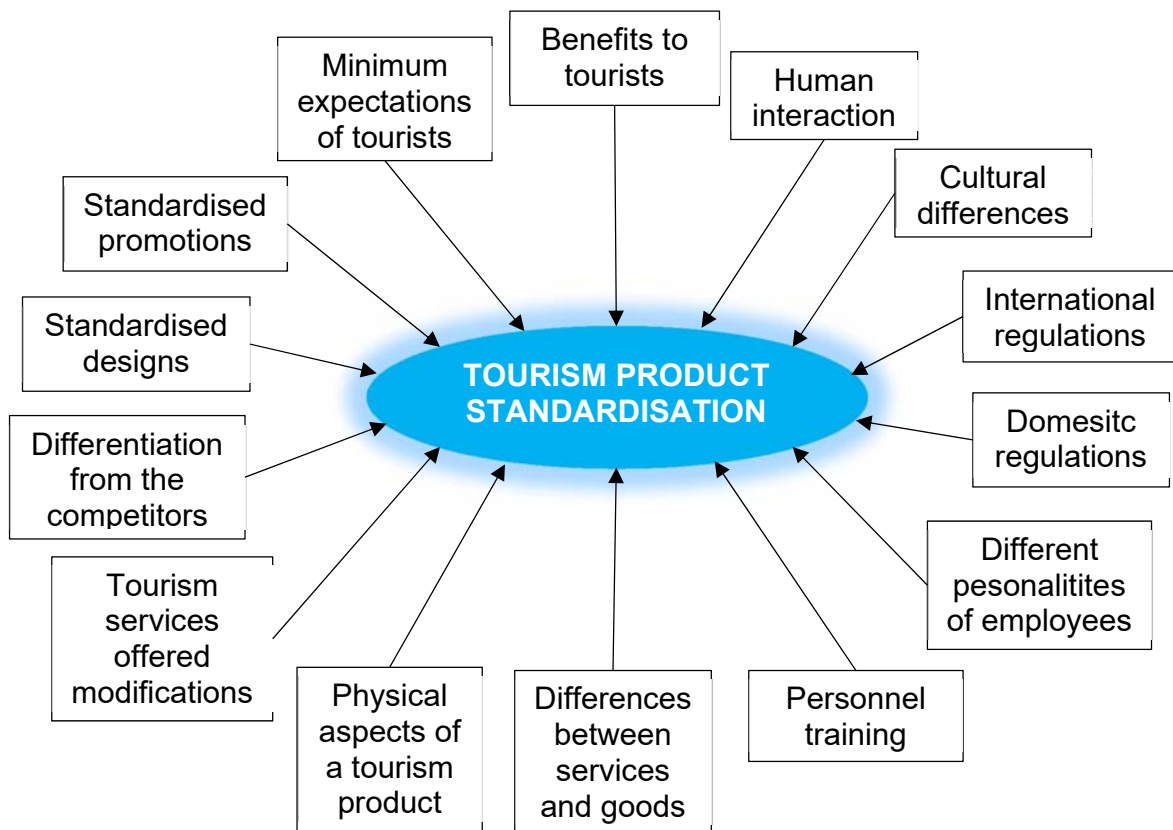


Figure 15 - Tourism Product Standardisation

Obviously, internal standardization plays a crucial role in all the companies that compose the tourism industry, where the total quality service is about the internal performance that begins from the management decisions (management approach) and ends with the proper duty distribution in the workforce (service quality). In the tourism industry, absolute standardization is almost unachievable due to human involvement in the production and the delivery process of the tourism product. Nevertheless, components of the tourism service especially some physical evidence such as uniforms, vouchers, etc., could be easily standardized to position the service on tourists' minds and influence consumers' purchasing behavior.

In the field of standardization, the government clearly has a prominent position with regard to its laws and measures implementation, by being a pure control mechanism. In this way, all companies in the tourism industry, except for their internal standardization, would follow specific standards and regulations set by the state body and collectively will

standardize the tourism product-destination Greece. Thus, any kind of illegalities would be eliminated and Greece could claim a strong position as a travel destination worldwide.

6.3. DATA COLLECTION

Data collection is vital for all marketing strategies and constitutes the golden key for advanced performance. Due to its nature, data are necessary for the tourism industry, mainly, for the specialized segmentation, targeting and positioning of the tourism product because without them the marketing plan blindly targets its audience. Still, why is data collection so significant for the tourism industry?

Data give tourism companies the opportunity to build a database, analyze significant information, identify and verify issues and perceptions about the existing and potential tourists, for promotional and retargeting efforts leading to niche markets with loyal customers. In addition, measurable data assist the effectiveness of every business and marketing decision, defining whether goals were reached, by considering progress and capitalizing on opportunities.

In previous years, data collection was done manually resulting in a costly, time-consuming process with the possibility of human error. In the new technological era, data are collected digitally for scalability, comparability, validity and reliability. Moreover, digital data collection is standardized, inexpensive, real-time, easy to analyze, more practical with fast results, protecting anonymity. Thanks to IoT (Internet of Things) data provide more specialized knowledge of tourists' needs, leading to efficient revenue streams with high-value tourists. Data can be collected online via website contact forms, digital surveys and contests, checkout/point-of-sale (POS) systems, social media monitoring, reviews and feedback, digital profiles, apps installations, GPS tracking and chatbots with exceptional attention to data privacy and security policies.

7. THE ROLE OF THE INTERNET IN TOURISM

The tourism industry began to grow in the 1970s affected by the CRS (Computer Reservation System), the 1980s by the GDS (Global Distribution System) and in the mid-1990s up to today by the Internet. The consistent increment of the internet users worldwide and the familiarization of tourists with the tools of the Internet, impose the

modernization of tourism services online, in order to serve the needs of tourists as best and as directly as possible. The process of information and online booking is easy, fast and almost always inexpensive and often provides tourists special privileges over traditional bookings, such as lower prices.

This new business method is called e-tourism and constitutes the connection of information and communication technologies to the tourism industry. Specifically, information and communication technologies are the set of professional areas related to the study, design, development, implementation, maintenance, and management of computer information systems, particularly, with regard to computer software and hardware applications, with the aim of production, storage, management and transmission of information of any type.

In other words, e-tourism is essentially the digitization of the entire tourism industry and infrastructure for the presentation and promotion of tourism products, services and destinations. It could easily be imprinted as the tourism industry sector interconnection cloud, as shown in the figure below.

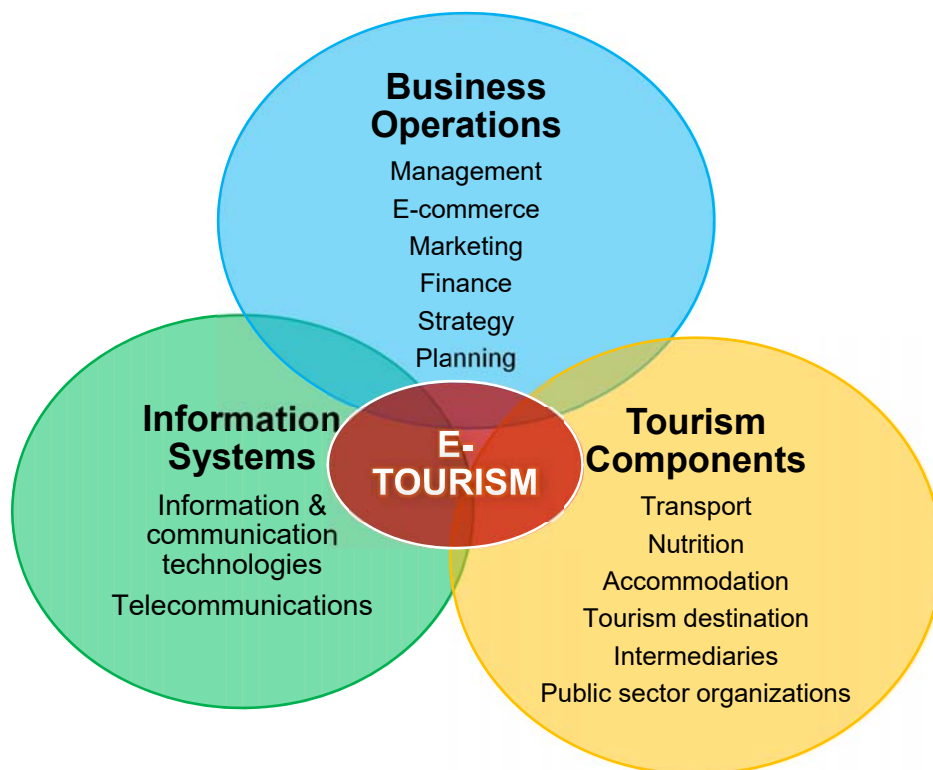


Figure 16 - E-tourism strategical structure

The first section deals with tourism companies' operations, including management, e-commerce, marketing, finance, strategy, and planning. The second section contains all the tourism businesses that compose the tourism industry including the following elements: transport, tourist destination, accommodation, nutrition, intermediaries and public sector organizations. Finally, the third area concerns information systems that include telecommunications as well as information and communication technologies.

7.1. E-TOURISM OBJECTIVES

E-tourism originates from a strong competitive advantage and raises the cubit for growth in the tourism industry. There are two types of objectives that can be achieved through e-tourism and are divided into quantitative and qualitative ones.

The quantities refer to the numerical indicators of the economic and social effects of tourism in the country, as shown below:

- The determination of percentage sales within a predetermined time limit.
- The anticipated increase in market share.
- The increment in the percentage of e-bookings.
- The improvement of the efficiency and sustainability index.

On the other hand, quality objectives include non-measurable results such as:

- The emergence of alternative forms of tourism, particular characteristics and comparative advantages of the tourism destination.
- The softening of the seasonality of demand through the growth of winter tourism with the further aim of removing the peak season.
- The degree of satisfaction of tourists with further improvement of the tourism services and products, offered by the value/price ratio.
- The delimitation of arrivals through the attraction of specific high-income market segments that bring more benefits to the tourism destination.
- The international online presentation and promotion advertising.
- The quality development and diversification of tourism products and services.

7.2. E-TOURISM BENEFITS

E-tourism provides a number of benefits that are becoming increasingly evident over the years to both tourists and tourism businesses.

Concerning tourists, the following benefits are observed:

- Access to a wealth of information.
- Quick and easy information on tourism products and services.
- Comparison of prices and additional services provided as well as the final decision of the proposal that is most advantageous to them.
- Personal opinion formulation via reviews, opinions and ratings of other tourists who have already visited the destination.
- Direct contact with instant response to any questions.
- 24-hour access to tourism business websites.
- Ease of payment in multiple ways such as credit and prepaid cards, bank transfer, etc.

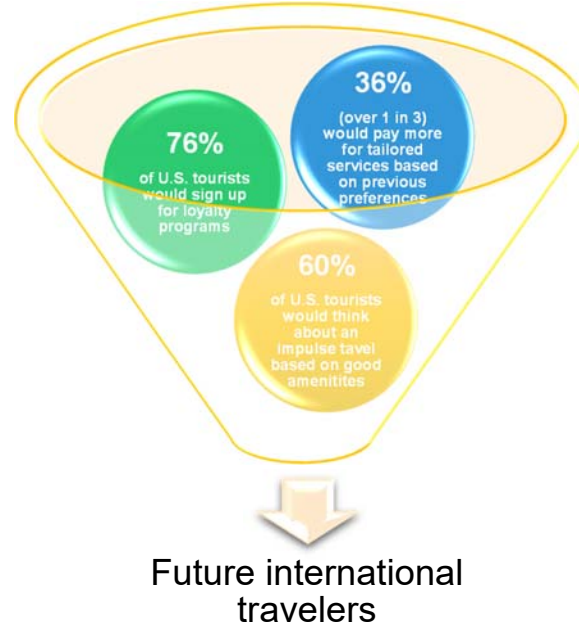


Figure 17 - Data from *The future of travel - New consumer behavior and the technology giving it flight.* (Think with Google, 2019)

The benefits of e-tourism for tourism businesses are the following:

- Ability to promote the image of the business internationally, easily and promptly.
- Information material distribution quickly and easily without geographical limitations.
- Business expansion with the usage of GDS, websites and online stores.
- Management of easy-to-use research methods for studying purchasing behavior and identifying consumer needs.
- Services improvement through feedback from surveys, comments and reviews.
- Operating costs reduction due to the automation of many functions.
- Growth of customer database and market share.
- Easy collection of market opportunity information for the online audience segmentation and determination.
- The appliance of the benchmark method: monitoring of the best strategies chosen by competitors in the industry.

DIMENSIONS	ONLINE TOURISM MARKETING	TRADITIONAL TOURISM MARKETING
Advertising	Customized information in response to specific inquiries	General information to all tourists
Targeting	Identify and respond to specific behaviors and preferences	Market segmentation
Promotions	Individually tailored to tourists' needs	Same for all tourists
Pricing	Negotiated with each tourist	Defined by the seller for all tourists
New features	Created in response to tourists' needs	Determined by the seller based on R&D
Distribution channels	Direct or via travel aggregators	Determined by the seller
Measurements to manage tourists relationship	The total value of individual tourist relationship	Profit

Table 5 - Traditional vs Online tourism marketing

7.3. ONLINE ADVERTISEMENT AND PROMOTION

Technological developments are expanding the need for online promotion of tourism services in a growing connected world with ever-increasing consumer sentiment for better travel experiences, thus, changing the nature of advertising from traditional to online.

In 2014, Nielsen conducted a survey for the advertisements of Greek tourism businesses in the online media and the results showed that tourism businesses were advertised by 40% on Google, 36% on social media and 33% on other sites that promote similar tourism products and services.

Advertisement for businesses in tourism

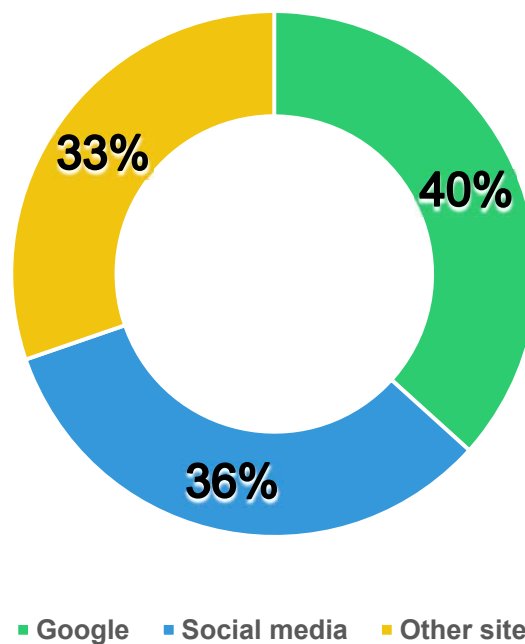


Figure 18 - Means of advertisements for tourism businesses (Nielsen, 2014)

According to Statista's (2019) research in the marketing & social media sector, word-of-mouth accounts for 19% of purchases and affects 90% of consumers worldwide. It must be stressed out that social media, forums and websites with reports & comments constitute online mouth-to-mouth advertising. In addition, Statista's reports imprint that 58% of online tourists show more confidence in advertising messages on corporate websites, while 50% find emails with advertising content credible.

Credible information for consumers

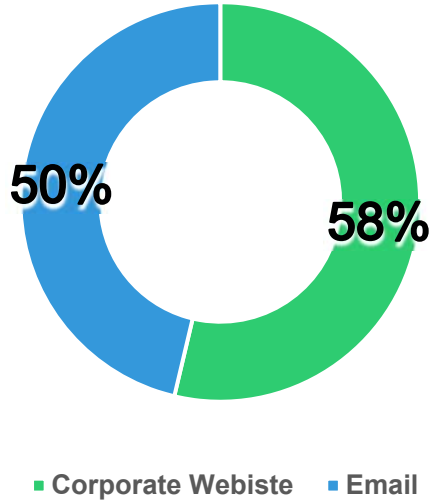


Figure 19 - Credible information for consumers (Statista, 2019)

In December 2018, Trekk Soft's study presented that 4.156.932.140 internet users around the world, over half of the earth population, used the Internet to search for information or book a tour, a trip, vacation or holidays. According to Internet World Stats (2019), 4.422.494.622 people were internet users in the world, based on the statistical results of June 2019, which corresponds to 57,3% of the world's population.

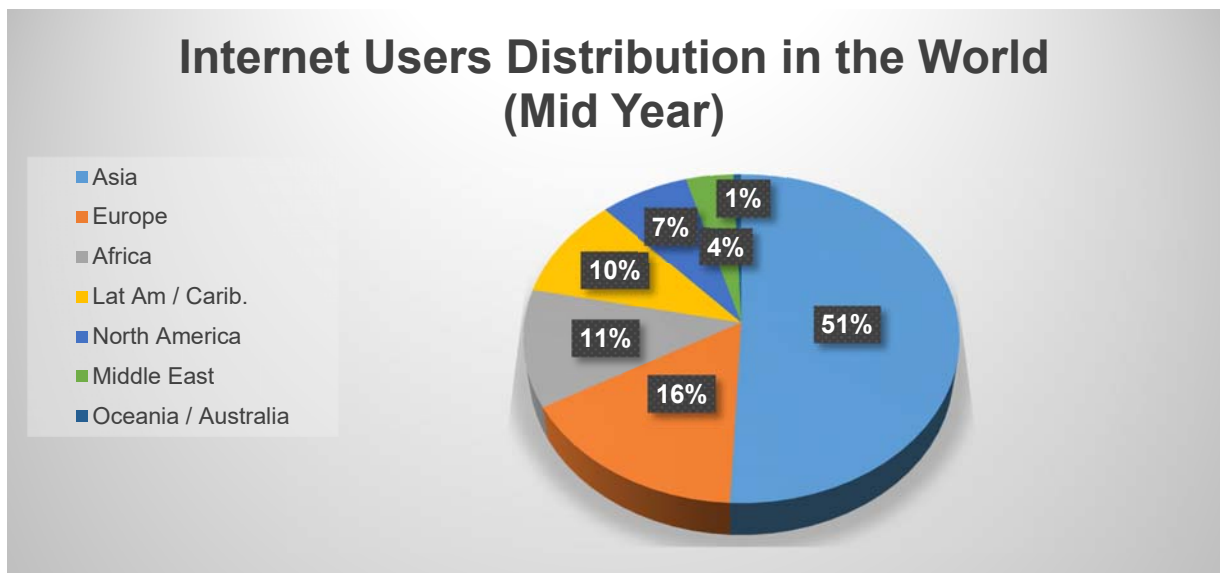


Figure 20 - Internet Users Distribution in the World (Mid Year) (Internet World Stats, 2019)

The Internet is constantly growing, driven by great amounts of online information, knowledge, entertainment and social networking available for modern users. Obviously, online advertising has the comparative advantage of targeting very specific audiences and giving immediate statistical data, using efficiency promotional and measurement tools gaining more and more supporters who want to expand their market share in the global tourism internet market.

7.3.1. PROMOTIONAL TOOLS

In recent years, the internet has been one of the major promotional and advertising channels offering multiple benefits to tourism businesses, while creating new opportunities for the development of the Greek tourism industry. The promotional tools for achieving a successful marketing strategy, included in the general part of the marketing mix, are discussed below.

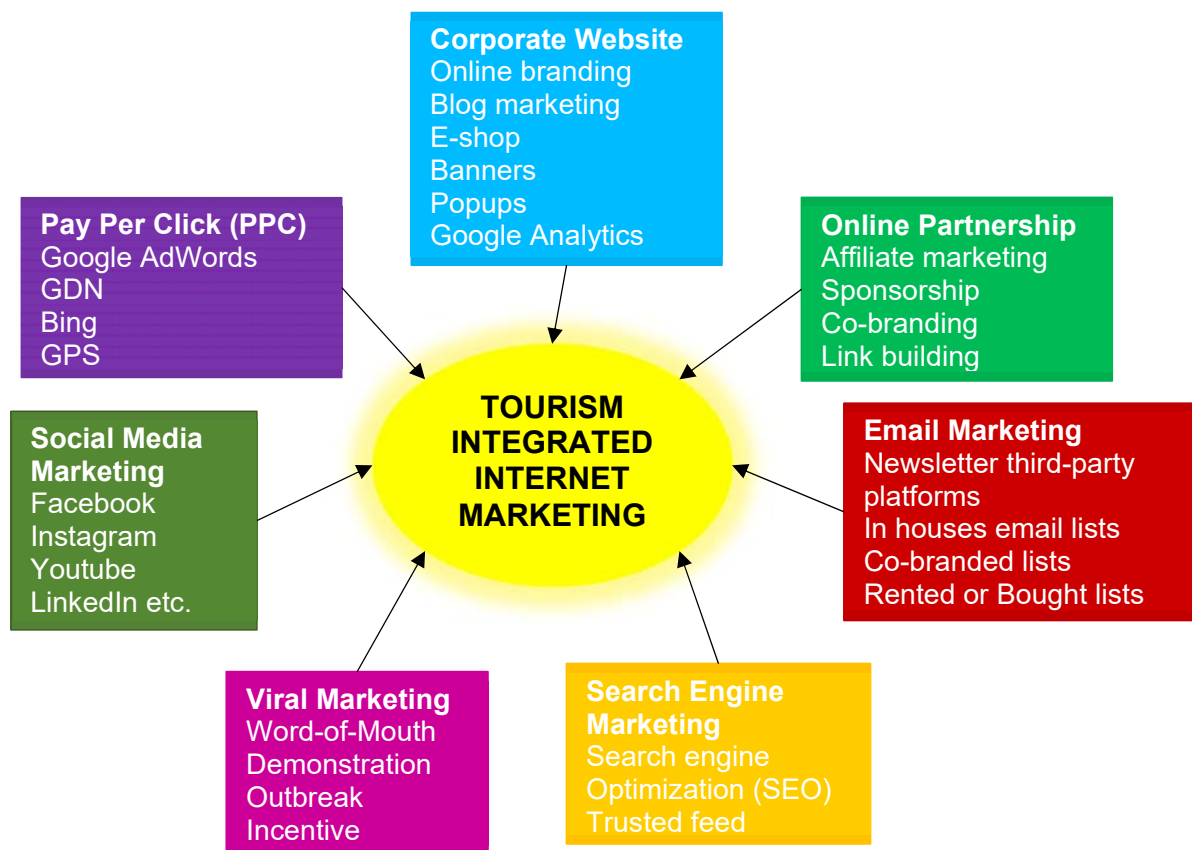


Figure 21 - Tourism Integrated internet marketing

7.3.1.1. Corporate website

The appearance of the website is directly linked to the original use of e-marketing. Through the website the firm promotes the characteristics of its tourism products and services, either by promoting them directly or indirectly, thus, giving the tourist the opportunity to contact directly, to be informed instantly, to proceed in booking and finally on online payment. The most important part of a tourism website is the registration of a representative and engine friendly domain name searches, that is, the exclusive web address of the tourist company, assisting on brand identification.

7.3.1.2. Search engine marketing (SEM)

Search engine marketing (SEM) is a promoting website technique used to increase corporate's website visibility on search engine results pages (SERPs) and ranking tables. Search engine optimization (SEO), a branch of SEM, boosts the visibility of websites by optimizing their position in search engines and placing them in the first ranking results that appear to potential visitors. This technique is increasingly chosen by tourism companies because it grows tourists' traffic and provides a competitive advantage to the tourism business implementing it.

7.3.1.3. Email marketing

The purpose of e-mail marketing is to promote tourism products and services, make them readable and establish the brand name of the tourism business, build relationships with new travelers and strengthen trust with existing tourists. Tourism firms can build a segmented email database based on preferences, latest purchases, etc. and send various personalized promotional information and announcements to existing and potential customers worldwide.

7.3.1.4. Social media marketing

Social media is one of the most important tools to promote tourism products and services due to their human-centric character. Tourism is based directly on the psychology of the tourists, either by their involvement in an activity or on their perception of the tourism products and services that they will purchase. Social media is the biggest social communication channel for the tourism industry because through these networks people feel the urgent need to communicate, get informed, make new friends, participate in social

and tourism events and form groups with common interests such as a tourism destination, a trip, a multi-day tour, etc.

The great benefits of social media marketing for the tourism industry are the following:

- Direct connectivity with potential tourists who create complex networks of friends, family, followers, colleagues and strangers.
- Sharing of tourism information (text, image, video, audio, link) between social networks.
- Engagement, by tourists' participation in a community or a group having an active role in the flow of its content.
- Brand awareness and expansion via the followers' interaction.
- Data collection for tourism products and services improvement
- Referral traffic to tourism corporate websites.
- Link building.
- Retargeting.
- Conversion of potential tourists to actual consumers.
- Origination of niche topics for specific segments of tourists.
- Followers creation, thus, loyal brand fans.

The most popular social media are Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, Flickr, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Wechat, providing the possibility of effective brand building and even attract an audience to pay attention to the brand, even when it is not thinking of it.

2018 SOCIAL MEDIA MONTHLY USERS

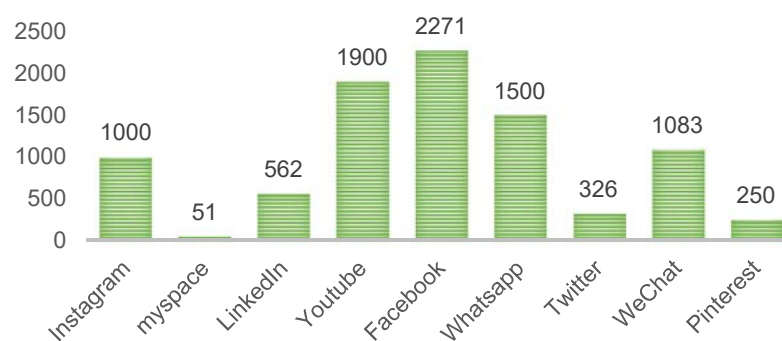


Figure 22 - 2018 social media monthly users

7.3.1.5. Blog marketing

Every modern tourism business that promotes its products through the internet and maintains a corporate website is required to publish articles on current developments and changes in the tourism sector. The given tactic brings out the knowledge of the tourism business in the tourism industry, by keeping up to date all tourists with current developments as well as by strengthening the bond of trust with the existing or potential customers. At the same time, internet users have the opportunity to get updates from the publications and submit their own comments or reviews, whether they are negative or positive. Blog marketing is a powerful channel of communication between tourists and tourism companies, providing the key benefit of identifying needs, understanding the way travelers think and generally being used as a research tool for tourists' preferences, attitudes and reactions.

7.3.1.6. Pay Per Click

The Pay Per Click advertising method is very popular on the Internet. Multiple PPC campaign types are generated with different features, such as based on the number of ad impressions (Cost Per Viewable Ad Impressions, Cost Per View, Cost Per Minute) or keywords (Cost Per Click, Click Through Rate). Over the last decade, the given advertising strategy has been extended to social media and tour agencies find it more inexpensive.

7.3.1.7. Affiliate marketing

Affiliate marketing is considered one of the most effective methods of promoting tourism products because it is mainly based on human resources, working online and promoting tourism products and services, by directing the tourist to the business website or the ones that include many tourism firms with common tourism point, also called tourism marketplaces. The remuneration is in the form of a commission after a confirmed and complete booking process. It has been proven that the benefits of this strategy contribute to the gigantic increase in sales and online bookings, in improving the visibility of tourism products as well as the image of the firm, due to the anthropocentric nature of tourism and the contribution of the human factor to the affiliate marketing.

7.3.1.8. Banners

Banner marketing or advertising is the most common form of an online promotional method on other websites with related products of their own. There are two different types that can be used for banner marketing, the Display Network and the Google Display Network (GDN). The Display Network is more passive in comparison to the Google Display Network, which automizes and efficiently optimizes such advertisements' results. The first one integrates the banners to other websites that appear to the Internet users during the browsing process, while the second one reaches users efficiently based on their preferences even during the searching process of specific keywords and phrases. It has certainly been observed that banners are not chosen by users who are interested in tourism products largely because they are not as interesting and interactive as the rest of the media.

7.3.1.9. Popups

Popups are mainly the most targeted ads of a website, but they must be used sparingly. The idea of popups usage is to preach something extremely important for the user such as an offer, a contest, etc. Popups have also other variations as pop-under, pop-before, but they have been considered as annoying because in a lot of cases they are used only to gather personal information.

7.3.1.10. Viral marketing

Viral marketing is a promotional strategy that is increasingly used by online tourism companies. The way it is implemented is similar to the function of the virus (viruses) that contributes to the rapid spread of a message or a service and has been very successful. There are patterns of virality such as Word-of-Mouth, Demonstration, Outbreak and Incentive. Viral marketing is not so easy to implement and not at all sure of its success not to mention that it cannot be achieved by marketing alone.

7.3.1.11. GPS marketing

Google maps in collaboration with Google My Business gives all tourism companies the possibility to ensure the correct address of the tourism business in web search results and displays it on the interactive Google world map. Any tourism business can post content that is displayed to users in an infobox next to the search results of the google

map information chart, where users can interact by leaving reviews. The magnificent is that google motivates users to react through GPS services by point system reward. Last but not least, google map provides the ability to tourism companies to create custom routes for tours and trips.

Google is the most integrated marketing tool, not only for its services concerning digital promotion but also for the accurate measurable results that provide to digital businesses.

7.3.2. MEASUREMENT TOOLS

Test case the online platform mythicalgreece.gr

Information digitalization is one of the most important factors in the marketing mix because it does not only promote the tourism brand directly, easily and effectively but provides also reliable statistics for optimal target-market.

There are many online tools that can measure the behaviors, actions and decisions of tourists, leading to the creation of the appropriate infrastructure for segmentation, targeting and positioning that can be classified into the following categories.

7.3.2.1. Website analytics

From the perspective of the corporate website, analytics can provide website traffic results which can be classified by demographic and geographic data, the ways users are acquired, the used devices (mobile, tablet, desktop), active users trending over time, pages visited, trends of active users, sessions connection, bounce rate, session duration, referrals, website speed and content, conversions, etc. An example of the metrics information is depicted in the following image, using the Google Analytics platform, showing the general picture of the analytics mentioned above.

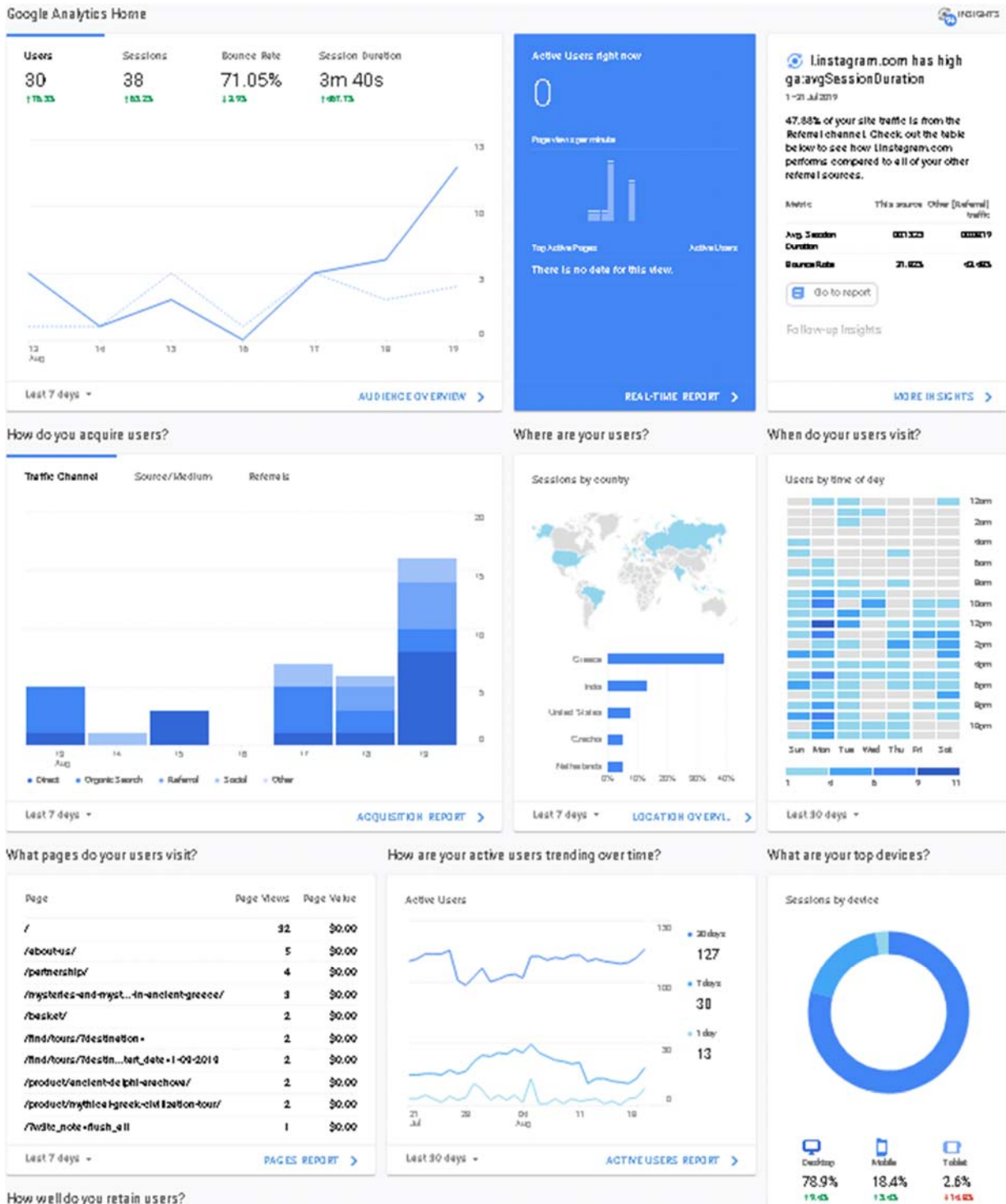


Figure 23 - Google Analytics of mythicalgreece.gr (August, 2019)

Moreover, there are tools that provide real-time statistics based on the heat in order to provide accurate information about the areas that get the most attention, as it is depicted in the image below.

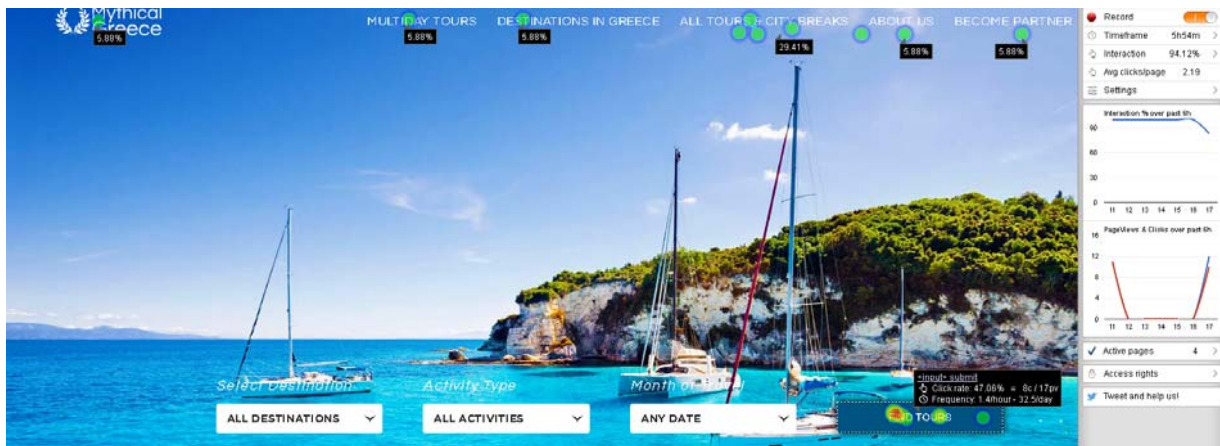


Figure 24 - Statistics of mythicalgreece.gr based on the heat (August, 2019)

In addition, there is a significant tool that tests corporate websites, providing results for the variables that affect users' reactions, called A/B testing. Of course, in the given list, SEO analytics could not be absent. Search Engine Optimization analytics help the tourism organizations to optimize the content of the corporate website for its efficiency to search engine results. Last but not least, there are tools, like Crashlytics, that observe and notify in real-time the crashes that might disturb the website efficiency to consumers.

7.3.2.2. Social media insights

Social media constitute the means of communication and interaction with groups of people sharing information and ideas across virtual communities and networks. Social media could be also characterized as a modern online mouth-to-mouth advertisement. In the last ten years, social media have literally established their presence in the online world and they form a powerful online promotional tool. Therefore, having such a strong position in the field of online marketing, insights could not be missing from social media platforms. Social media insights assist the tourism company to understand its audience as well as the competitors not to mention that social media give tourism firms the possibility to create a better strategy and higher quality content. The most popular social media platforms worldwide are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Badoo, Viber, Snapchat, Youtube, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Foursquare, etc. A typical instance of Facebook insights is shown as follows.

Results from 14 Aug 2019-20 Aug 2019

Note: Does not include today's data. Insights activity is reported in the Pacific time zone. Ads activity is reported in the time zone of your ad account.

■ Organic ■ Paid

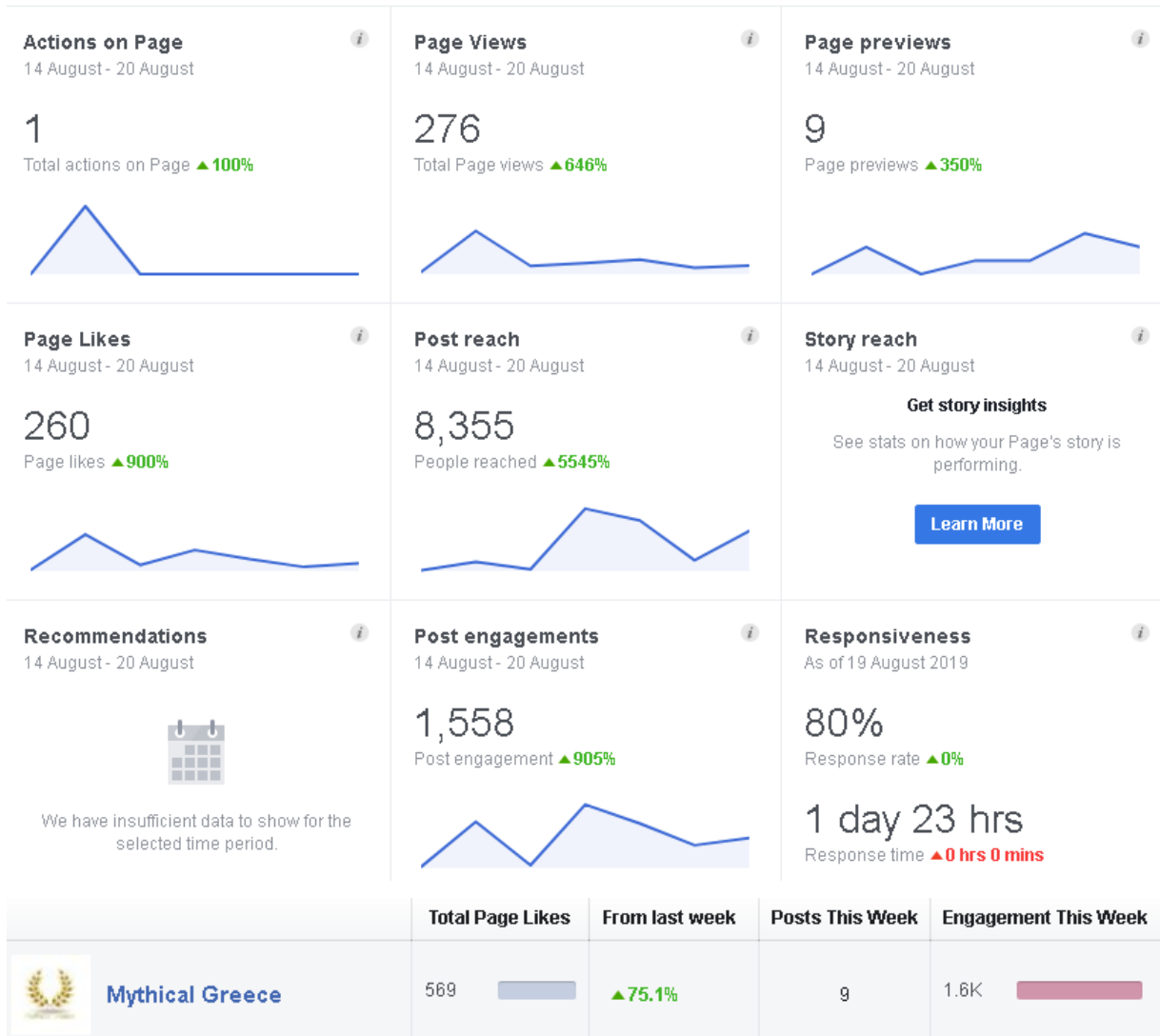


Figure 25 - Facebook Insights of mythicalgreece.gr (August, 2019)

However, rather than the insights of each social media, tourism companies can also monitor the #hashtags or keywords they are interested in, as it seems on the print screens below.

Monitoring #mythicalgreece

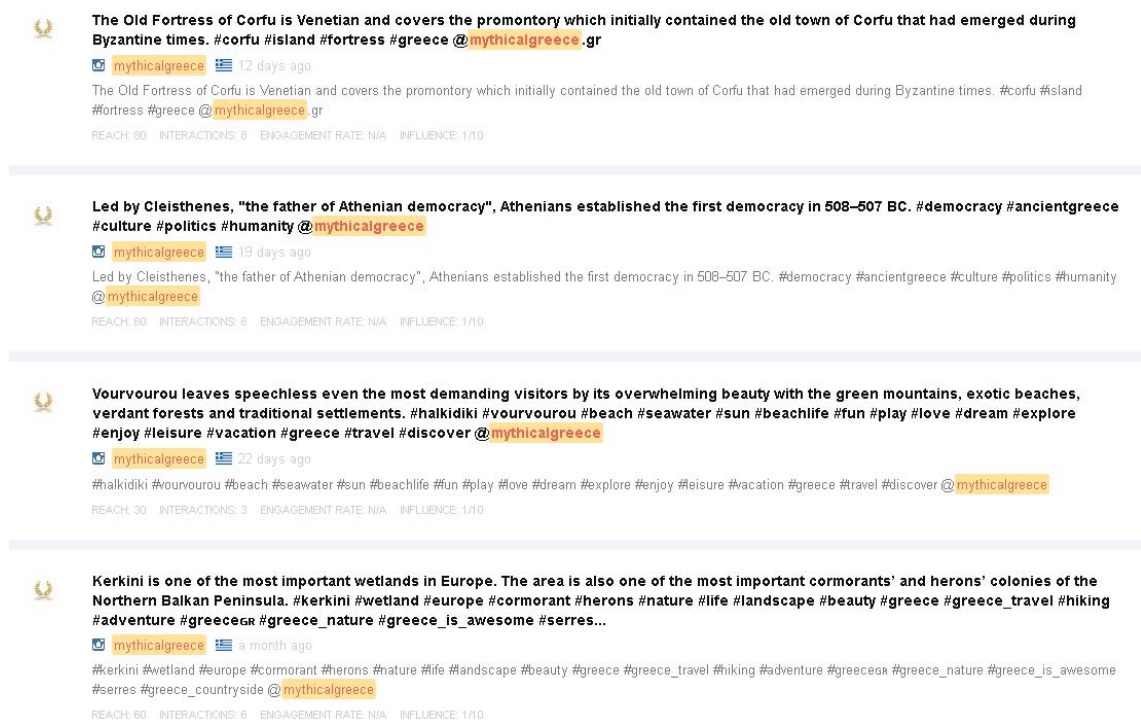


Figure 26 Monitoring #mythicalgreece using a third-party tool (August, 2019)

Monitoring #greece

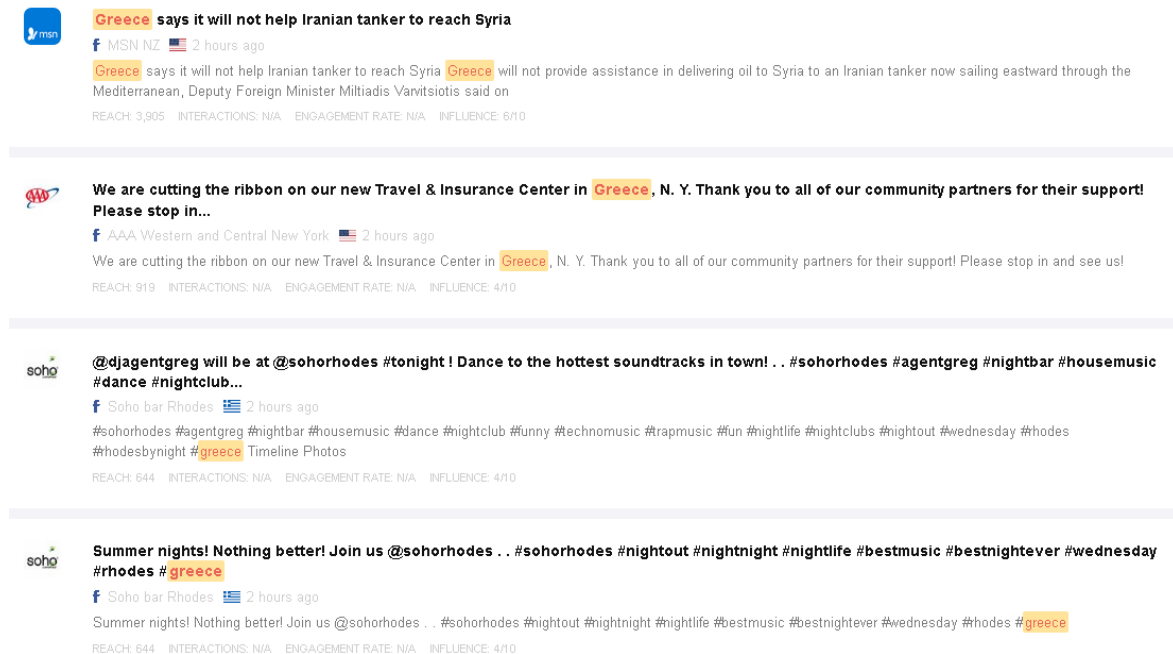


Figure 27 – Monitoring #greece using a third-party tool (August, 2019)

7.3.2.3. Email marketing analytics

Obviously, all email marketing platforms provide analytics for all the email campaigns, already sent to existing or potential customers. All the sent emails enclose a tracking code in order to identify and measure receivers' actions such as the quantity of the opened emails, which of the included in the email links the receivers visited, who unsubscribed from the list, etc.

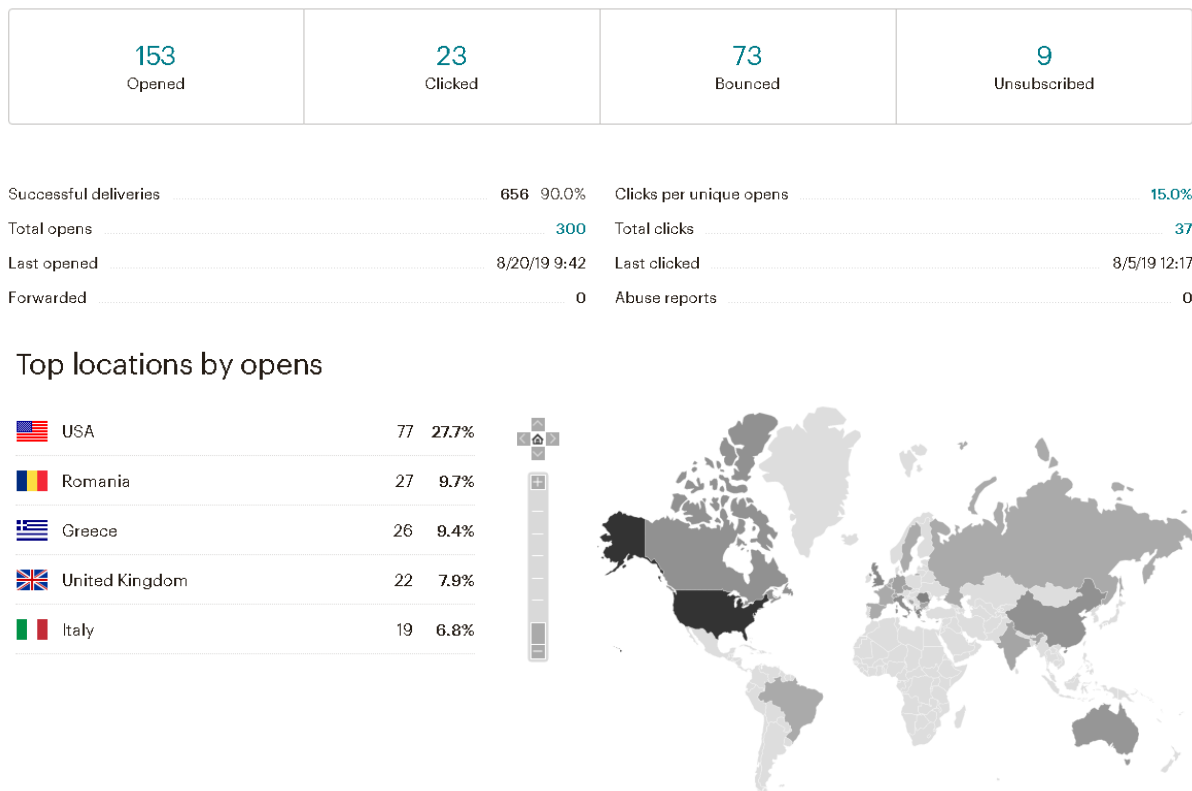


Figure 28 - Email marketing analysis of mythicalgreece.gr using a third-party tool (August, 2019)

7.3.2.4. Global trends analytics

In addition to the metrics, that clearly relate to the structure of the website and its traffic, the email marketing campaigns and the social networking campaigns, a tourism business can also build its marketing strategy and other marketing campaigns based on market trends, such as the Pay Per Click advertisements. Specifically, a tourism company can target a country and evaluate its trends. A significant sample is shown below where the location-target is the United States and a graph is instantly represented on the comparison of terms, Greece, tour, travel, holidays, vacation.

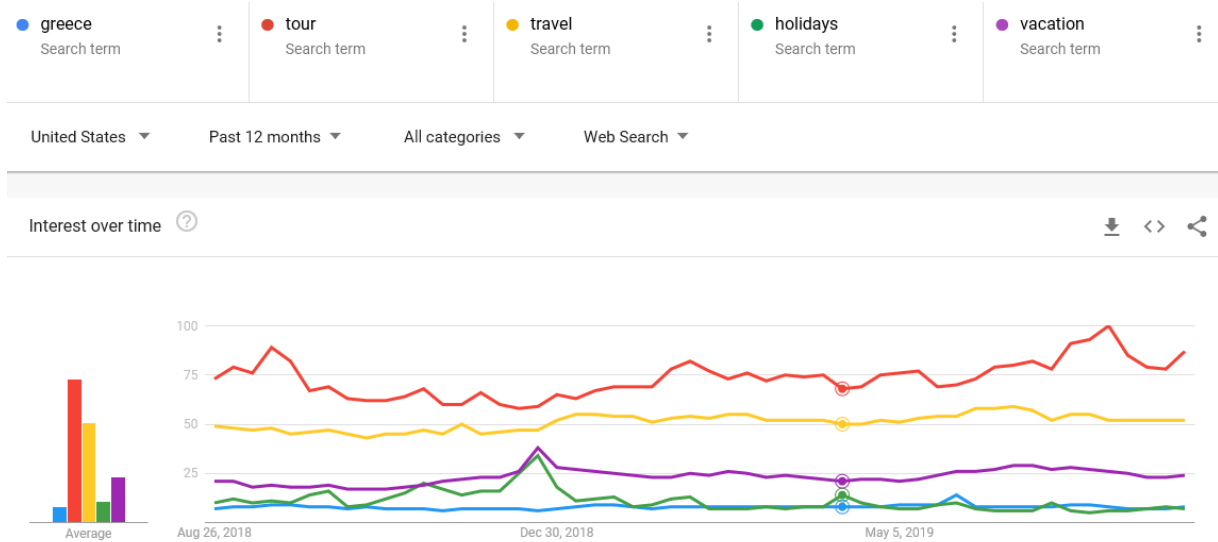


Figure 29 - Global trends on tourism using a third-party tool (August, 2019)

Online marketing is more of science, which with the measurement results of the marketing efforts optimizes the performance and finally identifies the best market opportunities for investments with the main goal to convert the potential travelers to actually loyal ones.

8. PROPOSAL

Standardization is a consensus-building process involving many countries that incorporate universally agreed procedures and practices providing a framework with requirements, specifications, guidelines or features to ensure that the materials, products, processes and services are appropriate for their purpose with the optimal quality, performance and interoperability. The main principles for standards development on the international and national levels are transparency, impartiality and consensus, openness, coherence, consistency, effectiveness and relevance. Clearly, there is a hierarchy in the structure of standardization that is governed by specific legislative directives, which starts from general to specialist, that is, from the International to the standards of each continent or union and then to the National ones. It is for granted that standards are developed based on market needs, which play a crucial role in the tourism industry. Thus, all standards applicable to the tourism sector are constantly improved.

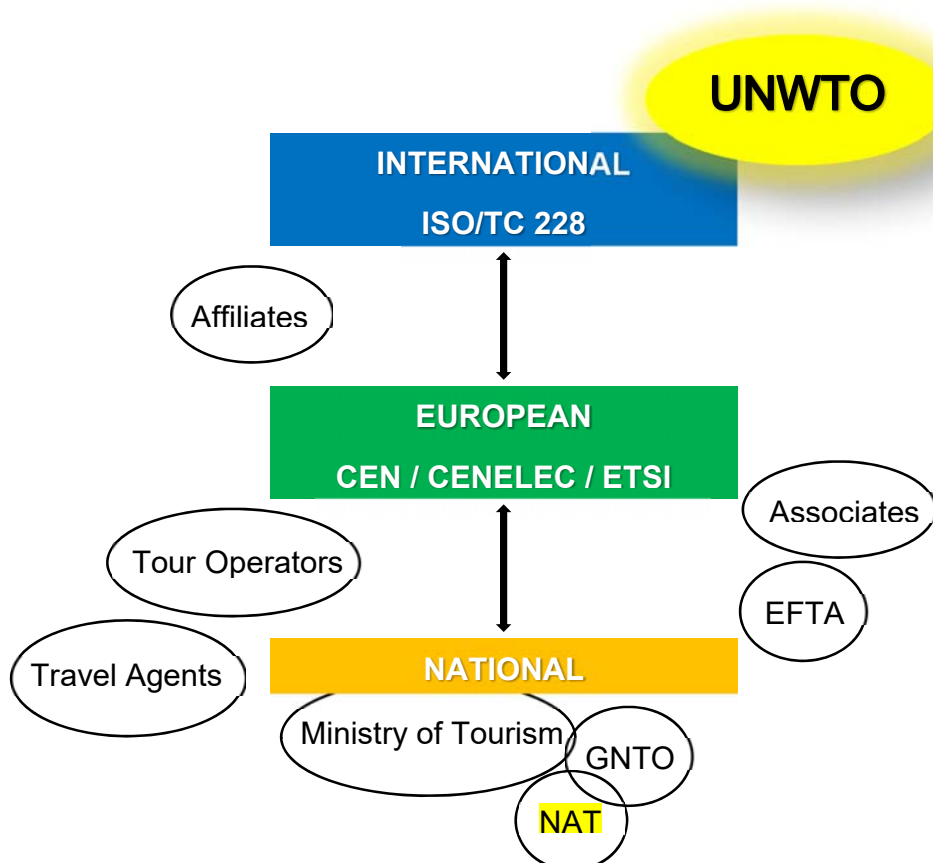


Figure 30 – Sample of Tourism Standardisation diagram

For the tourism industry, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) generated the ISO/TC 228 technical committee which is responsible for developing internationally accepted standards for terminology not to mention standards of tourism services. Moreover, the European Committee for Standardisation (CEN), the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardisation (CENELEC), and the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) cooperate to develop the European standards that protect the health and safety of employees as well as of tourists, providing criteria for making informed decisions. In addition, these standards facilitate all tourism providers to promote accurate and certified tourism products and services (ISO Focus, 2019).

UNWTO declares that the tourism industry has been constantly expanding and diversifying over the last six decades, constituting one of the greatest and rapidly-growing socio-economic sectors in the entire world, representing 7% of the world exports and 10 % of international GDP. UNWTO's contribution to the growth of the international tourism sector is huge as it developed the LEXTOUR and INFODOCTOR information systems, the interactive forum and the UNWTO historical and institutional archives in order to serve

its member-states as well as other institutions and tourism partners by providing permanent information services on legislative, administrative and policy measures related to the tourism industry. At the same time, UNWTO created an electronic multilingual system of access to libraries, documentation services, information brokers and tourism-related databases worldwide so to facilitate the updating and the retrieval of relevant tourism information as well as the members networking, particularly, the National Tourism Administrations. It is well-known that the World Tourism Organization has all the capabilities, knowledge and tools to develop innovative applications for the global tourism industry through standardized benefits for the member-states (WTO, 2019).

All the above efficient and cost-effective tools, mechanisms, agreements and many more solutions that each country can exploit individually, for each tourism destination, are fully utilized by Greece through the Greek National Tourism Organization, which is supervised by the Greek Ministry of Tourism. GNTO was founded in 1927 with the aim of organizing, spreading, advertising, promoting and developing the Greek tourism industry, measuring today its presence in 27 countries with 21 offices. In addition, the Hellenic Standardization Organization, which is supervised by the Ministry of Development and Investment, defines standards and specifications for Greek tourism products destinations and services while at the same time establishes certification systems by awarding marks and certifications of compliance to the Greek tourism industry.

However, in today's technological era these actions present deficiencies in terms of administration as well as of internet marketing. Specifically, an independent national two-tier official government body should be composed, overseen by the GNTO, in order to manage the national tourism development with its main goal not only to advertise and promote the tourism product Greece but also to protect it, internally and externally. This entity, the National Administrator of Tourism (NAT), will manage the Greek tourism marketplace mythicgreece.gr, which will be accredited by the United Nations World Tourism Organization as the only official online portal of Greek tourism, that provides certified tourism services and products in Greece as well as information on all the legitimate or non-tourism businesses.

National Administrator of Tourism (NAT)

NAT, as a government entity, will supervise all tourism infrastructure and superstructures, as well as the tourism services, businesses and facilities extensively. Moreover, NAT will be staffed by inconspicuous groups, also called ghost inspectors, who will be able to control, judge, and reward the tourism businesses that comply with the tourism standards of the World Tourism Organization and the GNTTO regulations, contributing alongside to sustainable Greek tourism development.

On the one hand, NAT will operate as a control mechanism that can impose financial and other penalties on specified offenses. For instance, the downgrading of hotels or lodgings that do not comply with international standards of tourism accommodation, the permanent suspension of tourism store's licensing in the event of hygiene offense, the financial sanctions in cases of labor exploitation, the permanent closure of non-licensed tourist firms and fines appliance to all tourism businesses that do not employ staff with a degree in tourism. All the tourism businesses that do not comply with the regulations, will be posted on NAT's official online tourism marketplace in order for tourists to be protected and avoid any deception. In parallel, tourists will be able to instantly report any incident which will be controlled by the special NAT inspectors. This will result in the transparency of all tourism businesses in Greece as well as in the improvement of the tourism products and services through fair competition.

On the other hand, NAT will reward with tax exemptions all the healthy tourism businesses that have a turnover fully harmonized within the Greek legal framework and their services are in the context of environmental protection, with the prerequisite that they are unencumbered by past tax debts. Of course, all these businesses will be posted on NAT's official online integrated tourism marketplace as trusted and accredited not only by GNTTO but also by UNWTO. In parallel, NAT will provide on these tourism businesses free online consulting for the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) program as well as funding for the expansion of their business activities. All the above actions create market incentives for the tourism businesses to follow accepted practices not to mention that they encourage innovation and growth in the tourism industry.

NAT's official online integrated marketplace, mythicalgreece.gr, will become the cornerstone of the online Greek tourism because it will be the mediator between tourists and tourism businesses for advanced, safe and accredited Greek products and services. Additionally, mythicalgreece.gr will be linked to the General Secretariat for Information Systems (G.S.I.S.) for the direct VAT payment to the state funds, after every online purchase. Clearly, the official Greek tourism marketplace, accredited by UNWTO, will launch the tourism destination Greece because the benefits are huge not only for the state but also for the Greek tourism businesses as well as the international tourists.

Benefits of the official Greek tourism marketplace

For the state

1. The only official integrated marketplace for the tourism destination Greece that protects its value and reputation, accredited by the UNWTO.
2. Standardization of all the tourism procedures in the most efficient way for the greatest tourists' experience and usability.
3. A huge demand and supply database for the tourism destination Greece.
4. A higher level of trust between the international tourists and the Greek tourism companies.
5. Automation: everything will be completed automatically within the platform.
6. Online purchases or other transactions 24 hours a day, year-round from any location with direct VAT payment to the State funds.
7. A global and real overview of the metrics concerning the preferences of the tourists as well as the sales of all Greek tourism products and services.
8. Overbooking resolution: All certified tourism services will be booked only by the official Greek marketplace. Thus, suppliers will minimize their expenses against travel aggregators. This will resolve the perishability problem.
9. Quality knowledge resolution: Through standardization, a quality rating and evaluation system will be developed via the official marketplace for all the tourism products and services, which will be constantly updated.
10. Greater transparency - availability in an open environment.
11. Monetization options will be multiple, based on the agreement. For instance commissions, monthly fees, etc.

12. Direct tax collection resulting in immediate profitability and tax evasion treatment.
13. Correct promotion of Greece, based on standardized integrated online marketing plans.

For the tourism suppliers

1. Cater to the specific needs of many different tourism vendors.
2. New trading partnerships among the traders and the suppliers.
3. A clear view of the revenues, since all taxes will be instantly paid to the state funds.
4. Less expensive than running a web presence independently: Suppliers will not have to pay for web development activities, hosting, security, backend systems and marketing promotions.
5. The cost that suppliers had to pay for their advertising and promotion, now, it would be invested in the improvement of their tourism products and services.
6. Reward Point System for all healthy and legitimate tourism businesses, an incentive to strive always for the best.
7. Increment of productivity and fair competition: Suppliers will be motivated to improve tourism services and products to better rank in the marketplace listings.
8. Easy way to expand the online footprint and profile.
9. Opening up to new markets.
10. All tourism vendors could also become consumers.

For the tourists

1. A wide range of certified tourism services and products.
2. Gathered information concerning the tourism places and providers as well as the quality of the tourism services and products.
3. An instant payment system that operates around-the-clock.
4. An immediate online report in case of fraud.
5. A convenient way to compare prices and products from a single source, accredited by the UNWTO.
6. The safest portal to trust with the most legitimate information concerning tourism products and services.
7. Ability to better adapt to tourists' needs through personalization.

Briefly, (National Administrator of Tourism) directly becomes a control mechanism that certifies and promotes all healthy tourism businesses by offering to all, regardless of size, opportunities for development as well as dissolving any monopoly on the market. As the only and unique UN (United Nations) certified state body, it will be the safeguard for quality and approved tourism services, guiding the tourism flow every year on the basis of the best infrastructure and facilities of each tourism business, as a reward. Of course, this will result in the undeniable relationship of trust that can be developed between the tourist and the tourism supplier. The electronic online integrated marketplace platform will help the domestic economy through the direct payment of VAT tax to the state funds via an Application Programming Interface (API), while at the same time, all processes will be standardized optimally, thereby, making tourism a sustainable sector of the country, leading to regional development. It is for granted that in order to implement a strong marketing strategy, primarily, a proper organization with as many standardized procedures as possible is required. Consequently, under the umbrella of the certified NAT and the online integrated marketplace platform, the best marketing of the tourism destination Greece can be implemented, which will bring prosperity not only to the state but also to all consistent tourism businesses, enhancing healthy competition with the aim of continuous optimization of tourism services. Obviously, the specific proposal is extremely flexible and scalable not to mention applicable to any country in the entire world, because tourism has no borders.

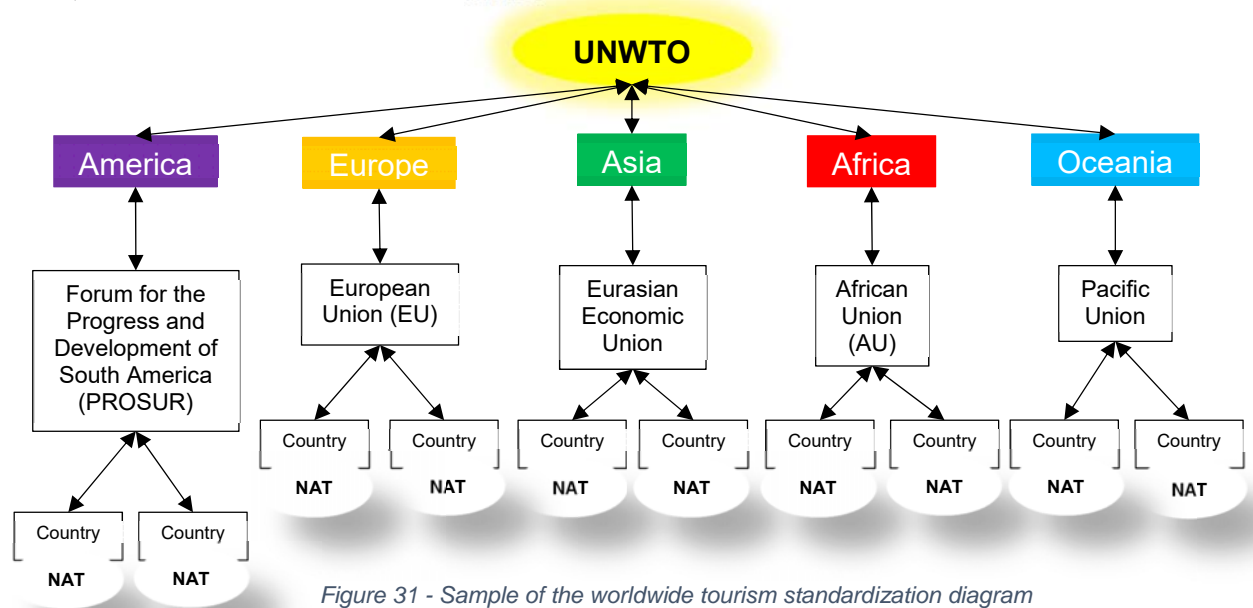


Figure 31 - Sample of the worldwide tourism standardization diagram

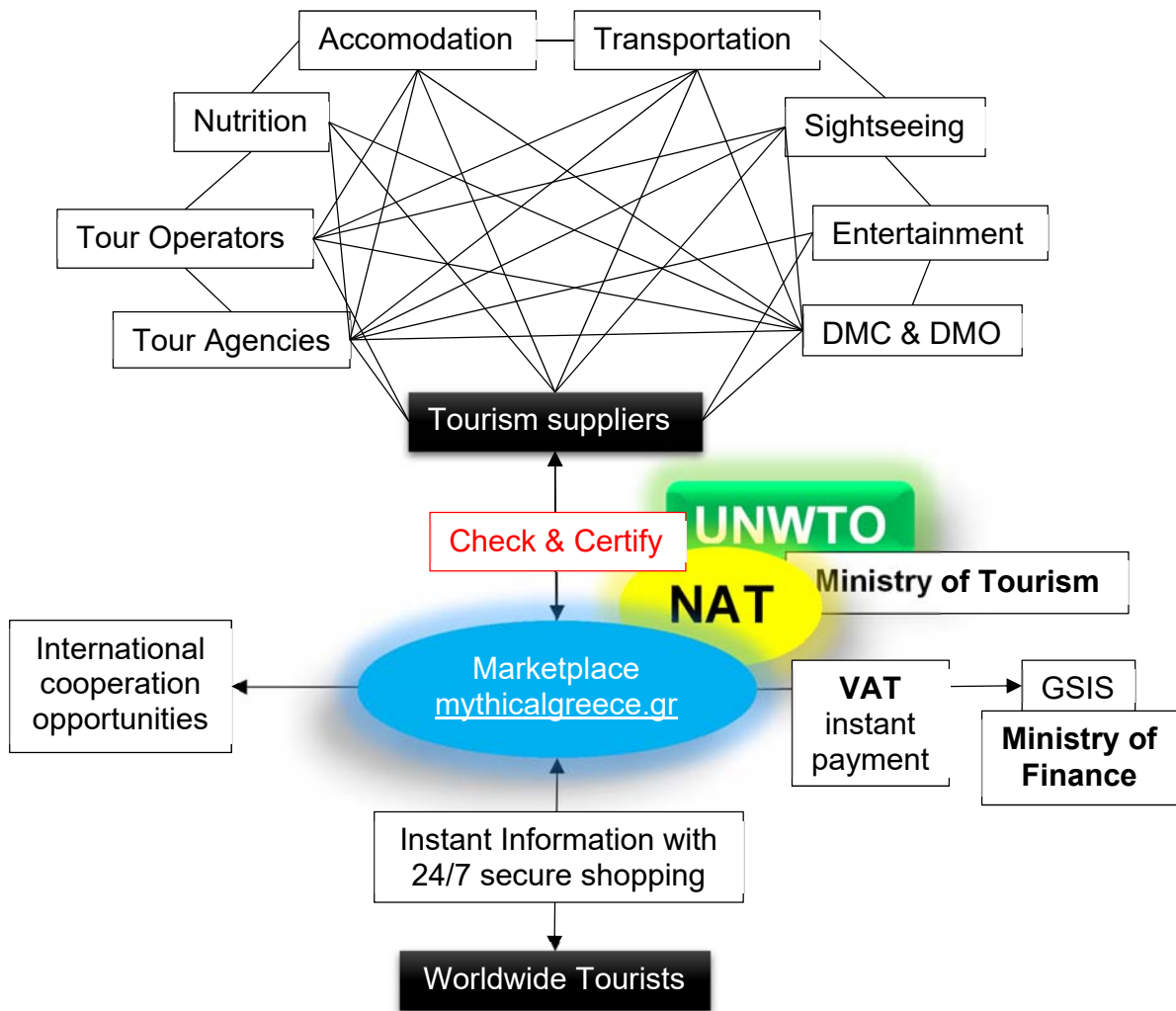


Figure 32 - Sample of the National Administrator of Tourism and its standardized online integrated marketplace

The online integrated platform is totally responsive to desktops and tablets but mainly on mobile phones in the form of an app for the best user experience (UX). At the same time, new technologies will be implemented for all Greek destinations' promotion. Specifically, a simulated environment will be created through VR (Virtual Reality) technology, which will place the tourists inside the experience, motivating them to visit Greece. By simulating as many senses as possible, such as vision, hearing, touch, even smell, the electronic device will be converted into a gate to this artificial world transforming it into an interactive one. After this technological unique experience, potential tourists will spread Greek destinations like a virus on all social media, leading Greece to become a "MUST VISIT" destination in the global tourism industry. Of course, there are multiple technologies that

could be applied based on the requirement of each tourism marketing strategy, such as Augmented Reality as well as Holograms. Specifically, an AR application (Appendix), by retrieving the tourists' location in the real world through the GPS receiver and the orientation via the gyroscope and the compass of the mobile phone, will appear the virtual objects in the camera scene, including all significant interactive information for the Points of Interest (POIs). At the same time, full 360° and 3D holograms of maps and cities will be developed, that seamlessly blend in with reality and improve the entire travel experience. Last but not least, the eye-tracking technology would be very helpful for personalized advertising, web and service design, always with the user's consent. In particular, this technology will allow marketers to collect data from tracking eye movements in real-time, by knowing what tourists are watching and what they mostly pay attention to. These data are quantified presenting an aggregated visual analysis that depicts the optimal pattern.

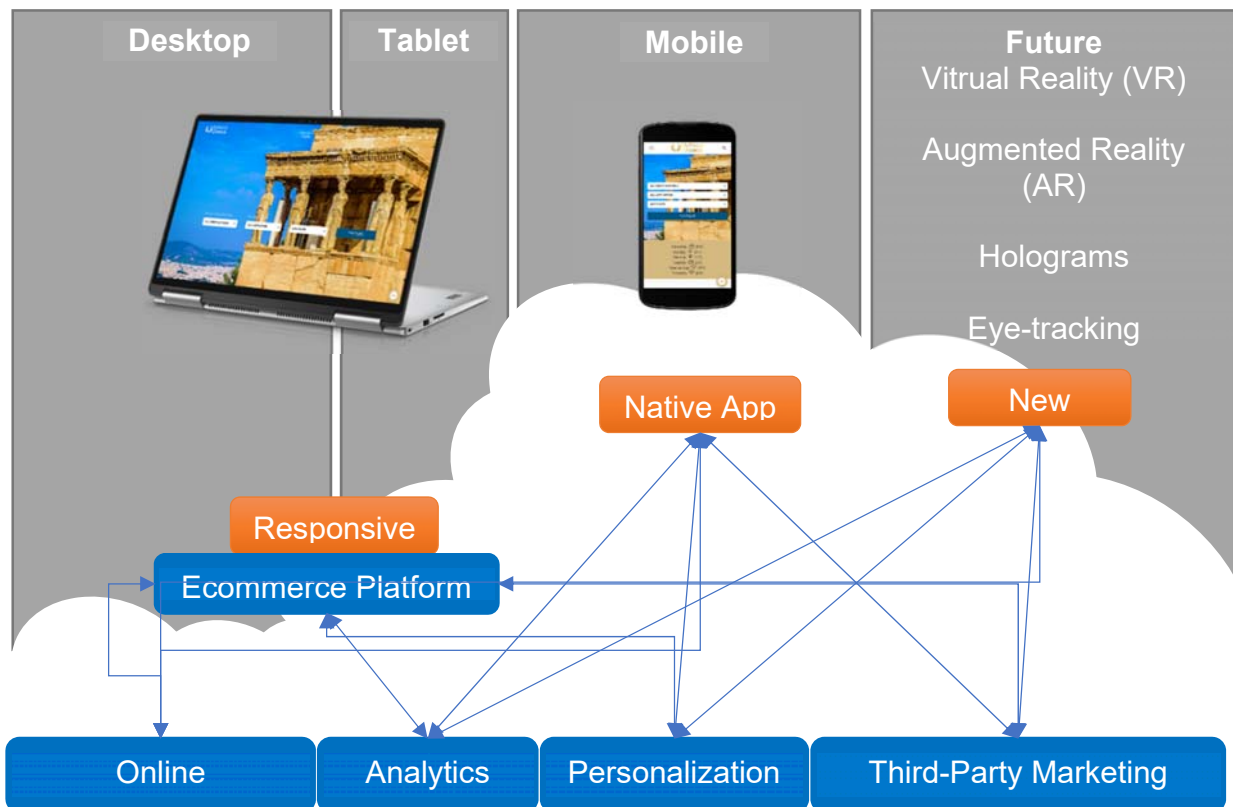


Figure 33 - Online e-commerce platform presence

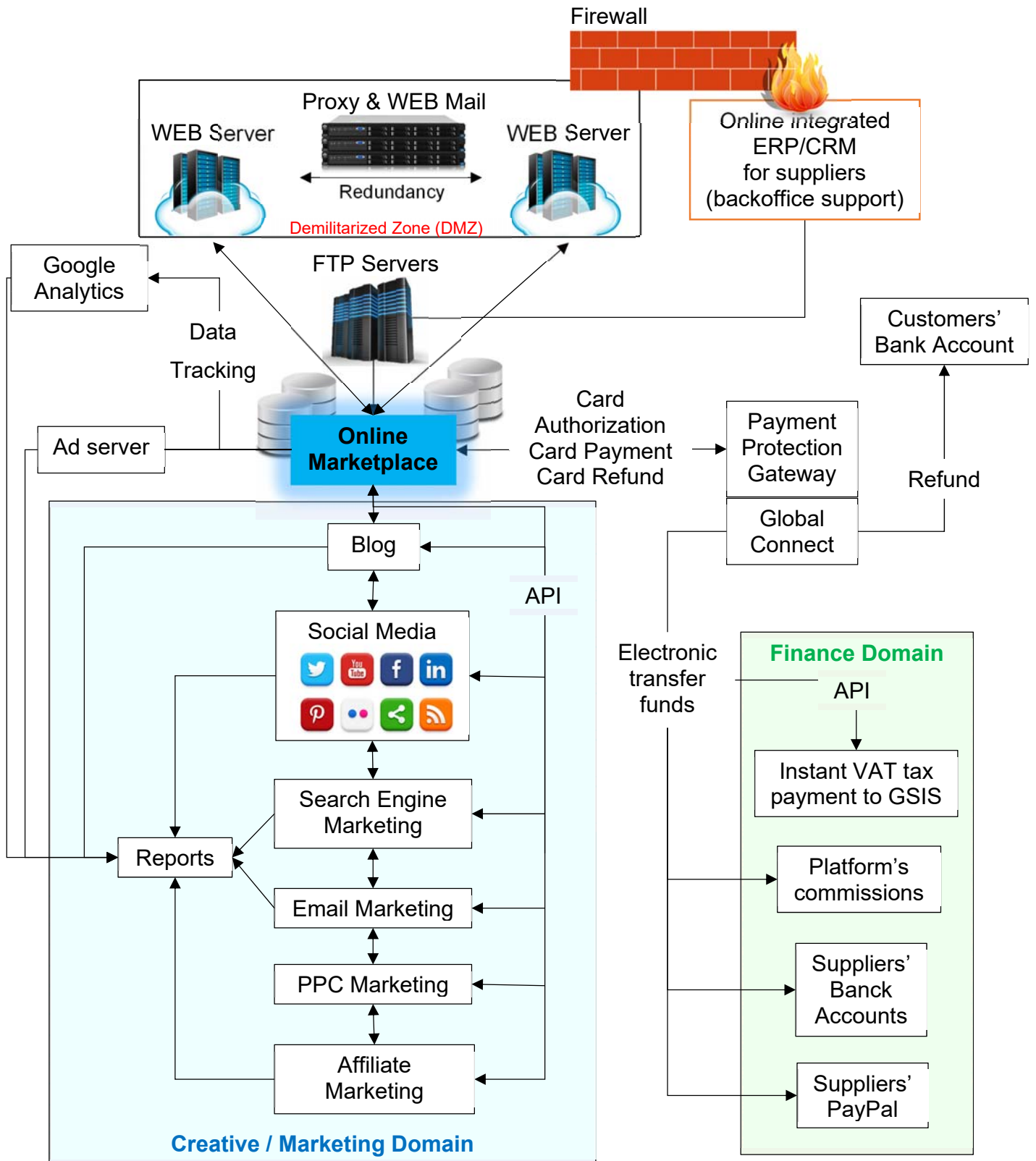


Figure 34 - Sample of the structure and the automated flow procedures concerning the online integrated marketplace platform

9. CONCLUSION

The complex composition of the tourism industry, the rapid rhythm of altering and growth in terms of experience, the demanding and sophisticated tourists as well as the era of the internet, indicate the need of integrated information and communications technology applicable to all tourism organizations in order to be competitive in today's dynamic marketing environment. From information search to decision-making behaviors, the internet plays a crucial role in many aspects of tourism. The state of the art declares that various solutions apply to online marketing technology for the tourism industry, based on marketing strategy. It is for granted that the internet, combined with online marketing tactics, is the key to the most accurate quantitative and qualitative sustainable management of tourism destinations, while integrated internet marketing communication is the leading branch of every modern marketing strategy and prevails over traditional marketing communication methods.

The specific dissertation presented a comprehensive analysis of internet marketing communication mix applicable to tourism industry components as well as all the online tools that each tourism organization can apply for better promotions and advertisements. Furthermore, the research highlighted the necessity of standardization in the tourism industry under the unambiguous beneficial cooperation of the private and the public sectors via the online integrated marketplace, certified by the UNWTO. The benefits of such clear and uniform development are undeniable for the state, the tourism components as well as the tourists not to mention that the architecture is scalable and flexible to all countries around the world with different cultural or natural sites of interest and taxation system. The entire implementation is a new vision of tourism management, where all resources are operated by a unique online integrated system providing promptly information in a quick, agile and human-centric way for better user experience.

Future works will be devoted to offering more Artificial Intelligent development, not only in terms of user experience but also in terms of marketing for all the tourism organizations. The long term goal is for the state to understand that the implementation of the online integrated marketplace and the appliance of this unique tourism architecture could only be beneficial for the tourism destination Greece.

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11. APPENDIX

The AR app is still in the beta version. The functionality is very simple following the specifications of the appropriate User Experience. As the variables, location and orientation, are perceived by the application, the user opens the camera to the Point of Interest (PoI), the screen becomes interactive and information about the particular tourism monument is displayed. At the same time, the tourist has the opportunity to see a 3D visual reconstruction of the monument.

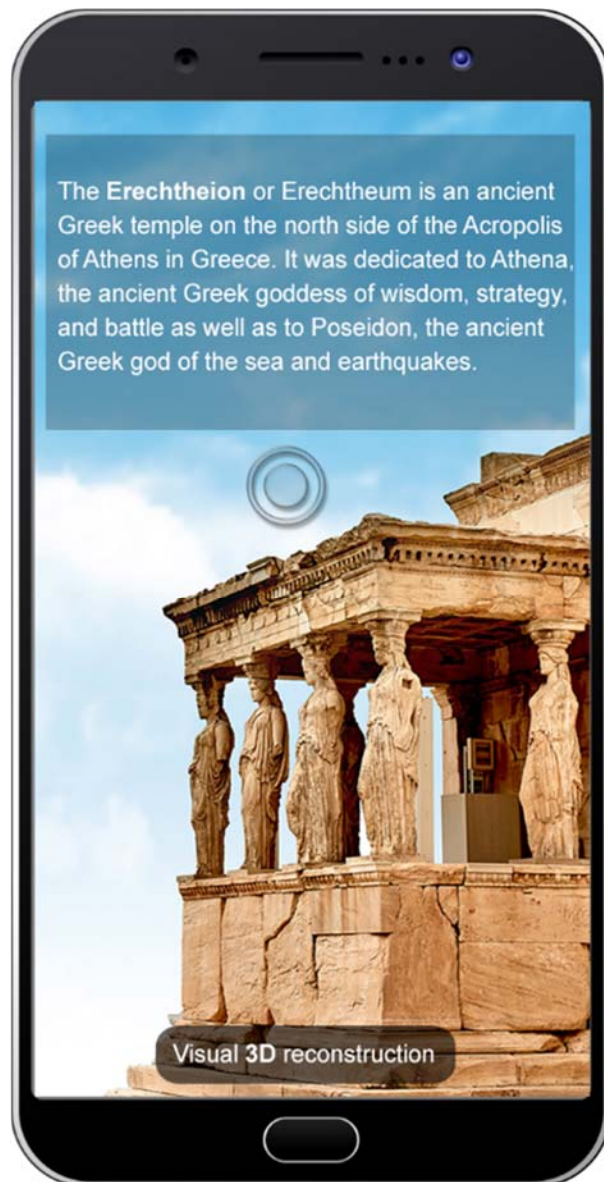


Figure 35 – Sample of the AR app (beta version)

Even if the tourist does not have internet access, the application provides offline information highlighting the most significant sites in the area of interest.



Figure 36 - Sample of the app offline information (beta version)

