Center for Sustainable Management of Tourism, Sport & Events (CESMATSE)

Cultural & Creative Tourism in Cyprus

Dr. Nikolaos Boukas

Assoc. Prof. in Tourism Management

European University Cyprus

The importance of cultural heritage for tourism planning & development

- McKercher & du Cros (2002) → the act of movement to another place for tourist purposes largely involves an element of culture

- Cultural tourism gains acceptance & fame constantly, since tourists seem to move away from the sun & sea type of vacation & seek more sophisticated types, characterized by differentiation, uniqueness & exclusivity (Apostolakis, 2003)

- UNWTO & UNESCO: cultural tourism is a 'good' form of tourism which could help to encounter the 'bad' form of mass tourism (Richards, 2001)

The evolution of cultural tourism

- Jovici (2014) → the evolution of cultural tourism is characterised by three phases:

1. The first phase has been seen as a type of alternative tourism that relies heavily on monumental tourism
2. The second phase has a more mass-market orientation
3. The third phase is focused on the creation of new market niches such as educational, creative, spiritual, gastronomic tourism, etc.
    - The third phase (the current one) of cultural tourism is concentrated more on the **meaningful experiences**

Towards creative tourism

- ***Creative tourism***: offers visitors the opportunity to develop their creative potential through active participation in learning experiences which are characteristic of the holiday destination where they are undertaken (Richards, 2001)

Form of Tourism	Primary time focus	Primary cultural focus	Primary form of consumption
Heritage tourism	Past	High culture Folk culture	Products
Cultural tourism	Past and present	High & popular culture	Products & processes
Creative tourism	Past, present and future	High, popular & mass culture	**Experiences**

Source: Richards (2001: 65)

Cultural tourism in Cyprus

- Cultural tourism in Cyprus has only been partially appreciated both by tourism policy as well as tourism professionals (Boukas et al., 2017)
- It mostly has an accompanying/peripheral/secondary role on the tourism product-service mix of Cyprus rather than being an autonomous phenomenon
- Considerable differences between individual & group visitors → individual visitors tend to be more purposeful cultural tourists (McKercher & duCros, 2002)
- Critical role of travel agents in planning the visit & directing visitor flows to museums & cultural sites
- Insufficient policy to guide efforts → Plethora of private museums, questionable standards at many instances (e.g. opening hours, guides)

Museums in Nicosia

- Museums as representative cultural destinations, contribute in a large degree to the formation of Cypriot cultural tourism (Boukas et al., 2017; Boukas & Ioannou, 2018)
- Role of atmospherics (especially layout & presentation of exhibits, correct lighting to draw attention to exhibits, signage & audio guide) in visitor experience
- Central role of **interactiveness** in engaging visitors & enhancing their experiences
- Importance of **value co-creation** as opposed to the **firm-dominant perspective**
- Emphasis in educational programs → youth segment concentration

Towards creative tourism 1

- Creative tourism is the natural evolution of cultural tourism → shift from service to experience economy

- Nonetheless, in order to embrace creative tourism we need to concentrate on the re-orientation of the policy frameworks

- Richards (2001: 66) → Creative tourism, although desirable & effective, sometimes cannot be applied easily in praxis: *'by giving the visitor more leeway to interact with the material being presented, & to generate their own meanings, the choice of perspectives become more difficult'*

Towards creative tourism 2

- Strategies
  - A series of practices, which enhance the visitor's participation & engagement, can have a positive impact to the obtained tourist experience & perceived value
  - Such practices pertain to actively engaging visitors at all stages of the experience, from the planning stage of their visit to receiving feedback
  - E.g.: *connecting the present to the past, mythologising the asset, creating stories around the exhibits, learning in playful environments, making experiences more alive through demonstrations & first-hand experiences* (Klopfer & Yoon, 2005; McKercher & du Cros, 2002, de Rojas & Camarero, 2008; Hertzman, Anderson, & Rowley, 2008; Veverka, 1998),

Towards creative tourism 3

- Role of the environment to shape the tourist experience, including atmospherics, interpretive methods, etc.

- Central role of interactiveness in engaging tourists & enhancing their experiences – tourist participation in activities

- Tourism & cultural policy need to be aligned with public & private museums' plans & initiatives

Conclusion

- The quality of cultural heritage of Cyprus (comparative advantage) is unquestionable → emphasis needs to be given upon its efficient management (competitive advantage) (Sharpley, 2009) → holistic value creation

- More engaged visitors → more satisfied customers → marketing philosophy

- Connection of the physical side of cultural heritage with its meanings → understanding the mission & significance of exhibits

- Reveiling the cultural content of places/exhibits in a unique, challenging & interesting way in the language of the average visitor

- (Co)creation of knowledge, mentality & relationship with cultural spaces & museums → path to sustainability

Thank you for your attention !

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