OVERTOURISM AND MARKETING STRATEGIES OF TOURISTIC ENTERPRISES

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Abstract: *Overtourism is a phenomenon that affects many touristic destinations. This study aims to explore the attitudes of touristic enterprises towards the impact of overtourism on touristic destinations. Moreover, it aims to explore the marketing strategies that each identified group of enterprises adopt. A primary survey was carried out in June – October 2019 to a random sample of tourism enterprises operated in Greece. Principal component analysis (PCA) was conducted to identify the main attitudes of tourism enterprises towards the impact of overtourism on tourism industry in the destination they operate. Cluster analysis was performed to classify those enterprises into groups according their attitudes towards overtourism. Two strategic groups of enterprises were identified: (a) conscious and (b) opportunists. In the next step, PCA was also elaborated in order to identify the main strategic dimensions influencing the marketing strategies that "conscious" and "opportunists" tourism enterprises follow. Furthermore, hierarchical and k-means cluster analysis were used to identify the marketing strategies that "conscious" and "opportunists" tourism enterprises adopt. Non parametric chi-square test was performed to develop the profile of those enterprises. Finally, the Friedman non parametric one way test was conducted to explore the association between each marketing strategic group and their opinion about opportunities and threats that overtourism creates regarding the improvement of the attractiveness of the places in which they operate.*

Key words: Overtourism; Tourism marketing strategies; Tourism enterprise; Impact of overtourism.

JEL Classification Codes: Z33.

1.   INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an economic activity that has been growing for the last few decades. In 2017, the number of international tourist arrivals worldwide was 1.332 million. The increase over the previous year was 7% and was the largest one compared to seven previous years, and is expected to continue at a rate of 4 to 5% in the forthcoming years. In Europe, the increase in the number of international arrivals increased by 8% compared to 2016, which represented 55 million international tourist arrivals more than in 2016 (UNWTO, 2017), with the top destinations were located near the Mediterranean region.

There has been a radical change in the perceptions of local people on tourism, in many destinations a tipping point has been reached and mass tourism has become a local political issue, sometimes spilling over into the street (Goodwin, 2017). The externalities of tourism have

become increasingly visible over the last decade, manifesting themselves in anti-tourism demonstrations in popular destinations such as: Venice, Dubrovnik, Santorini, Barcelona and Amsterdam.

The terms "overtourism" and "tourismphobia" were coined the last decade as new conceptualisations of social movements challenging the tourism growth premise (Dredge, 2017; Goodwin, 2017; Milano, 2017; Milano et al., 2021). Overtourism is a relatively new term that tries to describe the existence of a large number of tourists in a particular tourist destination. As Goodwin reports (2019), overtourism describes destinations where locals and visitors feel there are so many tourists that the quality of life and experiences is dramatically reduced. Although the terminology is new, the problem it describes has its roots much earlier, as since the end of the 18th century protests have been reported about the large number of visitors to Venice (Hospers, 2019).

Alexis (2017) explores the root causes of the over-tourism phenomenon and critically assesses the mainstream theories behind it. The phenomenon of overtourism is not new, what is new, is the degree to which it is rapidly spreading and irrevocably changing tourism destinations, as well as the rate to which the realization of this transformation has been growing (Sarantakou & Terkenli, 2019).

A study by Stanchev (2018) examines some of the most over-saturated destinations in Europe and actions taken to control the situation. The destinations studied are Venice, Barcelona, Prague, Santorini, Amsterdam, Dubrovnik and Mallorca and the negative consequences of over-tourism such as the loss of the local identity, the rise in the cost of living and the nuisance caused to the residents are detailed.

Overtourism is a complex phenomenon that strongly affects the viability of a place, as well as the experiences of residents, visitors and different stakeholders who are either directly or indirectly involved or affected by it (Bellini et al., 2016; Postma, 2013). Overtourism is the opposite of responsible tourism which is about using tourism to make better places to live in and better places to visit (Goodwin, 2019). This phenomenon has a considerable number of negatives effects on a destination including destruction of heritage, negative impacts on the life of locals and jeopardised sustainability of the destination (Séraphin et al. 2018; Séraphin et al. 2019).

Various studies exploring the pressure of tourism in local communities emerged as early as the 1970s (Boissevain, 1977; Williams, 1979). For example, an important contribution in the field of impact studies is the Doxey's theory (Doxey, 1975), which defines four emotional stages that residents can experience with increasing numbers of tourists. Another key contribution is Butler's (1980), according to which tourist destinations suffer from their own success.

Overtourism is linked to the number of visitors. However, 'crowd' and 'overpopulation' should not be confused with density. The crowd generally refers to a psychological response to density, i.e. feelings of lack of privacy or unwanted interactions (Gove & Hughes, 1980), and may be related to overcrowding as the excessive co-existence of individuals in a region that puts pressure on resources or has an impact on wider economic or social objectives (Johnston et al., 2005).

The main factors contributing to the increase in the number of tourists are: (a) The reduction of air transport costs. Low-cost airlines have significantly reduced the cost of air transport while at the same time they lead to an increase of about 175% in direct services worldwide (Dodds & Battler, 2019). This has favored the choice of attractive destinations for short trips but also for other reasons such as social events. (b) Technological development which has simplified the travel procedures and allowed travellers to easily collect information about the

destinations they choose, while the rental platforms for rooms and residences (Airbnb, Booking, Trivago etc.) offer more accommodation options for tourists. (c) The development of new markets such as China and India has given a big boost to the growth of tourism worldwide. Bangkok, for example, was the most visited city in the world in 2018 with 22 million visitors due to cheap air fares and Chinese tourists' preferences (Van et al., 2018). New groups of travellers (middle class) have also been developed and projected to increase by 160 million over the next five years. (d) Mass tourism has reduced the cost of travel and allowed short-term travel to a wide range of destinations as more tourists travel more frequently. (e) The reluctance of the management to form a marketing strategy in order to control and manage tourism development resulted in an unlimited touristic expansion. (f) The great importance of tourism in income and employment make the stakeholders to avoid to take measures in order to limit the number of tourists to attractive destinations. The main causes according to Séraphin et al. (2019) of overtourism are the theociological factor (mankind's lack of happiness), business factor (marketing) and technological and economic factors (development of technology and low cost transport). Hence the problem of overtourism can be tackled by addressing these factors and mainly through the development of proactivity by the destination managements organisations (DMO's) and the adopting of intelligence on destination management (Séraphin et al. 2019; Sheehan et al. 2016) . In particular, the DMOs are adopting activities including marketing and promotion, communication and branding, product development, and market research; networking; collaborating with public and private sectors; organising events, festivals, and trade shows; involving in publications and publishing brochures; taking up virtual space optimisation; networking with stakeholders;aligning roles with sustainable development goals (Gowreesunkar et al. 2018 Séraphin et al. 2019).

Therefore, due to the consequences of the phenomenon of overtourism on touristic destinations this study aims to explore the attitudes of touristic enterprises towards the impact of overtourism on touristic destinations in Greece and to explore the marketing strategies they follow.

2. METHODOLOGY

For the purposes of the work, a survey was carried out between the months of June and October 2019 using a structured questionnaire in a random representative sample of 183 companies active in various tourism sectors (accommodation, restaurants, rentals, etc.), operating in Greece. The sampling framework the researchers used consists of the list of touristic enterprises derived from the Directorates of Public Health and Social Care of 7 out of 13 Greek Regions. In particular 7 Regions of the 13 existed in Greece were selected at random. In the next step the researchers formed the sampling framework they used and sent the questionnaire to 30 enterprises of each Region that have been selected at random. Therefore, the selected sample consists of 210 Greek touristic enterprises. The productive sample reached the 183 companies active in various tourism sectors (accommodation, restaurants, rentals, etc.), operating in Greece.

The completed questionnaires were analyzed by using the SPSS statistical package. Initially, a factor analysis was used to reduce the variables describing the main attitudes of touristic enterprises towards the impact of over tourism on touristic destinations into a smaller set of key dimensions suitable for subsequent statistical analysis. The Anti-image panel and Bartlett's test were used to control the sample and variables. More specifically, the suitability of the sample was checked with Bartlett's p-test$<0,05$ (p="0,00)", and the MSA of variables (MSA> 0.5). An orthogonal rotation (Varimax method) was conducted and the standard criteria of eigenvalue >1, scree test and percentage of variance were used in order to determine the factors in the first rotation (Hair et al., 1998).

Cluster analysis was then applied in order to classify the touristic enterprises into groups with common characteristics and identified two main groups of enterprises (a) the conscious and (b) the opportunistic. Factor analysis was then re-used to investigate the main strategic direction affecting the marketing strategy pursued by each of the two groups of identified enterprises. In addition, cluster analysis was performed again in order to identify the marketing strategies adopted by conscious and opportunistic enterprises. Using the chi-square test, the profile of each group was developed. Finally, with the non-parametric Friedman test, the relationship of each group's marketing strategy was explored, in relation to their opinion about the opportunities and threats created by the phenomenon of overtourism, in the areas they operate.

The null research hypotheses this study aims to examine are:

H₀1: Touristic enterprises cannot be classified into groups according to their attitudes towards overtourism.

H₀2: Each group of touristic enterprises according to their attitudes towards overtourism cannot be classified into groups regarding the marketing strategies they follow.

H₀3: There is not any significant statistical association between the attitudes of touristic enterprises towards overtourism and their opinion about the opportunities and threats that overtourism creates regarding the improvement of the attractiveness of the places in which they operate.

H₀4: There is not any significant statistical association between the attitudes of touristic enterprises towards overtourism and their business characteristics.

3. RESULTS

3.1 The attitudes of tourism enterprises towards overtourism

Principal component analysis (through a varimax rotation) were conducted to identify the key variables describing the enterprises' attitudes towards overtourism and the latent root criterion (eigenvalue =1) and the percentage of variance were used to determine the number of factors (Table 1). Several different trial rotations were conducted to compare factor interpretability as suggested by Hair et al. (1998).

Table 1. They key variables describing the enterprises' attitudes towards overtourism

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.045	33.838	33.838	3.045	33.838	33.838
2	1..230	13.664	47.502	1.230	13.664	47.502
3	1.052	12.186	60.688	1.052	12.186	60.088
4	0.959	19.156	69.844			
5	0.810	8,996	78.839			
6	0.613	6.806	85.645			
7	0.601	6.673	92.318			
8	0.445	4.941	97.258			
9	0.247	2.742	100.000			

Three factors are formed such as interpreting 60.69% of total variability. From charging variables to each of the three factors (Table 2) we can define them as follows: (a) quality of life issues, (b) everyday life issues and (c) tourism quality issues.

Table 2. The main factors affecting enterprises' attitudes towards overtourism

	Component		
	1	**2**	**3**
Social Customs and tradition	0.778	0.330	0.035
Lifestyle	0.758	0.001	0.176
Environment	0.740	-0.024	0.015
Population isolation	0.564	0.289	0.549
Water resources	-0.004	0.764	0.071
Transport & transportation	0.078	0.726	-0.024
Social cohesion	0.133	0.475	0.208
Quality of tourism businesses	-0.033	-0.023	0.892
Security	0.342	0.350	0.555

KMO MSA = 0.668 Bartlett test of Sphericity = 372,743 P <0.001

Cluster analysis was then carried out in order to group the sampled enterprises in relation to their attitudes towards overtourism and identified two groups of enterprises (Table 3): (a) conscious and (b) opportunistic touristic enterprises. In particular, the conscious enterprises pay attention to social customs and tradition, lifestyle, environment, population isolation, water resources, transport & transportation, social cohesion, quality of tourism businesses and security issues. On the other hand, opportunistic enterprises comprising the 44% of the sample are not interested in any of the identified factors.

Table 3. Classification of tourism enterprises regarding their attitudes towards overtourism

Factors affecting enterprises' attitudes towards overtourism	Cluster		
	Conscious	**Opportunists**	**P**
Quality of Life Issues	0.76085	-0.95810	0.001
Daily Life Issues	0.19234	-0.24221	0.001
Tourism Quality Issues	0.19990	-0.25173	0.001
N=183	102	81	

Therefore, H_01: *"Touristic enterprises cannot be classified into groups according to their attitudes towards overtourism"* can be rejected.

3.2 The marketing Strategies adopted by Tourism Enterprises according to their attitudes towards overtourism

Following the same procedure for the test of the variables applied above, we apply a factor analysis again in order to identify the main factors that affect the marketing strategies that conscious and opportunist enterprises follow. These new factor analyses reveal five factors that affect the marketing strategies adopted by conscious enterprises (Table 4) and two factors which influence the marketing strategies that opportunist enterprises follow (Table 5).

Table 4. The key variables describing the factors that affect the marketing strategies of conscious enterprises

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	**% of Variance**	**Cumulative %**	**Total**	**% of Variance**	**Cumulative %**
1	9.594	47.968	47.968	9.594	47.968	47.968

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
2	1.889	9.446	57.414	1.889	9.446	57.414
3	1.702	8.511	65.925	1.702	8.511	65.925
4	1.339	6.694	72.619	1.339	6.694	72.619
5	1.074	5.371	77.989	1.074	5.371	77.989
6	0.850	4.248	82.237			
7	0.596	2.979	85.216			
8	0.560	2.799	88.015			
9	0.479	2.393	90.408			
10	0.415	2.075	92.484			
11	0.325	1.624	94.108			
12	0.307	1.534	95.641			
13	0.197	0.985	96.626			
14	0.167	0.837	97.463			
15	0.151	0.757	98.219			
16	0.134	0.671	98.890			
17	0.082	0.412	99.303			
18	0.061	0.307	99.610			
19	0.042	0.208	99.818			
20	0.036	0.182	100.000			

Table 5. The key variables describing the factors that affect the marketing strategies of opportunist enterprises

Component		Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
		Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
	1	7.240	55.690	55.690	7.240	55.690	55.690
	2	1.407	10.825	66.515	1.407	10.825	66.515
	3	.890	6.845	73.361			
	4	.817	6.286	79.647			
	5	.633	4.870	84.517			
	6	.441	3.390	87.907			
	7	.403	3.102	91.009			
	8	.316	2.429	93.438			
	9	.282	2.171	95.609			
	10	.227	1.747	97.356			
	11	.162	1.249	98.604			
	12	.112	.859	99.463			
	13	.070	.537	100.000			

According to the results of factor analysis (Table 6), the five main factors that affect the marketing strategies that conscious enterprises adopt are (a) marketing design (b) public relations (c) placement (d) promotion and (e) development of new markets.

Table 6. The main factors affecting the marketing strategies of conscious enterprises

	Component				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Existence of a budget	.828	.198	.268	-.053	.005
Marketing planning	.818	.222	.159	.152	.320
Development of new products	.806	.343	.061	.075	.173
Entry to new business areas	.786	.326	.098	.228	.184
Marketing expenses	.777	.151	.173	.111	.250
Existence of a budget for advertising	.728	.373	.122	.243	.154
Sales training	.693	.304	.381	.186	.144
Number of products	.669	.498	.004	.194	-.125
Strong markets	.519	.047	.514	.116	.482
After sales service	.395	.788	.134	-.042	.241
Public relations actions	.391	.745	.147	-.039	.002
Organization of events	.183	.678	.234	.480	-.051
Web promotion	.490	.635	-.028	.205	.015
Credit sales	.157	.193	.884	.049	-.057
Use of wholesalers	.238	.075	.841	.222	.207
Participation in exhibitions	.058	.216	.160	.769	-.088
Use of discounts	.426	-.162	.018	.631	.049
Use of radio	.099	.476	.189	.544	.475
Emphasis on retail	.156	.017	.310	-.304	.795
Entering new markets	.390	.107	-.321	.290	.685

. KMO MSA = 0.770 Bartlett test of Sphericity = 1914,651 P <0.001

Furthermore, the two key strategic dimensions influencing the marketing strategies that opportunist enterprises are (a) marketing planning issues and (b) selling issues (Table 7).

Table 7. The main factors affecting the marketing strategies of opportunist enterprises

	Component	
	1	**2**
Strong markets	.845	.069
Organization of events	.841	-.261
Entering new markets	.830	.171
Marketing planning	.819	.383
Public relations actions	.777	.430
Existence of a budget	.748	.271

Existence of a budget for advertising	.698	.214
After sales service	.684	.205
Web promotion	.675	.403
Marketing expenses	.671	.517
Development of new products	.658	.403
Sales training	.001	.878
Quality	.234	.631

KMO MSA = 0.836 Bartlett test of Sphericity = 804.843 P <0.001

Then, hierarchical and k-means cluster analysis performed in order to identify the marketing strategies adopted by the conscious and opportunists tourism enterprises.

As Table 8 indicates, the "conscious" enterprises can follow three marketing strategies: (a) promotion orientation strategy, (b) marketing orientation strategy and (c) selling orientation strategy.

Table 8: The marketing strategies the Conscious touristic enterprises follow

Factors affecting the marketing strategies adopted by conscious tourism enterprises	Cluster			
	Promotion orientation strategy	Marketing orientation strategy	Selling orientation strategy	P
Marketing Planning Issues	-.02778	0.66959	-1.03265	0.001
Public Relations Issues	-.016616	0.76941	-0.78387	0.001
Placement Issues	-0.12035	-0.11051	0.54523	0.001
Promotion Issues	0.62120	-0.80344	-0.52452	0.001
Retailing and New Markets Issues	-0.41329	0.26105	0.80478	0.001
N = 102	54	30	18	

Moreover, cluster analysis (Table 9) identified that opportunists tourism enterprises adopt two marketing strategies (a) marketing orientation strategy and (b) selling orientation strategy.

Table 9. The marketing strategies of the Opportunists touristic enterprises follow

Factors affecting the marketing strategies adopted by opportunist tourism enterprises	Cluster		
	Marketing orientation strategy	Selling Orientation strategy	P
Marketing Planning Issues	-0.16137	0.71002	0.001
Selling Issues	0.31311	-1.37768	0.001
N=81	66	15	

Therefore, the research hypothesis $H_0 2$: *"Each group of touristic enterprises according to their attitudes towards overtourism cannot be classified into groups regarding the marketing strategies they follow"* can be rejected.

3.3 Profiling of each group of tourism enterprises

Friedman non parametric test employed to profile the conscious and opportunists tourism enterprises towards their opinion about the opportunities and threats that overtourism creates regarding the improvement of the attractiveness of the places in which they operate.

As Table 10 indicates, both groups of tourism enterprises believe that the hospitality of the people who live and work in the places they operate, the Greek cuisine and the hotel's modern facilities, consist of the main opportunities that overtourism might create towards the improvement of the attractiveness of their places as tourist destinations.

Table 10. Attitudes of tourism enterprises about the opportunities that overtourism creates towards the improvement of the attractiveness of the places in which they operate

	Conscious ($x^2 = 376.812$, P<0.001)	Opportunists ($x^2 = 116.522$, P<0.001)
Enhance of archaeological sites	4.93	4.93
Enhance of the local heritage	5.38	5.56
Climatic conditions	5.87	5.56
Direct access to the sea	3.98	3.07
Modern airport	3.61	2.56
Cost benefit relations	5.57	5.44
Athletic and cultural events	4.55	4.94
Hospitality	7.59	8.22
Greek cuisine	7.44	8.17
Hotel's modern facilities	6.08	6.56

On the other hand, the fact that due to overtourism their places are not friendly to tourists, traffic jams and expensiveness comprise the main threats of overtourism regarding the improvement of the attractiveness of the places in which they operate, as tourist destinations (Table 11).

Table 11. Attitudes of tourism enterprises about the threats that overtourism creates towards the improvement of the attractiveness of the places in which they operate

	Conscious ($x^2 = 168.852$, P<0.001)	Opportunists ($x^2 = 316.716$, P<0.001)
Non friendly to tourist	6.61	7.48
Traffic jams	6.73	6.54
Expensiveness	6.14	6.11
Not attractive landscape	5.34	5.04
Bad cost benefit relations	4.57	4.93
City break	4.61	5.02
Competition	6.20	5.91
Compromised environment	5.24	5.65
Bad condition of local transportation	5.00	4.76
Cut of air travels	4.57	3.57
Non friendly to tourist	6.61	7.48
Traffic jams	6.73	6.54
Expensiveness	6.14	6.11
Not attractive landscape	5.34	5.04

Therefore, the research hypothesis $H_0 3$: *"There is not any significant statistical association between the attitudes of touristic enterprises towards overtourism and their opinion about opportunities and threats that overtourism creates regarding the improvement of the attractiveness of the places in which they operate"* might be rejected. Moreover, chi-square analysis performed in order to profile the conscious and opportunists tourism enterprises according to their business characteristics. As Table 12 portrays most of the "conscious" tourism enterprises run by people of Generation X, and are mostly hotels which operate during summer. Similar is the profile of the "opportunists" tourism enterprises.

Table 12. Profiling Tourism Enterprises regarding their business characteristics

Characteristics		Conscious		Opportunists	
Gender	Male	n.s	39%	n.s	56%
	Female		41%		44%
Age	Generation Z	x^2=32.824 P<0.001	32%	n.s	19%
	Generation Y		24%		30%
	Generation X		41%		30%
	Baby Boomers		3%		22%
Type of Activity	Hotel	x^2=109.824 P<0.001	41%	x^2=109.824 P<0.001	37%
	Restaurant		6%		26%
	Camp		6%		0%
	Rental Appartments/Villa/Rooms		3%		4%
	Cazino		12%		4%
	Café/Bars		18%		11%
	Rent a Car		6%		7%
	Cruises		6%		11%
	Tour Operators/Travel Agents		3%		0%
Season of Activity	Spring	x^2=144.353 P<0.001	9%	x^2=144.353 P<0.001	7%
	Autumn		6%		4%
	Summer		76%		63%
	Winter		9%		26%

Hence, the research hypothesis $H_0 4$: *"There is not any significant statistical association between the attitudes of touristic enterprises towards overtourism and their business characteristics"* can be rejected.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Overtourism is a phenomenon that occurs mainly in popular destinations, but with multilateral effects, on the environment, on people and on the activities that develop in them. Business activities in areas facing overtourism were the subject of the study.

This survey identified that the quality of life issues, the everyday life issues and the tourism quality issues are the three main factors affecting the main attitudes of tourism enterprises towards the phenomenon of overtourism. Hence this study supports the findings of the other researchers including Bellini et al., (2016) ; Postma, (2013), Séraphin et al. (2018); Séraphin et al. (2019) according to whom overtourism has negative impact on the viability and

sustainability of the destination, its heritage, the experiences of residents, visitors and the stakeholders.

Futhermore, tourism enterprises were classified according to their attitudes towards overtousism into two groups, the conscious and opportunists enterprises. In the next step this study examined the marketing orientation of these two categories of tourism enterprises and found out that "conscious" enterprises adopt the following marketing strategies: (a) promotion orientation strategy, (b) marketing orientation strategy and (c) selling orientation strategy. "Opportunists" enterprises, on the other hand, follow two marketing strategies: (i) marketing orientation and (ii) selling orientation strategy.

Both groups of tourism enterprises believe that the hospitality of the people who live and work in the places they operate, the Greek Cuisine and the hotel's modern facilities, consist the main opportunities that overtourism might create towards the improvement of the attractiveness of their places as tourist destinations. Moreover, the fact that due to overtourism their places are not friendly to tourists, the traffic jams and the expensiveness, comprise the main threats of overtourism for both groups of enterprises.

This study indicated that "conscious" enterprises adopt more sophisticated marketing strategies whilst "opportunists" prefer simpler marketing ones. Moreover, the tourism stakeholders should try to make their places more friendly to tourists, take the appropriate measures so as the traffic jam to be reduced, face the expensiveness, promote hospitality, Greek cuisine, modern facilities of the hotel, adoption of adopt environmental protection practices and the local heritage.

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