

MAJOR CHALLENGES FOR GLOBAL TOURISM IN THE NEAR FUTURE



"We want to know what issues are relevant in the long run," according to Martin Lohmann, Managing Director of the Institute for Tourism and Recreational Research in Northern Europe, N.I.T. in Kiel. Researchers circulated the notion that challenges are complex problems, for which there is usually no simple solution.

Together with the University of Lüneburg, Lohmann has been researching the challenges regarding global tourism. Lohmann with 22 other international researchers, are provided in a Delphi study surveying the main challenges of tourism. However, referring from a total of 53 interviewed experts, very different opinions and views were raised. Lohmann summarized these variations of challenges together into four major issues.

The first challenge of global tourism expected to be confronted in the future is the continued globalization of supply and demand. "How to deal with it is a challenge for all destinations," Lohmann stated with conviction. Globalization is currently standing rapidly in conflict with environmental efforts. A region focused in tourism would want to attract more visitors and guests while at the same time connecting the objective with environmental preservation and awareness. For some countries, such as Austria, globalization is a more serious problem compared to its neighbors. Austria, living mainly with domestic and German tourists, compared to the already very international tourism in Switzerland.

The second major challenge is what Lohmann called "Costs and Benefits", which can be simplified in other words: What does the world really gain from tourism? Suppliers or providers of travel services should benefit from tourists by making money while the tourists or the customers should be able to relax and enjoy their stay with the money they spend. If there is no guarantee in this mutual interaction, tourism itself is superfluous. Lohmann sees a threat in the over-exploitation of the environment when opening for new spots or areas for recreation and tourism, and at the same time the prevention of such over-exploitation is depriving a country of its core tourism effect. "If the negative effects of promoting tourism is not under control, then tourism is in danger."

With new projects in tourism, one must always pose the question regarding the expected benefits for both the suppliers/providers/vendors and the guests.

As of today, tourism is expected to adapt to environmental factors. "Adaptation" is the third major challenge in global tourism development. For example, one must adapt to demographic change, such as the increasing number of aging workers in the labor force intensifies the competition of hiring younger workers.

The fourth challenge regarding global tourism is internal self-control. Among other things, the main factor regarding self-control is to avoid potential over-capacity. Lohmann used a cruise ship as an example for this challenge. As cruise ships increase in capacity, prices tend to fall as suppliers inside the ship undercut each other. A ruinous competition will lead to the survival of only a few suppliers or vendors that can manage the continuous increase in demand. According to Lohmann, "this is an unnecessary, painful process."

This study of Lohmann is only the beginning. Martin Lohmann believes that his research could contribute a lot to the proper response of tourism globalization as well as the natural environment.

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