



Medical Tourism and Its Role in Marketing Jordan Abroad

**Mohammad Nayef Alsarayreh^{1*}, Kafa Hmoud Abdallah Al Nawaiseh²,
Mohammad Sultan Majed Mahasneh³, Mohammed Abdul Razzaq Abu Rumman⁴**

¹Al-Balqa Applied University, Jordan, ²Al-Balqa Applied University, Jordan, ³University of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, ⁴Al-Balqa Applied University, Jordan. *Email: mohammad_n_k_s@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Jordan is one of the most developed countries in the field of Medical Tourism. It is distinguished by the abundance of advanced hospitals and internationally recognized doctors. It has an advanced medical network in governmental, private, and military sectors. The importance of the study lies in demonstrating the role of marketing as an important factor for the promotion of medical tourism, which is reflected on the economical return of the state and represents one of the important axes of the growth of the Jordanian economy since they are considered centers of treatment and healthcare in the world. The study concluded that the information related to medical tourism that are used in marketing Jordan abroad are neither sufficiently clear nor direct, also the information of marketing medical tourism aboard does not demonstrate these products precisely. The study recommended the followings: Following modern technological ways in marketing Jordan abroad from touristic perspective, clarifying the prices of provided touristic services to the tourist so as to grasp that there is a competitive advantage in comparison with other countries that provide same services.

Keywords: Medical, Tourism, Marketing

JEL Classifications: Z32, L83, M31

1. INTRODUCTION

The medical tourism sector in Jordan is still facing many challenges that local experts call to confront it in order to push the sector towards more success and development. The kingdom is characterized by medical cadres, modern equipment and competitive prices in addition to the existence of most important touristic locations that are specialized in medical treatment and recreation like Dead Sea and Ma'zin Hot Springs.

Jordan ranks first in medical tourism in the Middle East and North Africa region and is among the top five in the world according to the World Bank report. The Jordan Tourism Board has allocated 250,000 JDs to promote medical tourism. The Council of Arab Ministers of Health has chosen Amman as the capital of Arab medical tourism for 2012.

The Board has developed a plan to host international insurance companies, especially from Germany, in order to send patients from these countries for treatment in Jordan instead of treatment

in their countries because of the high costs of treatment, especially skin and bone diseases.

Medical tourism in Jordan has fallen in light of the many risks and challenges faced internally and externally. It was considered that the government's decision to restrict the entry of Libyans and Yemenis to Jordan would lead to a significant reduction in the number of patients arriving, also Iraqi and Sudanese patients require a visa in advance which lead them to go to other countries such as Turkey, Egypt and Lebanon.

The Jordanian medical sector has always been a support for the Arabs. The Jordanian private hospitals have received large numbers of Palestinian wounded in the Intifada and by Israeli aggression on Gaza in 2008, 2012 and 2014. Jordan has also been a safe haven for the treatment of the Libyan, Syrian, Yemeni and Sudanese wounded in recent years.

Moreover Jordan has been characterized by medical tourism, which has made it the first destination in the Middle East and North Africa.

Jordanian Hospitals Association is highly involved in various marketing activities of Jordanian medical services, Jordan succeeded in obtaining the award as the best destination for medical tourism in 2014 and the election of the President of the Association as a representative of Jordan for the presidency of the World Council for Medical Tourism is an international recognition of Jordan's advanced status as a regional center for medical tourism, The migration of qualified Jordanian workers to work outside the Kingdom led to a severe shortage especially in qualified nursing, especially females. At the same time, hospitals were not allowed to bring in foreign nurses to cover the shortage.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Al-Kharabsheh et al., (2011) in their study entitled "The Impact of Viral Marketing via Internet in promoting touristic products in Jordan," concluded that viral touristic promotion via Internet helps in publishing information specialized in touristic offers in Jordan, this type of promotion helps in increasing the competitive ability of Jordanian touristic companies as well the validity of information of touristic information in Jordan, and in providing the required information of the touristic programs in Jordan to help the customers make the purchase decision.

The study recommended continuously improve the outputs of the viral touristic promotion via Internet in order to provide information about touristic products and programs, pay attention to the provided information within this type of promotion due its role in making the purchase decision by the customers. Moreover, companies should apply this type of promotion because of its features and advantages.

AlSarayreh et al., (2011) in their study entitled "Tourism Promotion through the Internet (Websites) (Jordan as a Case Study)," aimed to study the status of tourism promotion in Jordan, in particular via the Internet, with a future plan to develop this type of promotion based on the needs of the country. Their objective was to draw conclusions that help to know and understand this type of tourism promotion, and to identify how to develop it in Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to disseminate the maximum information about the Kingdom. This study adopted a survey form which is carefully designed to collect data and information that was used to identify the trends and opinions of the sample. The results showed that the tourism promotion through the Internet helps to increase competition in the prices of tourism, while the website design helps to spread information about the tourism offers. People from both genders consider that the website design as a means helps to ensure the information veracity of tourism offers. The research paper recommended continuing development of the role of tourism promotion through the Internet in spreading information about the tourism offers, so as to achieve the greatest possible benefits.

Al-Qudah and Attaleb study (2009) entitled "medical tourism and its impact in Jordan National economy," aimed to identify the importance of medical tourism sector as one of the various forms of tourism in general and identify how could it impact

Jordan National economy since tourism sector is of the sustainable development sectors. The study also pointed to the importance of recognizing the concept and size of medical tourism in Jordan, and the contribution of tourism to the reduction of economic problems through the application of pricing policies, the efficiency of employment and the level of available health information in private hospitals so as to enable and to foster the development of medical tourism in Jordan. In order to achieve the objectives of the study, the researcher developed and evaluated a questionnaire distributed to (175) workers in a number of private sector hospitals in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and only (150) copies were restored. The study found that there is no statistically significant relationship at the level of ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the level of efficiency of Jordanian workers in the health sector and the development of medical tourism in Jordan

Hankinson study (2005) entitled "destination brand images: A business tourism perspective," identifies brand images from a business tourist perspective (people visiting destinations for business meetings, incentive events, conferences and exhibitions) and tests their relationship with perceived quality and commercial criteria whereas previous studies of destination brand images have been conducted from the perspective of the leisure tourist. Data on the brand image attributes associated with 15 UK destinations promoting themselves as business tourism centers were collected via repertory grid analysis from a sample of 25 organisations using business tourism facilities. A self-completion questionnaire was used to measure managers' ratings of the perceived quality of each destination and the commercial criteria used to select a destination. The data were analyzed using content analysis, exploratory factor analysis and correlation analysis. The content analysis identified eight clusters of brand image attributes. Subsequent factor analysis identified three underlying dimensions – overall destination attractiveness, functionality, and ambience. While all three were correlated with perceived quality, commercial criteria were dominated by a destination's functional rather than ambience attributes. The results of the study provide a more informed and systematic basis on which to develop a destination's business tourism positioning strategy by providing a framework for selecting relevant brand image attributes.

Ernst study (2006) entitled "Medical Tourism: Why Americans Take Medical Vacations Abroad," explains that medical tourism is a phenomenon by which Americans are saving thousands of dollars seeking treatment in emerging health markets like India and Thailand. It emphasized that costly health care at home is the result of several problems, some of which are policy-related, such as expensive medical malpractice lawsuits and prolonged, pricey FDA regulations. The study found that foreign hospitals and doctors welcome the rise of medical tourism, and organizations are developing to help market their services. The globalization of health care means more competition and good quality at better prices. The study recommended that policy makers should ease costly restrictions on American hospitals, doctors, and patients to help them compete.

Abu-Rumman et al., (2005) entitled "The evaluation of medical services from the point of view of Arab tourists coming to

Jordan for treatment (a study of a sample of private hospitals) , investigates one of the tourism types that is characterized by high revenue and long period of stay compared with other tourism types that formulates the Jordanian tourism sector. The study focuses on the evaluation of medical services that are introduced to Arab patients. The study also explores the reasons that motivate them in choosing Jordanian hospitals for medication, (382) copies of the questionnaire were given to the study sample (Arab patients) in the private hospitals in Amman. The study shows that their evaluation for medical service was positive based on a mean of (4.11), but they were dissatisfied with the prices based on a mean of (2.28). The research also shows that private Jordanian hospitals provide patients with a slightly different diagnosis than what they receive in their home country. Medical services promotion, Number of hospitals and the good hospital reputation in Jordan has a positive impact on the Arab patients' selection of private hospitals.

Riege and Perry study (2000) entitled "Focuses on how national travel and tourism authorities can market a country as a tourist destination, with particular reference to the marketing of Australia and New Zealand to target markets in Germany and the United Kingdom. These two nations in Europe are by far the most important tourist generating countries for Australia and New Zealand and there has been a recent substantial increase in the value of international travel and tourism revenues and promising future prospects. However, there is little research emphasizing specific marketing and distribution strategies that may be applied by travel and tourism organisations, airlines and intermediaries to market a tourist destination successfully in overseas markets. This research collected data using in-depth interviews with 41 experienced practitioners in Germany, the UK, Australia and New Zealand, and analyzed the data with a rigorous case study methodology. The results of this research assist in clarifying the conceptual issues provided in the literature, linking theoretical marketing knowledge about strategies in the discipline of international travel and tourism marketing.

3. PROCEDURAL DEFINITIONS

Medical tourism: Medical tourism is based on the provision of touristic and medical services in specialized places; including resorts, hospitals, sanatoriums, and most of the medical sessions are held in the open air, where there are warm water and sunshine. Medical tourism could be an optional or compulsory choice depending on the opinion of the specialized doctor, and may be chosen by some since it could include all family members, where the patient is being treated while the family is enjoying their vacation.

Marketing: The modern concept of marketing focuses on the final consumer or the industrial buyer which is considered the starting point of marketing process. According to the modern concept of marketing, the efforts related to the final consumer precede production, starting with various studies and marketing researches aimed at detecting the tendencies and tastes of the final consumers and industrial users in order to create congruence between the

consumer (his desires, dispositions, tastes and income) on the one hand and the product (its characteristics) on the other hand.

4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study aims to:

- Recognize the importance of medical tourism.
- Recognize the role of medical tourism in marketing Jordan abroad as a tourist medical destination.
- Reach conclusions and recommendations which positively improve marketing medical tourism.

5. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The importance of the study could be summarized in the followings:

- Demonstration of the role of marketing as an important factor in dealing with the opportunities and challenges facing medical tourism worldwide and ways to develop it in line with the aspirations of medical tourism at the international level, especially to facilitate the transit of patients across the borders of countries.
- The impact of medical tourism on the economic return of the state as it constitutes an important axis of the growth of the Jordanian economy since they are considered medical and healthcare centers at the global level.
- Recognition of the importance of international medical tourism, centers of excellence in health services, laws regulating medical tourism, quality standards and reliability in healthcare, ensuring patient safety, supporting services for medical tourism, optimal marketing of health services, experiences of leading countries in medical tourism.
- Providing a scientific addition due to the lack of studies that address the issues of marketing medical tourism in Jordan externally.

6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

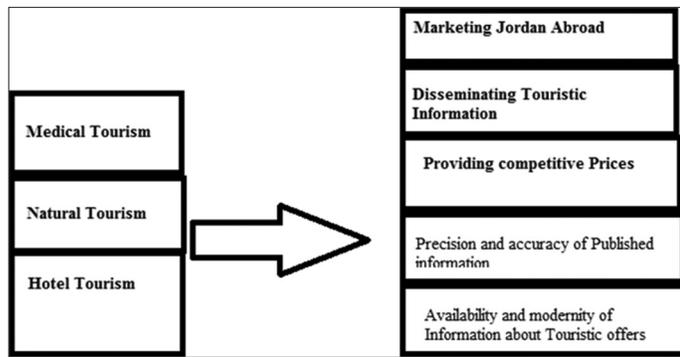
6.1. Problem of the Study

Medical tourism is closely linked to economic development and works to solve some of the problems experienced by countries such as unemployment, and creates new opportunities to reduce the aggravation of problems; Jordan is considered one of the advanced countries in the field of medical treatment. It is distinguished by the abundance of advanced hospitals and internationally recognized physicians and its advanced medical network which belongs to the health, government, private and military sectors. Therefore, the study problem is highlighted by studying the impact of medical tourism in marketing Jordan abroad.

6.2. Study Questions

- 1) Does marketing Jordanian medical tourism abroad impact disseminating special information about touristic offers?
- 2) Does marketing Jordanian medical tourism abroad impact increasing competition of the prices of touristic offers?
- 3) Does marketing Jordanian medical tourism abroad impact providing special information about touristic offers?

6.3. Study Model



7. STUDY TYPE AND ITS APPROACH

7.1. Study Methodology

This study belongs to explorative analytical studies that apply collecting and analyzing data in order to reach results. The

Table 1: Frequencies and percentages of personal factors of the respondents

| Factor | Frequency (percentage) |
|------------------|------------------------|
| Gender | |
| Male | 129 (53.09) |
| Female | 114 (46.91) |
| Age | |
| 18-25 | 19 (7.82) |
| 26-35 | 43 (17.7) |
| 36-45 | 70 (28.81) |
| 46 and more | 111 (45.68) |
| Monthly Income | |
| \$(200-500) | 8 (3.29) |
| \$(501-1000) | 54 (22.22) |
| More than \$1000 | 181 (74.49) |

Table 2: Arithmetic averages, standard deviation, t-values and significance levels of disseminating information of touristic offers

| Item | Arithmetic average | SD | t | Significant |
|--|--------------------|------|-------|-------------|
| The information concerning the medical tourism used to market Jordan abroad needs a short time to understand its content | 4.35 | 0.79 | 20.65 | 0 |
| The information related to medical tourism and the marketing of Jordan abroad is presented in a remarkable and interesting manner | 4.58 | 0.8 | 23.87 | 0 |
| The information related to medical tourism used in marketing Jordan abroad is clear and direct | 2.44 | 1.26 | -5.45 | 0 |
| The appearance and shape of information related to medical tourism to Jordan's outward marketing is decent and enjoyable | 4.38 | 0.82 | 20.37 | 0 |
| The information related to medical tourism and the marketing of Jordan abroad is characterized by simplicity and simplicity | 4.45 | 0.84 | 20.98 | 0 |
| The information related to medical tourism and the marketing of Jordan abroad are presented in innovative and innovative ways | 2.58 | 1.18 | -4.33 | 0 |
| The promotion of medical tourism and the marketing of Jordan abroad will reduce the cost of providing information for Jordanian tourism offers | 4.17 | 1 | 14.15 | 0 |
| The online medical tourism promotion offers a wealth of information and tourist offers | 3.86 | 0.98 | 10.65 | 0 |
| Tourism helps promote medical tourism by means of modern technology to quickly and easily create innovative offers and services that suit the requirements of tourists | 2.45 | 1.11 | -6.01 | 0 |
| The promotion of medical tourism through technology helps to increase offerings through additional services | 4.4 | 0.85 | 20 | 0 |
| Sum | 3.77 | 0.57 | 16.33 | 0 |

SD: Standard deviation

study was prepared online by distributing a questionnaire to a number of tourists equals to 280, of them 255 copies have been restored and 12 copies were excluded, so 243 copies were adopted for statistical analysis representing the sample of the study.

7.2. Hypotheses

1. There are no statistically significant discrepancies of marketing Jordanian medical tourism abroad at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) on disseminating information of touristic offers.
2. There are no statistically significant discrepancies of marketing Jordanian medical tourism abroad at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) on increasing competition of prices of touristic offers.
3. There are no statistically significant discrepancies of marketing Jordanian medical tourism abroad at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) on getting the required information about of touristic offers.

7.3. Statistical Analysis

Description of Personal and demographic factors of the respondents:

Table 1 demonstrates the 53.09% of the sample were males whereas 46.91 were females. The age of 45.68% of the sample equals 46 years old or more while 28.81% of the sample their age ranges between 36 to 45 years old and 17.00% of the sample their age ranges between 26 to 35 years old and 7.82% of the sample their age ranges between 18-25 years old.

Moreover, it is indicate in the table that 74.49% of the sample has a monthly income that exceeds \$1000, while 22.22% of the sample their income ranges between \$501 to \$ 1000 and 3.29% of the sample their monthly income ranges from \$200 to \$500.

7.4. Hypotheses Testing

11.1. First Hypothesis: There are no statistically significant discrepancies of marketing Jordanian medical tourism abroad at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) on disseminating information of touristic offers.

Table 2 indicates that all items except 3, 6 and 9 have got arithmetic averages greater than 3.00 for each of it at significance level less than 0.05. Items 3, 6 and 9 have got arithmetic averages that are less than 3.00 which means that they are not statistically significant. So the information related to medical tourism that is used in marketing Jordan abroad is neither clear nor sufficiently direct. Furthermore, information related to medical tourism that is used in marketing Jordan abroad is not presented innovatively and creatively. Also, promoting of medical tourism via modern technological means does not help in facilitating innovative offers and services that coincide with tourists' requirement.

The items as a whole have got an arithmetic average of 3.77 with a significant level less than 0.05 which means that they are statistically significant, so the first hypothesis will be rejected that there are statistically significant discrepancies at $\alpha \leq 0.05$ of medical tourism in marketing Jordan abroad on disseminating information related to touristic offers.

11.2. Second Hypothesis: There are no statistically significant discrepancies of marketing Jordanian medical tourism abroad at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) on increasing competition of prices of touristic offers.

Table 3 indicates that all items except 11 and 15 have got arithmetic averages greater than 3.00 for each of it at significance level less than 0.05. Items 11 and 15 have got arithmetic averages that are less than 3.00 which means that they are not statistically significant. So marketing of medical tourism abroad does not increase the effectiveness of information towards a competitive advantage among tourism companies. Furthermore, medical tourism marketing abroad achieves an interactive display and offer prices of tourism products at competitive prices.

The items as a whole have got an arithmetic average of 3.16 with a significant level less than 0.05 which means that they are statistically significant, so the second hypothesis will be rejected that there are statistically significant discrepancies at $\alpha \leq 0.05$ of medical tourism in marketing Jordan abroad on increasing competition of prices of touristic offers.

11.3. Third Hypothesis: There are no statistically significant discrepancies of marketing Jordanian medical tourism abroad at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) on getting the required information about of touristic offers.

Table 4 indicates that all items except 24 have got arithmetic averages greater than 3.00 for each of it at significance level less than 0.05. Items 24 has got an arithmetic average that is less than 3.00 which means that it is not statistically significant. So marketing information for medical tourism abroad does not show the cost of these products accurately.

The items as a whole have got an arithmetic average of 3.51 with a significant level less than 0.05 which means that they are statistically significant, so the third hypothesis will be rejected that there are statistically significant discrepancies at $\alpha \leq 0.05$ of medical tourism in marketing Jordan abroad on getting the required information about of touristic offers.

8. CONCLUSIONS

There are no statistically significant discrepancies of marketing Jordanian medical tourism abroad at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) on disseminating information of touristic offers. Except the information related to medical tourism that is used in marketing Jordan abroad is neither clear nor sufficiently direct. Furthermore, information related to medical tourism that is used in marketing Jordan abroad is not presented innovatively and creatively. Also, promoting of medical tourism via modern technological means does not help

Table 3: Arithmetic averages, standard deviation, t-values and significance levels of increasing competition of prices of touristic offers

| Item | Arithmetic average | SD | t | Significant |
|---|--------------------|------|-------|-------------|
| The marketing of medical tourism abroad increases the effectiveness of information towards a competitive advantage among tourism companies | 2.56 | 1.15 | -4.67 | 0 |
| Medical tourism marketing abroad increases the speed of implementation of tourism programs | 3.03 | 1.19 | 0.28 | 0.78 |
| The medical tourism marketing abroad crosses geographical boundaries to provide a competitive advantage | 3.29 | 1.07 | 3.23 | 0 |
| The marketing of medical tourism abroad provides added value to tourism products and programs | 3.46 | 1.16 | 4.76 | 0 |
| The medical tourism marketing abroad achieves an interactive display and offer prices of tourism products at competitive prices | 2.73 | 1.18 | -2.72 | 0.01 |
| The marketing of medical tourism abroad allows the delivery of products to the market via webcasts with specifications, prices and availability for tourists | 3.82 | 1.09 | 9.16 | 0 |
| The mechanism and nature of the marketing of medical tourism abroad encourages the promotion of tourism products by means of advertising messages on websites | 3.2 | 1.1 | 2.25 | 0.03 |
| The positive outlook for the marketing of medical tourism abroad has made advertising messages for tourist products effective | 3.23 | 1.16 | 2.42 | 0.02 |
| Sum | 3.16 | 0.66 | 3.01 | 0 |

SD: Standard deviation

Table 4: Arithmetic averages, standard deviation, t-values and significance levels of getting the required information about of touristic offersw

| Item | Arithmetic average | SD | t | Significant |
|---|--------------------|------|-------|-------------|
| The marketing information for medical tourism abroad is accurate | 3.72 | 1.13 | 7.71 | 0 |
| Any files attached to the marketing information for medical tourism abroad are uploaded quickly | 3.46 | 1.61 | 3.44 | 0 |
| Information on the marketing of medical tourism overseas shows the issues related to time periods | 3.51 | 1.73 | 3.57 | 0 |
| Information on the marketing of medical tourism provides details of tourism programs | 3.95 | 0.93 | 12.26 | 0 |
| Medical tourism marketing information abroad shows the components of the products are clearly | 3.72 | 1.13 | 7.71 | 0 |
| The marketing information for medical tourism abroad shows the cost of these products accurately | 3.46 | 1.61 | 3.44 | 0.39 |
| Sum | 3.51 | 0.75 | 8.25 | 0 |

SD: Standard deviation

in facilitating innovative offers and services that coincide with tourists' requirement.

1. There are no statistically significant discrepancies of marketing Jordanian medical tourism abroad at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) on increasing competition of prices of touristic offers. Except marketing of medical tourism abroad does not increase the effectiveness of information towards a competitive advantage among tourism companies. Furthermore, medical tourism marketing abroad achieves an interactive display and offer prices of tourism products at competitive prices.
2. There are no statistically significant discrepancies of marketing Jordanian medical tourism abroad at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) on getting the required information about of touristic offers. Except marketing information for medical tourism abroad does not show the cost of these products accurately.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Following the latest technological methods in marketing Jordan in terms of tourism abroad.
2. Providing information on medical tourism in Jordan in such a way that the tourist can know all the necessary information about the services available in Jordan.
3. Publishing touristic offers on medical tourism in Jordan in an easy, smooth and innovative form.
4. Clarifying the prices of tourism services provided to the tourist to know that there is a competitive advantage compared to the same services in other countries.
5. Expanding the scope of health travel, since the concept of health travel has changed from the past, with its branches overlapping with diverse human health goals, including medical tourism in its traditional sense, treatment of various

types of dental diseases, spa tourism, resort tourism and tourism for people with disabilities.

6. Conducting more studies that reflect the importance of medical tourism and marketing abroad.

REFERENCES

Abu-Rumman, A., Salah, D. (2005), Measuring the evaluations of therapeutic services from the point of view of Arab tourists arriving in Jordan for treatment, (a study of private hospitals). *Jordanian Journal of Applied Sciences*, 105, 95-105.

Al-Qudah, Attalib. (2009), Medical medical tourism and its impact on the Jordanian national economy, a field study from the point of view of workers in some private Jordanian hospitals. *Qadisiyah Journal of Administrative and Economic Sciences*, 11(4), 17-32.

Alsarayreh, M., Jawabreh, O.A.A., Alkharabsheh, K.S., Aldahamsheh, M.M. (2011), Tourism promotion through the internet (websites)(Jordan as a case study). *Asian Social Science*, 7(6), 125-135.

Alkharabsheh, K.S., Lsarayreh, M.N., Rumman, M.A., Alfarajat, A.H. (2011), The impact of viral marketing via internet on promotion of tourism products in Jordan. *International Research Journal of Finance and Economics*, 80, 138-148.

Andreas, M.R., Chad, P. (2000), National marketing strategies in international travel and tourism. *European Journal of Marketing*, 34(11-12), 1290-1305.

Ernst, D.M. (2006), Medical tourism: Why Americans take medical vacations abroad. *Pacific Research Institute*, 4, 45.

Hankinson, G. (2005), Destination brand images: A business tourism perspective. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 19(1), 24-32.

Mill, R.C.Q., Morrison, A. (1985), *The Tourism System an Introductory Text*. Englewood, Cliffs: Prentice Hall.

Wall, G., Matheson, A. (2006), *Tourism Changes, Impacts and Opportunities*. New Jersey: McGraw Hill.