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PREFACE

The 2011 International Society of Travel and Tourism Educators (ISTTE) conference theme is: ‘The International Sounds and Tastes of Tourism Education’. This theme highlights ISTTE’s mission to improve the quality of education and research in the travel, tourism and hospitality industries by providing a forum for international educators, scholars, researchers, executives and government officials to explore current issues related to travel and tourism. Research and academic papers presented at the 2010 conference showcase seven key themes: Teaching & Learning in Tourism Education, Special Interest Tourism, Cruise Tourism, Tourism Marketing, Event Management and Financial Issues in Hospitality Management.

Three types of papers are included in the proceedings: full, poster and working papers. This year 57 submissions across these three categories of research and academic papers were submitted and competed for the opportunity to present at the conference. All entries were subject to a double-blind review process. Twelve were accepted in the full paper category. This represents a 70% acceptance rate in the full paper category. Twenty were accepted in the working paper category and eleven in the poster paper category. Authors with accepted submissions were invited to submit a final paper for the inclusion of the 2011 proceedings. 78% of the accepted papers are coming from authors from US and Canadian Colleges and Universities, 22% from Colleges and Universities across the globe.

On behalf of the ISTTE Board and all ISTTE Members, I would like to thank all the researchers who participated in the paper call process. Our sincere thanks are also extended to all the reviewers who have generously contributed their time and constructive comments to the authors. We are also grateful for the support of all ISTTE officers in their various functions and Dr. Dominic Dillane, President; Michael Sabitoni, the Chairman of the Board; Ms. Joann Bruss, the Executive Director.

Florian Hummel

Research and Academic Papers Committee Chair



Florian Hummel, EdD
Editor, 2011 Annual ISTTE Conference Proceedings

GENERAL INFORMATION

The 2011 Annual Conference devotes several sessions to the academic and research presentations. It is the intent of these sessions to focus on a broad range of topics that are related to education, research, and management in the field of travel, tourism, and hospitality services. ISTTE is an international organization; therefore, submissions from international scholars are highly encouraged. The conference provides a forum for international educators, scholars, researchers, industry executives, corporate trainers, consultants, vendors, administrators, and government officials to explore issues related to travel and tourism at all levels.

CONTRIBUTION AREAS

Contributions were invited for the following subject areas:

- Bridging the gap between industry and education needs
- Cross-cultural studies in travel and tourism
- Emerging issues in travel and tourism education and training
- Innovations and designs for travel and tourism
- Innovative and creative teaching techniques
- Human resources in travel and tourism
- Impacts on the travel and tourism industry
- Information communication technology research for travel and tourism
- International travel and tourism issues and trends
- Marketing and sales in travel and tourism
- Meetings/conventions and events management
- New perspectives of the travel and tourism management
- Perspectives on articulation and/or accreditation
- Sports and entertainment management
- Strategic management of travel and tourism services
- Studies of gaming and entertainment industries
- Sustainable tourism planning and development
- Technological applications in travel and tourism education
- Travel and tourism education and curriculum
- Travel and tourism research issues or cases

TYPES OF SUBMISSIONS:

Refereed Full Papers
Poster Paper Submissions to be Based on Refereed Extended Abstracts
Working Paper Submissions Based on a Refereed Abstract

RECOGNITION OF REVIEWERS

We express our sincere gratitude for the strong support and timely assistance of the reviewers who reviewed the research and academic papers that were competing for a presentation opportunity at the 2011 International Society of Travel and Tourism Educators Annual Conference. Their careful consideration of these papers as well as their thoughtful and informative comments for the authors helped us to identify the best possible papers for presentation at the conference and for these proceedings. Without their significant contribution to ISTTE as well as to the profession and the disciplines of Tourism and Hospitality we could not have produced a quality conference program at Miami.

Thank you for your help and hard work!

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A sociological approach to wedding travel. A Case Study: Honeymooners in Ioannina, Greece.

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Abstract

Wedding travel are an important part of the tourism industry because of the changing socioeconomic factors. They respond to the demands of modern society for the so called 'good life' and they are thought to give honeymooners social prestige. The present survey consists of qualitative research by means of in-depth interviews with representatives from some important travel agencies in Athens specializing in wedding travel and quantitative research by means of a structured questionnaire distributed to 22 couples about to be married in the town of Ioannina, Greece from June to September 2008. The purpose of this exploratory study is to investigate the destination preferences of the couples about to be married, their interests, their concerns and their expectations from wedding travel.

JEL Classification L83 Sports; Gambling; Recreation; Tourism

Key words: wedding travel, human needs, travel motives, Greece

1. Introduction

Travelling for enriching knowledge, cultural communication and leisure is not a modern invention (McKercher & Du Cros, 2002:1; Mylonopoulos, 2000). For modern man, at least in the developed countries, travelling has become an inner need. This was acknowledged in the United Nations Conference on International Travel and Tourism in Rome in 1963. Moreover, the importance of world tourism for the economic, social and cultural development of the nations was highlighted in the Manila Declaration on World Tourism (WTO, 1980).

Apart from its international nature, tourism became massive after World War II. This phenomenon along with the democratization of tourism, due to technical, economic, social and psychological factors, attracted the researchers' attention to investigate the reasons and motives which make people travel (Maslow, 1943; Cohen, 1972; Perreault et al., 1977; Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1981; Iso-Ahola, 1982; Pearce, 1982; Mayo & Javris, 1981; 1984; Moutinho, 1984; Moutinho, 1986; Jafari, 1987; Schmidhauser, 1989).

The significance of tourism has been largely explored, in terms of motivations (Crompton, 1979; Pearce, 1982; Mansfeld, 1992), experience (Cohen, 1988; Ryan, 1997) and satisfaction (Noe, 1999; Zalatan, 1994). Scholars attempt to study the travellers'/tourists' motives as these set in motion the tourism procedure. Despite the plethora of surveys, no consensus has been reached on a commonly accepted framework of analysis (Jafari, 1987: 151-159). The current analysis is primarily based on the study of theories of motivation, such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943), Iso-Ahola's escape seeking theory (1980) and the push-pull factors (Dann, 1977).

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is often portrayed in the shape of a pyramid with five levels, with the largest and most fundamental levels of needs at the bottom, and the need for self-actualization at the top. It suggests that the most basic level of needs must be met before the individual will strongly desire (or focus motivation upon) the secondary or higher level needs. Later, Maslow partially amended his theory, underlying that it is not necessary for a person to meet completely the needs in one level so that they desire higher level needs. Consequently, a person can be partially satisfied and dissatisfied at the same time in all five levels. This is especially true in the societies of developed countries where people focus motivation upon higher level needs without having previously fully met the needs at lower levels. For instance, although someone may not have their own housing (need for safety), they choose a far away, expensive destination for their holidays, by adhering to the choices and the 'musts' imposed by society for 'a good life' (Swarbrooke and Horner, 2007:54). In a survey in the US, 60% of the respondents answered that travelling corresponds to what 'good life' means; owning a house came second. The previous generation of Americans would be surprised at the thought that someone would prefer travelling to the safety of owning a house. Similar surveys in Europe had the same findings (Gee et al., 2001:71). This individual choice is inscribed in the cycle of 'good life' and either gives a social status [psychological and social need] or is a life goal [self-actualization].

2. The Honeymoon

People usually claim that travels are the most beautiful days of their lives while travelling is often advertised by travel agents as a 'life experience' (Ryan, 1997:194-195). Uzzell (1984:85) considers travelling and vacations as the institutionalized means of a society which allows fantasy and reality to mix. Tourism is an alternative time experience, that is leisure time or holiday time, away from the restrictions of the daily routine (Wang, 2000:216), offering thus a sense of escape and freedom.

So it comes as no surprise that the tourism industry is based on the precondition that vacations are a human need and that every man should have such an experience. This is evidenced in the advertising of the travel industry: «Suggestions for escape», «Fill your dreams»¹, «The whole world in your hands», «Dream holidays»², «Escape ... we have escape plans».

Krippendorf (1987:17) claims that through these options for escape the tourism industry offers strength, energy and makes people happy. According to Hobson and Dietrich (1994:23), tourism is a mentally and physically healthy pursuit in our free time so it is a factor which improves quality of life. Holiday making by a growing

¹ From the promotional campaign of the Greek travel agency «Travel Plan», *I Kathimerini*, 'Travels' magazine, 15 August 2008, p. 11.

² From the promotional campaign of the Greek travel agency «MAP», *I Kathimerini*, 'Travels' magazine, 20 June 2007, p. 37.

number of members of a society is attributed to the improvement in the living standards and economic growth. Vacation time is being extended, the number of tourists is increasing along with the frequency of holiday making as a lot of people go on vacations more than once a year (Doswell, 2002:16).

Kapa Research, a Greek opinion poll company, conducted a survey in the city-region of Athens in 892 households. When asked whether they had made a leisure travel recently, only 10% of the respondents answered negatively. The remaining respondents were distributed as follows: 64.5% had been on a leisure trip in Greece, 5.9% had been abroad while 19.4% had travelled both within Greece and abroad.

The rapid change in the consumer behaviour has allowed holiday making with a special content. Wedding travel, that is holiday voyages undertaken by the newly-wed couple, falls into this category. Today wedding travel have a particular social dimension as apart from the opportunity for the couple to spend some time together and escape from daily routine and family environment, they offer a social status which is further enhanced if the destination to visit is an exotic one. In the past, the prevailing term in Greece, still in use, was 'bridal tour'. It consisted in making a tour in a horse-drawn carriage around the Acropolis in Athens or a two-day excursion in a place near the couple's place of residence. Nevertheless, today honeymoon has wider socioeconomic dimensions, marked by the destination. Honeymooning especially in faraway and exotic destinations meets a series of needs imposed by modern society.

After we had screened the advertisements in the printed and electronic press of the travel agencies and organizations in Greece, it was revealed that a huge number of tourist packages is addressed to newly-married. For example, the Greek travel agency 'Versus Travel' advertises in its website wedding and luxury travels,³ 'Manessis Travel' has a special category of wedding travel while there is a special section where it is mentioned that all individual travels can be turned into wedding packages.⁴ Furthermore, in the website of the Greek travel agency 'Heronia Travel', there is a special category entitled 'wedding refuges', addressed exclusively to newly-married couples⁵, 'Ginis Vacances' offers 'Exotic wedding travels'⁶ while 'Akadimos Travel' just wedding travels.⁷ The suggested destinations are mostly exotic, such as Bali, Seychelles, Maldives, Phuket, Mauritius and Jamaica. Apart from the special ads of the general travel agencies for newly-wed couples, there are numerous specialized travel agencies in Greece and abroad, which organize exclusively wedding travel and have their dedicated websites.⁸ A typical example of this trend in developed countries is that since 1986 a special British magazine 'Wedding and Travel Magazine', has been dedicated exclusively to everything that has to do with wedding travel (e.g. destinations, bridal boutiques, wedding venue providers,

³ http://www.versustravel.eu/?page_id=2239, accessed on 6 March 2011

⁴ <http://www.manessistravel.gr>, accessed on 6 March 2011

⁵ This special section has the following sections: Destinations, Time schedule of the honeymoon, Economic tips, How to choose your hotel, How to choose a romantic room, List with the things to take while on honeymoon, Romantic ideas, Gifts between the couple, Sexy ideas while packing your suitcases, Cheap ideas for honeymoon, Wedding list (<http://www.heronia.com/Default.aspx?ID=205>, accessed on 6 March 2011)

⁶ [http://www.ginis.gr/el/group.php?subcatid=422&subcatgtitle= Honeymoon and Exotic](http://www.ginis.gr/el/group.php?subcatid=422&subcatgtitle=Honeymoon%20and%20Exotic), accessed on 6 March 2011

⁷ <http://www.acadimotravel.gr/destinations.php?travelgroup=4&lang=1>, accessed on 6 March 2011

⁸ Some of these are: <http://www.weddingtraveler.com/>; <http://www.wedding-travel.com/>; <http://www.alohaweddingtravel.com/>; <http://www.weddinglinksonline.com/>; <http://www.weddingchannel.com/>

photographic studios).⁹ In Greece there are some special editions of magazines specializing in travel and tourism such as 'Voyager'.¹⁰

3. The research methodology

A primary survey was conducted in four travel agencies in Athens¹¹ by means of in-depth interviews in order to explore whether the specialized wedding travel area is a viable segment in the field of tourism. More specifically, the interviewees were asked about the destination preferences of the couples about to be married, their interests, their concerns and their expectations from the wedding travel.

When asked about the factors which led to the establishment of wedding travel as a specialized tourist product, all four interviewees agreed that this was due to the rise of living standards, the rise of educational attainment and the progress of technology. Social reasons were also identified. The respondents claimed that honeymooning is considered a social upgrading and when it takes place in an exotic destination it is thought that it lends the couple a social status and appreciation from family, professional and social surroundings. The survey also showed that there was mobility in the segment of the wedding travel and a growing increase in the demand. The interviewees said that although this segment was profitable it could not become independent.

The organization of wedding travel reflects the business rationale adopted by each travel agency. Some of them have a specialized department for wedding travel, some others offer incentive travels and wedding travel on an equal basis while others organize wedding travel as common individual travel.

As for the preferences of the couples, it was shown that the most popular destinations were mainly the exotic ones (e.g. Maldives, Phuket, Mauritius, Bali, Jamaica, Seychelles, Cuba). The dominance of these destinations is explained by the fact that they have been intensely advertised and established as a trend.

Furthermore, the survey showed that travel agencies offer newly-wed couples some extra services at no charge. For example, they offer discounts varying from 20% to 50% on the cost of the trip, the decoration of the room in the chosen accommodation, fruit basket and wine upon arrival, a souvenir gift, an extra night etc. The range of the services depends on the policy of the travel agency and other factors (e.g. season, destination, duration of the trip).

As for the content of the wedding travel, it was revealed that the couples do not choose packages which include sightseeing, visits to museums and archaeological sites. Newly married couples see the trip as a chance for relaxation, away from the crowd and tiring tours, as they are tired from the wedding preparations. So escape from stress, caused by the wedding preparations, and relaxation are the two dominant factors affecting the couple's choices (Iso-Ahola, 1983:55) along with the psychological need for a lifetime trip.

Finally, it was showed that there is no particular time when wedding travel take place. However, they mostly take place in spring and in autumn.

⁹ <http://www.wedding-travel.com/magazine.aspx>

¹⁰ Voyager, Special edition on wedding travels, summer 2002.

¹¹ The survey was carried out in the following travel agencies: WEDDING TOURS S.A., HERONIA, GINIS and TRAVEL PLAN, interviewing the heads of the department which organized wedding travels.

4. The choices in wedding travel. A survey in the town of Ioannina, Greece.

A primary survey was carried out in the Greek town of Ioannina from May to July 2008 in order to explore the couples' motives, their preferred destinations and the way the cost of the trip is covered. A structured questionnaire with 13 questions was distributed to 22 out of a total of 40 couples about to be married. These couples were going to get married from June to September 2008 in two different parishes of the town. All 22 couples responded to the survey.

4.1. The profile of the couples

The age range of the couples varied from 18 to 50 years old. For women, this was 18-40 while for men it was 26-50. 72.1% of the men and 50% of the women fell into the 26-30 age bracket. The age bracket distribution by gender can be seen at Table 1.

Table 1. Age brackets of the couples about to be married

	<i>Men</i>		<i>Women</i>	
	frequency	%	frequency	%
18-25	-	-	8	36.4
26-30	16	72.1	11	50.0
31-40	5	22.7	3	13.6
41-50	1	4.5	-	-
<i>Total</i>	22	100.0	22	100.0

The survey also showed that 100% of the men were employed while the respective percentage for women was 68.2%. More specifically, there were four male and three female secondary school teachers (18.2% and 13.6% respectively). Moreover, there were three male and four female public servants (13.6% and 18.2% respectively). Thirteen men and four women (59.1% and 18.2% respectively) were self-employed while two men and three women were private employees (9.1% and 13.6% respectively). The employment status of the couples can be seen at Table 2.

Table 2. Employment status of the couples about to be married

	<i>Men</i>		<i>Women</i>	
	frequency	%	frequency	%
Secondary school teacher	4	18.2	3	13.6
Public servant	3	13.6	4	18.2
Private employee	2	9.1	3	13.6
Self-employed	13	59.1	4	18.2
Housewife	-	-	4	18.2
Unemployed	-	-	3	13.6
Student	-	-	1	4.6
<i>Total</i>	22	100.0	22	100.0

As far as the educational attainment of the couples is concerned, 45.5% of men and 68.2% of women have completed secondary education while the respective percentages for those who have completed college/university studies are 45.5% and 31.8%. Only one man has completed graduate studies (Table 3).

Table 3. Educational attainment of couples about to be married

	<i>Men</i>		<i>Women</i>	
	frequency	%	frequency	%
Primary education	1	4.5	0	0,0
Secondary education	10	45.5	15	68.2
College/University	10	45.5	7	31.8
Graduates/Master's	1	4.5	0	.0
PhD	0	.0	0	.0
<i>Total</i>	22	100.0	22	100.0

4.2. Results of the survey

All 22 couples had already arranged a wedding travel. 17 couples (77.3%) were going to travel abroad while 5 couples (22.7%) were going to travel within Greece. More specifically, 8 couples (36.4%) had chosen Europe, 4 couples (18.2%) had chosen Asia, 4 couples (18.2%) Central and Latin America and one couple (4.5%) Africa. (Table 4)

Table 4. Destinations of wedding travel of the participants

<i>Destination</i>	<i>frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
Greece	5	22.7
Europe	8	36.4
Asia	4	18.2
Central and Latin America	4	18.2
Africa	1	4.5
<i>Total</i>	22	100.0

Out of 22 couples, only three (13.7%) had decided to travel in group, that is to be members of a group of travellers participating in the same trip while the remainder 19 couples (86.3%) were going to travel individually. Their responses confirm the views of the heads of the wedding travel departments of the travel agencies that the newly-weds seek for isolation and relaxation. The average length of the trip for the majority (72.7% - 16 couples) was 4-7 days, while the remainder 27.3% (6 couples) would go on holiday for more than 8 days.

As for the reasons which affected their selection of a particular destination, eight couples (36.4%) thought that their honeymoon to the specific destination fulfilled a dream of theirs and considered it as a life experience. Another eight couples (36.4%) saw the honeymoon as an opportunity for relaxation while three couples (13.7%) said that their choice was due to the fact that they had imitated their friends who had been to the same destinations. The full array of reasons can be seen at Table 5.

Table 5. Reasons for selecting a particular honeymoon destination

<i>Reasons</i>	<i>frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
Relaxation	8	36.4
Life experience	8	36.4
Imitating friends	3	13.7
Leisure	1	4.5
The destination has 'something different'	1	4.5
Other reason	1	4.5
<i>TOTAL</i>	22	100.0

Decision making on the selection of the destination is also influenced by external factors. The survey showed that the dominant factor (41.5%) affecting their choice was the travel agency through its personnel and printed advertising material. Moreover, the friends and relatives of the couple influenced the couple's decision making (24.4%). Mass media, especially TV and radio, also affected their choices (21.9%), followed by magazines (7.3%) and the Internet (4.9%). (Table 6)

Table 6. Factors affecting the selection of the honeymoon destination

<i>Factors</i>	<i>frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
Travel agent- advertising	17	41.5
Recommendations from friends and relatives	10	24.4
Mass media	9	21.9
Magazines	3	7.3
Internet	2	4.9

A crucial problem for the newly-weds is the cost of the wedding travel, taking into account the fact that wedding expenses are huge for the couple and their families. The survey revealed that 14 out of the 22 couples paid by themselves for their honeymoon, while nine couples (27.3%) replied that they expected for the cost of the honeymoon to be covered by the money offered to the couple as wedding gifts. In addition to this, four couples (12.1%) said that their families (parents, brothers and sisters) would cover the cost of the trip, while three couples (9.1%) responded that they would pay for the trip by credit card. It is noteworthy that none of the couples chose to get a holiday loan from a bank, although in recent years this option has been advertised as a good solution for someone to support the cost of a holiday trip (Table 7).

Table 7. Ways of covering the cost of the wedding travel

<i>Travel cost funded by</i>	<i>frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
The savings of the couple	14	42.4
The money offered to the couple as wedding gifts	9	27.3
The family as a gift to the couple	4	12.1
Credit card	3	9.1
Other	3	9.1
Holiday loan	-	.0
<i>Total</i>	33	100.0

All the interviewed couples said that they usually went on summer vacations. However, only four couples (18.2%) usually went to Europe while only one couple usually went on long-haul trips. On the contrary, the majority (77.3%) replied that they usually travelled within Greece. As for the length of stay, their summer vacations usually lasted up to seven days (86.4% of the couples) while for 13.6% they lasted from one to two weeks.

What is interesting is that the interviewed couples selected honeymoon destinations which differed from their usual vacation destinations, which explains the fact that for them honeymoon is a life experience, something different or a dream come true. 12 out of the 17 couples who usually spent their summer vacations in Greece were about to travel abroad for their honeymoon and in particular to European

cities (e.g. Rome, Prague, Vienna) which are promoted by travel agencies and considered as romantic destinations ideal for honeymooners. In addition to this, four couples selected a honeymoon destination in Asia (e.g. Phuket, Maldives) and one couple in Jamaica.

Furthermore, three out of the four couples who said they usually travelled to Europe selected different honeymoon destinations. Two of them selected the Caribbean and one couple selected Egypt. The fourth couple selected again a European destination for their honeymoon (Vienna). Finally, the couple that replied that they usually travelled to exotic places, selected again an exotic honeymoon destination in the Caribbean.

5. Conclusion

Wedding travel as a special form of travelling have emerged due to the global socioeconomic changes. Travel agencies capitalize on the new demographic and psychographic data by offering a diversified tourist product which meets the needs, desires and special demands of a couple who is about to be married. Although the bridal trip comes under a special category in the travel industry, most travel agencies cannot organize an independent section dealing exclusively with wedding travel packages, as is the case abroad.

According to the data collected from the above survey, all newly married couples from June to September 2008 in the Greek town of Ioannina went on a honeymoon trip either within Greece or abroad. The factors that influenced their decision making regarding the honeymoon destination were mainly the travel agencies and advertising, followed by the recommendations from friends and relatives. The mass media also had an influential role on decision making as they put forward the idea that the honeymoon to specific destinations and especially to exotic ones is a life experience or something different not to be missed.

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