



## **THE INTERNATIONAL SOUNDS AND TASTES OF TOURISM EDUCATION**



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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:

<b>Refereed Full Papers</b>
<b>Poster Paper Submissions to be Based on Refereed Extended Abstracts</b>
<b>Working Paper Submissions Based on a Refereed Abstract</b>

## 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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## **Congress tourism while on a cruise. A Case Study.**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Cruising is an old leisure activity. Originally it was addressed to a few wealthy tourists. However, nowadays the features of cruising have changed and cruising has a wider and different group of consumers. Over the last years new activities have been developed on board cruise ships in an attempt of the cruise industry to attract new consumers. New products such as chartering a cruise ship by a company in the framework of an incentive cruise for the staff or the organization of an event, an educational programme or a conference on board a cruise ship. This paper explores the degree of the conference attendees' satisfaction from the Annual ISTTE Conference 2010 on board Carnival Cruise Line's 'Paradise', which departed from Long Beach, California and to what extent such initiatives can be successful.

**KEY WORDS:** Cruising, Cruise ship, Conference on board

### **1. Introduction**

Coastal areas have attracted people since antiquity as they were the main field for their food-collecting activities such as fishing. In addition to being a survival field, coastal areas were an important destination for leisure travel. Sea touring is not a phenomenon of the modern era. It is historically proved that since antiquity there had been ships used for leisure. The most known was 'Syracusia', designed by Archimedes and built around 240 BC by Archias of Corinth on the orders of Hieron II of Syracuse. The ship was luxurious. It had 30 rooms, a temple of Venus, a library with a reading room and a garden (Antonopoulos, 1963: 45). Moreover, Cleopatra of Egypt owned a luxury yacht. It is said that the Ptolemeys had about 800 luxury yachts (Athinaios, 1979: 12), which can be considered as the forerunners of the modern yachts and tourist vessels.

During the Roman era, the Roman citizens used to visit in groups ancient Greek cities (e.g. Athens, Corinth, Rhodes) for relaxation or in order to attend various events, religious celebrations, with specially chartered ships (Antonopoulos, 1963: 78). Rich merchants from around the globe used to sail to Corinth in Greece in order to conduct business transactions and spend their holidays. At the classical era there was a famous

ancient saying: "Ou pantos plein es Korinthon", which translates as "Not everyone is able to go to Corinth", due to the expensive living standards that prevailed in the city. Roman emperors and patricians, the rich land owners, used to sail with luxury passenger vessels of *Victoriae* and *Orariae* type. The sea tourings of the Roman general and consul Germanicus in the Adriatic and the Ionian Sea as well as that of the Emperor Nero, who toured Greece and attended the Pythian, the Isthmian, the Nemean and the Olympic Games, were the most known (Athineos, 1979: 13).

In the 15<sup>th</sup> century Venice organized in a systematic way the group sea touring in order to carry pilgrims to the Holy Land. The interest of Venice in sea touring was so big that special rules for safe navigation were set up. During this period tourist businesses were established. The headquarters were in Venice while there were branches in all the big cities of Europe. Their aim was to gather travelers-pilgrims and carry them to the Holy Land (Lane, 1934: 8). In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, touring acquired a new form which combined leisure, exposure to both the cultural legacy of classical antiquity and Renaissance and historical research, especially through the Grand Tour of wealthy young Englishmen (Simopoulos, 1972: 44). During this period, group sea touring was abandoned and replaced by the sea touring of individuals or small groups, especially in the region of the Mediterranean Sea.

## **2. Cruising**

Cruising combines passengers' leisure on board with calls to one or more cosmopolitan ports, satisfying thus their need to get to know new places and come in contact with different cultures (Mylonopoulos, 2004: 108-111). Cruising is a purely leisure activity. The idea of cruising, that is travelling by ship for leisure and not for transport reasons, is attributed to Arthur Anderson, a sailor from the Shetland Isles, one of the founders of Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, which became known in the shipping industry as P & O. In 1835 Anderson suggested a cruise departing from England to the Faroe Islands and the coasts of Spain so that passengers could enjoy the sun during the winter (Gibson, 2006: 4). In 1844 P&O extended its cruises in the Mediterranean and over the next decades cruising also took place in other regions. In the 1860s the chartering and the management of ships for cruising was widespread (Boniface & Cooper 1996: 49). These cruises lasted long and the clientele was wealthy. Travelers had abundant time and money and traveled mainly for health reasons rather than for leisure. Cruising meant enjoying the trip rather than visiting the different ports of call (Mylonopoulos & Moira, 2005: 97).

The first cruise ships did not differ from passenger ships, regarding their construction and the provision of services. Due to seasonality and lack of customers, passenger ships often served as cruise ships. After the end of World War I the number of ships used in the cruise industry increased due to the change of the immigration policy of the United States. The US imposed strict limits to the immigrants' entry into the country (Georgantopoulos & Vlachos, 1997: 385). This resulted in the conversion of passenger ships to cruise ships so that the vessels remained active and the problem of seasonality was faced (Lundberg and Lundberg, 1993). In the 1930s there was an improvement in accommodations on board the leisure ships with the inclusion of individual baths. This was the case of the ship *Monarch of Bermuda* in 1933 (Starr, 1993: 176).

The new era for cruising started in the 1960s when the ship as a means of carrying passengers between the United States and Europe was replaced by airplane. In order to gain profit from passenger ships, ship owners converted them into cruise ships. However, there were problems, as these ships did not have ventilation systems, open spaces and other amenities for tourists. For instance, there was no ventilation on board

until the 1950s (Starr, 1993: 179). In the 1970s cruise ships started operating purely as a space of provision of tourist services in the Caribbean with clients from Northern America. Cruise ships were designed with open spaces and decks so that leisure and sport activities could take place on board (e.g. swimming pools, tennis) (Boniface & Cooper, 1996: 49). European companies, especially from Scandinavia, conducted cruise market surveys for the region of the Caribbean. In the early 1980s cruise ships were the focus of the tourism industry and new ships specially designed for cruises started to be built (Starr, 1993: 176). The 'aggressive' advertising campaigns but also some popular films and TV shows, such as the 'Love Boat', contributed to the success of this new trend and helped form a very attractive image for cruises (Wood, 2000: 349; Moira & Mylonopoulos, 2006: 31). This increase in demand for cruising encouraged the companies to build ships with bigger tonnage. Holland America Line adopted the name 'ocean liners' for these ships (Maxtone-Graham 2000: 47). In this generation of cruise liners there is a tendency for an increase in the number of outside cabins.

In the 1990s megaships with a carrying capacity of about 2,000 passengers were built; for example, *Sovereign of the Seas* (1987) formerly operated by Royal Caribbean International, *Monarch of the Seas* (1991), *Majesty of the Seas* (1992). These cruise liners used to sail seven-day Caribbean itineraries. *Sovereign of the Seas*, which was called 'floating mall', marked the change in the philosophy of cruising, from simple leisure travel to 'a self-sufficient, full vacation experience' (Foster, 1994: 141-142). In this generation of huge cruise liners the prevailing feature was luxury and high quality hotel services, such as accommodations, food, leisure, day and night activities and tours in the ports of call. In the 1990s the cruise market was one of the fastest growing sectors of the economy (Dickinson & Vladimir 1997: 37). There was a particular increase in the demand for cruising in the United Kingdom and the rest of Europe and later in the Asia-Pacific region. The growing rate of cruising, with an annual increase of 8% since 1988, had almost doubled compared with the total tourism activity (Economist, 1998: 14). According to the data from CLIA, PSA and GP Wild, in the 1990s the Northern America covered the two thirds of the world demand for cruising. The European market ranked second while the rest of the world shared a very small percentage.

Later, even though the total of the cruise passengers all over the world were 10.7 million in 2001 (Peisley, 2002), cruising was harshly affected by the terrorist attacks of 9/11 in the USA. The demand for cruising changed and it was limited to the US and Canada territorial waters (homeland cruising). Flying cruising was also restrained as the Americans preferred to drive to the home cruise port rather than fly. In 2007 about 9.57 million Americans went on a cruise. According to CLIA (2008), cruisers have above-average annual household income of 93,000 USD, average 46 years old, have a high level of educational attainment and consider cruising as a good way to sample destinations that they may wish to visit again on a land-based vacation.

In Europe there was an increase in cruising in the 2000s. A total of 225,586 jobs were generated in Europe thanks to the cruise industry while the European ports had 21.7 million cruise passengers in 2008. At the end of 2008 there were 42 cruise companies in Europe with a fleet of 129 ships and a carrying capacity of 116,000 passengers (G. P. Wild, 2009: 1). During this decade the demand for cruising more than doubled compared with the previous decade, i.e. it increased from 5.7 million to 14.4 million passengers. Over the same period the number of the Europeans who had been on a cruise all over the world more than quadrupled, i.e. from 1.7 million in 1998 it reached 4.4 million in 2008 (G. P. Wild, 2009: 3-4). The Europeans made 27% of

the total cruise passengers compared with 22% ten years before. The most popular country for cruising in Europe was Italy, which had more than five million passengers in its ports and particularly in Naples, Civitavecchia and Venice in 2008. Greece came second in terms of number of passengers in Europe. The Greek ports of Piraeus, Santorini, Rhodes and Mykonos had 4.3 million cruise passengers (G. P. Wild, 2009: 5-7). Spain ranked third with 3.6 million cruise passengers (with the inclusion of the Canary islands).

### **3. The research methodology**

Modern cruise ships offer passengers sea, sun, leisure and services, which differentiate from the simple maritime transport on board a passenger ship (Mylonopoulos, 2004: 108). For many tourists the motives to go on a cruise are various such as security, social status, the friendly atmosphere but also the services provided (Cartwright & Baird, 1999). The dominant feature in cruising is the hotel function of the ship. Cruise ships offer services similar to those provided by hotels with qualified staff as in modern hotel units (e.g. hotel manager). What differs a cruise ship from a hotel is that due to its ability to sail it can move to different geographical regions so that it can any time meet the demand for accommodation. It is easily accessible and functions as 'home far from home' while at the same time it carries passengers to different ports of call/destinations (Gibson, 2006: 2).

Today there is a tendency for more and more ships of a big tonnage to be built with services that go beyond the conventional hotel function. The aim is to cover all the services provided by a luxury hotel-tourist complex (e.g. spas, golf courses, art rooms, theatres, business centres, cinemas). Modern cruise ships have become 'floating resorts'; for instance, *Queen Mary 2* built in 2004, has a tonnage of 150,000 gross tonnage and carries 3,090 passengers and 1,253 crew, *Independence of the Seas* and *Freedom of the Seas*, with a tonnage of 160,000, carries 3,634 passengers and 1,360 crew, *Genesis*, built in 2009, with a tonnage of 220,000, carries 6,400 passengers, *Oasis of the Seas*, with 220,000 gross tonnage and carries 5,400 passengers (Spencer-Brown, 2008).

The armchair adventurers (Foster, 1988:227) and the cruise ship as a floating seniors house which were the features of the cruise industry over the past decades have turned into "action cruising" and the cruise ship has turned into a multifunction space, marking the cruise industry in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. Cruise lines have introduced innovative onboard amenities and facilities, including surfing pools, bowling alleys, rock-climbing walls, multiroom villas, multiple themed restaurants and expansive spas, health and fitness facilities. The question often asked in the past "how am I going to spend my time on board all day?" was replaced by the question "where shall I find some time for some rest?" (Starr, 1993: 185).

The development of the cruise industry has made cruising affordable to a range of social classes. There is no longer a standard profile for cruisers. From the rich and the famous to the family next door, all the strata of society can enjoy cruising nowadays. There is no longer the standard image that cruising is closely linked with the third age. It is a fact that in the past only the wealthy people and old people had the privilege to go on a cruise as they were the only ones who could afford it. Cruises at that time lasted for long, so a myth was created around them, which was maintained for many years through cinema and television. Cruises started becoming affordable to social classes with an average annual household income as short cruises were offered and customers could choose either fly-cruise or easy cruise. In addition to this, the carrying capacity of cruise ships increased. This resulted in the reduction of the median age of cruisers as almost half of the passengers are below 45 years old while

one third of them are below 35 years old (Lundberg and Lundberg, 1993). The huge success of James Cameron's film "Titanic" in 1997, starring Leonardo DiCaprio, contributed enormously to the increase in cruise bookings by young people (Major, 1998). According to CLIA data in August 2004, 34% of cruisers were between 35 and 54 years old. Only one out of four (25%) was a pensioner. Furthermore, three out of four cruisers were married (76%) while 16% of cruisers were accompanied by their children, below 18 years old.

Families are actually one of the target groups of cruise planners. By offering so many activities for children (e.g. table tennis, treasure hunting, bingo, Internet cafes), cruise ships are becoming the ideal places for the children's leisure and entertainment (Starr, 1993: 185). According to CLIA, one million children participated in cruises in 2003. Actually one of the rapidly growing segments of cruising concerns extended families. Modern cruise programmes combine services and amenities addressed to each of the members of a family, i.e. children, parents, grandparents. So there are activities specially tailored for adults, teenagers, seniors but also activities that encourage the participation of all members of the family at the same time.

A whole grid of professional activities has been developed in order to support the cruise industry. Travel agents have a very important position in this industry as 74% of cruise passengers book cruise vacations through travel agents (CLIA, 2008: 29). These travel agencies, scattered all over the world, specialize in selling cruise vacation packages, promote and advertise this tourist product in international special brochures and catalogues by paying very high fees.

#### **4.Cruises and Conferences**

Over the last years new activities on board cruise ships have been developed by the cruise industry so that it can attract young consumers. To this end, new products have been created such as the chartering of a cruise ship by a company which offers an incentive cruise to its staff or the organization of an event, and educational programme or a conference on board a cruise ship. This kind of cruises is promoted as suitable for corporate events, family reunions and other special occasions. Cruise liners offer the ideal balance between individual freedom and group proximity. The organization of an event while on cruise can contribute to the group spirit among the members of a company or a community (Hughes & Kroehler, 2007: 216-263). Modern cruise ships offer all kinds of amenities for the successful organization of a conference or an incentive trip such as luxurious facilities, special halls, full audiovisual equipment, restaurants, bars and leisure venues. They are also ideal for all family members, which is an extra incentive for conference attendees' to bring along members of their family. Moreover, a cruise ship is an ideal venue for conferences as conference attendees' cannot 'escape' the ship until the next port of call, so in some way they are 'obliged' to attend the conference.

According to the wording of WTO (1992, in Wootton & Stevens, 1995: 306), «business tourism denotes the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their normal environment for the purposes of business.» The conference attendees' «motivation for travel may be primarily to attend the meeting, but this may be part of a wider itinerary of visits, including extended tours, or leisure interests» (Lawson, 1982: 298).

The world market of congress tourism is really huge. The number of congresses and conventions according to ICCA (2010) has had a significant increase worldwide (from 5,186 in 2000 to 7,634 in 2005 reaching 8,294 in 2009 with fluctuations in between.) Europe was the most popular destination in 2009 as it hosted 54.4% of the world congresses and conventions. However, its share is on the decrease over the last

decade while the popularity of the other regions (North America, Oceania, Africa, Asia, Middle East and Latin America) is on the increase (ICCA, 2010: 15). USA and Germany rank first as far as the organization of world congresses and conventions is concerned.

With regard to the size of the congress tourism market there is lack of reliable data. It is estimated that it varies from £900 million for the big congresses and conventions to £6 billion, smaller congresses and meetings included, in all kinds of facilities. Congresses and meetings of this kind are widely used for the promotion of some tourist destinations. In most European countries there is a Conventions and Visitors Bureau (CVB) which facilitates the organization of events of any kind (Mylonopoulos & Kontoudaki, 2011). Conference attendees' have a high social, professional, economic and scientific background. Surveys have shown that almost three quarters of them (72%) are usually accompanied by persons of their family or friend environment (Cotterell, 1994) and often have high consumption expenditure.

A lot of cruise companies promote the organization of conferences on board cruise ships (e.g. Royal Caribbean, Carnival Lines, Norwegian Cruise Lines and Celebrity Cruises<sup>1</sup>). This kind of conferences gives the host country a prestige and has significant economic benefits.

## 5. Case study

### 5.1. The survey

A primary survey was carried out on board Carnival Cruise Line's *Paradise* in order to explore the degree of the conference attendees' satisfaction from the Annual Conference of the International Society of Travel and Tourism Educators (ISTTE), which was held on October 18-22. The theme of the conference was: «Education across the Waters: Expanding the Boundaries of Tourism and Hospitality». 106 conference attendees' participated in it. The itinerary of the cruise was Long Beach-Catalina Island-Ensenada/Mexico-Long Beach. A total of 50 structured questionnaires were distributed to participants on 21 October 2010 on the last day of the cruise during the farewell event. The response rate was 92% that is 46 questionnaires were returned.

### 5.2. Passengers' profile

As for the respondents' nationality, 13 people (28.3%) came from the US, 12 (26.1%) came from Europe, 10 (21.7%) came from Asia, one from Africa, one from Australia while there were six people of mixed nationality (e.g. American-Israeli). The full distribution by nationality can be seen at Table 1.

TABLE 1. Nationality of the respondents

<i>Nationality</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
USA	13	28.3
Europe	12	26.1
Asia	10	21.7
Africa	1	2.2
Australia	1	2.2
Other	6	13.0
Missing Value	3	6.5
<i>Total</i>	46	100.0

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.meetingsonships.com/default.asp?pid=46284&sid=13426>



34.8% of the respondents (16) were men and 65.2% (30) were women. The age groups of the respondents can be seen at Table 2.

TABLE 2. Age groups of the respondents

<i>AGE</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
20-30	9	19.6
31-40	13	28.3
41-50	13	28.3
51-60	8	17.4
61 up	2	4.3
Missing value	1	2.2
<i>Total</i>	46	100.0

The majority of the respondents, 25 people (56.5%) were married while 13 (28.3%) were single. Most of the respondents who replied that they had children were accompanied by them. The marital status of the respondents can be seen at Table 3.

TABLE 3. Marital status of the respondents

<i>Marital Status</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Missing value	1	2.2
Married	26	56.5
Single	13	28.3
Separated	4	8.7
Widow(er)	2	4.3
<i>Total</i>	46	100.0

19 out of the total of 46 respondents (41.3%) said that they were accompanied in the cruise conference. Eight of them were accompanied by their spouse, four by their child/children and one by their spouse and child/children while five of them did not specify who accompanied them (Table 4).

TABLE 4. Conference attendees' accompanying persons

<i>Accompanying persons</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
YES	19	41.3
NO	27	58.7
<i>TOTAL</i>	46	100.0
<i>If yes, by:</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Not answerable	27	58.7
Spouse	8	17.4
Child/Children	4	8.7
Other	5	10.9
Both spouse & child/children	1	2.2
Missing value	1	2.2
<i>TOTAL</i>	46	100.0

With regard to the occupation of the respondents, 25 (54.3%) were members of teaching staff at higher level educational institutions (universities/colleges), 12

(26.1%) were students while 9 (19.6%) did not specify their occupation. In the latter case the persons accompanying them were involved in the tourism industry.

TABLE 5. Occupation of the respondents

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Member of teaching staff	25	54.3
Student	12	26.1
Other	9	19.6
<i>Total</i>	46	100.0

When asked about their status in the conference/cruise, 26 respondents (56.5%) said that they participated as speakers and 10 as delegates. (Table 6)

TABLE 6. Conference status of the respondents

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
As a speaker	26	56.5
As a delegate	10	21.7
Other	10	21.7
<i>Total</i>	46	100.0

### 5.3. Participation

Half of the respondents (50%) replied that they had also participated in past ISTTE conferences. Ten of them had participated once, three of them had participated four times and another three respondents twice. Moreover, three respondents had sixteen participations in the previous ISTTE conferences, which is probably explained by the fact that they are founding members of the Association. (Table 7)

TABLE 7. Participation of the respondents in past ISTTE conferences

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
N/A	23	50.0
1	10	21.7
2	3	6.5
3	1	2.2
4	3	6.5
5	1	2.2
6-10	1	2.2
16 and more	3	6.5
Missing	1	2.2
<i>Total</i>	46	100.0

Participants were also asked about whether they had already had a previous cruise experience. The majority of the respondents (60.9%) replied that they had. Five of them said that that had been on a cruise once while three of them had participated in a cruise at least seven times.

TABLE 8. Previous cruise experience of the respondents

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
N/A	28	60.9
1	5	10.9
2	1	2.2
3	1	2.2
4	3	6.5
5	3	6.5
6	1	2.2
7 and more	3	6.5
Missing	1	2.2
<i>Total</i>	46	100.0

However, for the overwhelming majority of the respondents that was the first time they had ever participated in a conference on board a cruise ship. Only one person answered that they had participated in a conference-cruise before.

TABLE 9. Is it the first time that you have participated in a conference on board a ship?

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
YES	44	95.7
NO	1	2.2
Missing	1	2.2
<i>Total</i>	46	100.0

Next, respondents were asked to rank their motives for their participation in the ISTTE conference-cruise (conference, cruise, experience, vacations) from 1 to 4. The option 'conference' ranked first (58.7%), followed by 'vacations' (17.4%) and 'cruise' (13%).

#### **5.4. Satisfaction with the cruise**

The participants in the survey were asked to rate the quality of the services during the conference. 37% of them thought the secretarial support was very good while 32.6% of them found it was excellent. Moreover, 43.5% of the respondents rated the quality of the conference equipment as very good. As for the organization of the conference, about one third of the respondents (37%) thought it was excellent while almost half of them (43.5%) rated it as very good. Furthermore, half of the respondents (50%) found the quality of the meals during the conference-cruise very good while a quarter of them (26.1%) rated it as excellent. The various events were rated as very good (41.3%) and excellent (34.8%) while the workshops were highly appreciated by the majority of the respondents (84.8%). Regarding the quality of the presentations it was rated excellent (37%) and very good (41.3%). Finally, a third of the respondents (32.6%) found the exhibition to be fair while another third (30.4%) thought it was very good.

As far as the elements composing the cruise experience are concerned, almost half of the respondents (45.7%) thought the cabins were very good, 30.4% found them excellent while about one third (30%) rated them as fair. Regarding the quality of the restaurants, about half of the interviewees (45.7%) rated them as very good while a quarter of them (26.1%) found them excellent. The quality of the bars was rated as very good and excellent by 47.8% and 21.7% of the respondents respectively. In addition to this, about one third of the interviewees (32.6%) rated the cruise leisure

venues as fair while 37% of them thought they were good. The general image of the cruise ship was rated as very good by a third of the respondents (32.6%) while a quarter of them (26.1%) thought it was excellent. The cruise ship staff was rated as excellent and very good by 43.5% and 47.8% of the respondents respectively. As for the choice of ports of call, 39.1% of the interviewees rated it as average while one third of them (32.6%) found it very good.

Finally, half of the respondents (52.2%) said they had been very satisfied with both the cruise and the cruise ship while 71.7% of them had also been very satisfied with the conference. Moreover, half of those surveyed said that they would definitely participate again in a conference on board a cruise ship.

## **6. Survey findings**

The survey showed that 41.3% of the respondents were accompanied by one or more persons (family or friends). Half of the interviewees had participated in past ISTTE conferences while 60.9% of the respondents participated in a cruise for the first time. Only one person replied that they had participated in a conference on board a cruise ship in the past.

As for the motives for participation, the option 'conference' ranked first for 58.7% of the respondents while the options 'cruise' and 'vacations' ranked first for about one third of the respondents (30.4%). As for the conference secretarial services, one third of the interviewees (32.6%) thought it was excellent while 37% of the respondents rated it as very good. Moreover, the conference audiovisual equipment was rated as very good by 43.5% of the respondents while the overall conference organization was rated as excellent and very good by 37% and 43.5% of the respondents respectively. The different events on board the cruise ship were found to be very good and excellent by the majority of the respondents (76.1%).

39.3% of the respondents who participated in the cruise for the first time rated the secretarial support as very good while a third of them (35.7%) found it excellent. Moreover, almost half of them (46.4%) rated the audiovisual equipment as very good while 42.9% of them thought the overall organization of the conference was very good. More than half of the respondents (57.15%) rated the meals as very good while 28.6% of them found it was excellent.

As far as the cruise ship restaurants were concerned, 57.1% of those who were on a cruise for the first time (Group 1) rated them as very good while 29.4% of those who had been on a cruise before (Group 2) found them excellent while another 29.4% thought they were very good. Leisure activities were rated as very good (47.4%) and excellent and very good (23.5%) by the two groups of respondents respectively.

The cruise ship staff was rated as excellent by almost half of the respondents (57.1%) belonging to Group 1 and very good by almost two thirds (64.7%) of the respondents belonging to Group 2. In addition to this, ports of call were rated as excellent by 53.57% (Group 1) and 47.1% (Group 2) of the respondents respectively. About half (52.2%) of those who participated in the survey said they had been very satisfied with the cruise while more than two thirds of them (71.7%) replied they had been very satisfied with the conference. Almost half of the respondents (52.2%) replied that they would definitely participate again in a conference on board a cruise ship.

All in all, the majority of participants, with or without cruise experience, were satisfied with both the organization of the conference and their overall cruise experience.

## **7. Conclusion**

Professional and scientific congresses attract a specialized audience, which is willing to go where they take place. Cruise ships, as a floating hotel with luxury services, is increasingly promoted as an important congress venue. Congress-cruise tourism is addressed to special interest groups and combines professional and scientific expertise with tourism. To this end, it seeks to adapt the tourist product to the needs of a congress/conference. This form of tourism has a large potential as it meets both conference attendees' and accompanying persons' needs, by offering a wide variety of experiences, a change of scenery, as the cruise ship calls at different ports, and familiarization with various cultures (when ports of call are found in a different country from that of the embarkation port).

Consequently, this market niche needs to be further explored through surveys among the members of the special interest groups participating in this form of tourism. This will enable the tourism industry professionals to meet the demands of this specialized target group.

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