



H.F.R.I.
Hellenic Foundation for
Research & Innovation

Description of the funded research project
2nd Call for H.F.R.I. Research Projects
to Support Post-Doctoral Researchers

ECO TOURISM

Title of the research project: Enhancing user interactivity of tourism SMEs' websites as a means to successfully promote ecotourism

Principal Investigator: Ioanna Yfantidou

Reader-friendly title: EnIPEco

Scientific Area: Social Sciences

Institution and Country: Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece

Host Institution: Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Project webpage:

Budget: 95274€

Duration: 24 months



Research Project Synopsis

The purpose of the present project is to enhance sustainable tourism services in Greece by identifying new marketing patterns through analyzing the effect of new media interactivity among travellers. Five different research methodologies are combined for the study. The first step is to content analyse the marketing messages of selected sustainable tourism websites. Then, a number of participants will be asked to browse around these sustainable tourism websites as usual but their browsing behaviour will be tracked with the use of a mouse tracker. At the same time, participants will be asked to fill in a survey which will include various questions about their views of sustainable tourism. Next, participants will be asked to take part in an eye tracking experiment to monitor the point of gaze towards the appeals of the content-analysed websites to assess the respondents' cortical engagement levels. The results will be used as a baseline to build a new sustainable tourism website. Next, an eye tracking and mouse tracking experiment will also take place for the new sustainable tourism website to assess the impact of the new marketing messages. Lastly, some participants will be interviewed a few weeks after they have taken part in the eye tracker experiment. The findings of all five different studies will be gathered to the final report to create an online marketing business model.

Project originality

Given that social sciences have largely relied on surveys and interviews as the main research methodologies to gain a deeper understanding into people's behavior; this research project aims to follow a hybrid research methodology which also includes experiments. Considering the current increase of experiments in contemporary marketing, this study is combining five methodologies to improve research validity and results' reliability. The final goal is to create a marketing business model that is based on people's physiological reactions and promote it to Greek SMEs and other stakeholders.

Expected results & Research Project Impact

Considering that sustainable tourism is the next-big-thing in tourism services, the long-term vision of this proposal is to create an ecotour brand name that stands out from the rest and will result in increasing revenue for SMEs in times of economic hardship. However, a brand name is not easily or quickly created. Marketing is the most puzzling part about managing a business, as you get to communicate the benefits of your business to your ideal customers. The hard part about marketing is trying to not be all things to all people, but rather be really focused and specific about what, how and where you communicate your messages to get maximum impact. Tourism industry is mostly made up of small and medium size businesses, with limited budgets, which is why having a plan of attack is central. That's where e-marketing strategy comes into play. A marketing strategy doesn't have to be complex. In fact, it should be a living, breathing document that guides businesses to ensure they are consistently marketing the benefits of their products and services to the appropriate audiences to achieve positive return on investment. The aim of this research project is to finally create a marketing business model for the Greek sustainable tourism industry which will be based on the research findings and will be projecting the consumers' views and behaviours.

The importance of this funding

The H.F.R.I. funding of my research project is of great importance to me as it will help me expand my knowledge, widen my academic and research network and provide the best kick-off of my research career. As an early career researcher, a PostDoc will boost my CV and provide a competitive advantage for future funding proposals.



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