



INTERNATIONAL TOURISM MARKETING: THEORY, STRATEGIES, AND GREEK APPLICATIONS

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ABSTRACT: *International tourism marketing involves creating promotional plans to showcase destinations and services and experiences to people who travel between countries. The marketing of international tourism differs from domestic marketing because businesses and governments need to handle diverse cultural elements, worldwide market competition, seasonal fluctuation, environmental sustainability and political instability. This research examines international tourism marketing principles through an analysis of destination branding methods, market segmentation approaches and digital advertising strategies while investigating organizational procedures and stakeholder partnerships. The Greek tourism industry serves as a case study to demonstrate the dual nature of global market competition in this sector.*

KEYWORDS: International Tourism Marketing, Marketing Strategy, Destination Branding, Digital Advertising, Organizational Processes, Greece.



THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS IN INTERNATIONAL TOURISM MARKETING

International tourism marketing uses general marketing principles yet incorporates particular elements which are unique to tourism promotion. Tourist destinations present more than product value because they combine various service elements with experiential and symbolic attributes.

Destination Image Theory. It refers to the complete set of perceptions and emotional responses that tourists develop about their travel destinations. The combination of *cognitive* (tourist information about attractions and infrastructure and safety) and *affective* elements (tourist feelings of excitement and relaxation and cultural interest) forms the destination image (Scott et al., 2012). The combination of historical heritage and Mediterranean climate and welcoming nature makes Greece an attractive destination for tourists. The image of a destination remains sensitive to economic downturns, health emergencies and media reporting.

Service and Experience Orientation. The tourism industry operates as a service-based sector which requires marketing strategies that address its intangible nature and time-sensitive product availability. Hotel rooms together with airline seats become unsellable for future dates because they cannot be stored for later sales. The management of available capacity and accurate demand predictions stand as essential elements for success. The tourism industry focuses on creating memorable experiences for visitors because they want more than basic travel services (Witt et al., 2013).

Stakeholder and Network Theories. Tourism destinations function through multiple stakeholders which include, among others, public authorities, hotels, airlines, restaurants, local communities and visiting tourists. The success of marketing depends on how well different stakeholders work together. Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) function as key entities because they unite different strategies while maintaining brand consistency throughout the industry (Tien et al., 2019)

Digital and Social Media Theories. Tourists in the twenty-first century base their travel choices on digital platforms which have become their primary decision-making resource. User-generated content—including reviews, Instagram posts and YouTube vlogs—creates more influential destination images than conventional advertising methods. International tourism marketing now depends on three essential theories which include social proof and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) and influencer marketing.

Key Strategies in International Tourism Marketing

Tourism marketers employ a range of strategies to attract international travelers.

Segmentation, Targeting, Positioning (STP). The STP model consists of three essential components which help destinations select their target international market segments. Greece needs to determine which specific international visitor groups it should focus on for its tourism industry. The tourism industry of Greece focuses on three distinct visitor segments which include Western European cultural tourists with high incomes, Asian honeymooners, and North American digital nomads under thirty years old. The marketing approach needs to be adjusted according to the specific requirements of each target market segment. The positioning strategy defines how Greece wants to be perceived by customers in relation to its competitors through



its combination of historical sites and sunny weather and authentic lifestyle compared to Spain's focus on beach tourism (Halkiopoulos et al., 2021).

Destination Branding. Branding stands as a fundamental strategy which holds essential value for businesses. A well-developed brand identity helps people remember it while building emotional bonds with customers. The brand identity becomes stronger through the use of slogans and logos and visual advertising campaigns. The "All You Want is Greece" advertising campaign presented diverse experiences to tourists while "Greek Summer State of Mind" used the pandemic to create emotional connections through safety messages and timeless appeal (Paraskou & George, 2017).

Promotional Channels. The advertising industry has shifted from using traditional media like TV and print to digital platforms, which include search engines, social media and online travel booking systems. The global customer base of booking engines such as Expedia and Airbnb helps expand their reach. Social media platforms enable the creation of viral content through their campaigns. The Greek island of Kimolos achieved success by using Facebook and Instagram to connect with specific groups of eco-tourists and alternative travelers (Paraskou & George, 2017).

Big Data and Analytics. International tourism marketing now depends on big data analysis to study traveler behavior through search patterns, booking activities and spending habits for better demand forecasting and customized service delivery. The Greek tourism board uses digital platforms to analyze off-season travel patterns of different markets so they can create specific marketing strategies (Paraskou & George, 2017).

Event Marketing and Cultural Promotion. The tourism industry uses festivals and sports tournaments and exhibitions to draw visitors during periods of low demand while establishing unique market positions. Greece promotes cultural events throughout international markets to expand its tourism industry past beach destinations (Paraskou & George, 2017).

ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESSES, INNOVATION, AND STAKEHOLDERS

Tourism marketing exists within a system of interconnected organizational structures and policy frameworks.

Role of Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) and Policy Support. The Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs), such as Marketing Greece, work to unite national and regional tourism promotion efforts. The organizations deliver unified marketing messages while uniting public and private stakeholders to develop enduring destination brands. The competitiveness of a destination depends on policy choices regarding, for instance, visa rules, infrastructure development and environmental sustainability initiatives. However, it is possible for a destination with excellent marketing to fail to deliver lasting visitor satisfaction in the case of inadequate infrastructure (Rossidis et al., 2019).

Innovation in Tourism Marketing. The tourism industry can stay competitive through three main innovations, which include virtual reality (VR) destination previews, mobile apps for customized travel plans and artificial intelligence (AI) chatbots for customer support.



According to Rossidis et al. (2019), the Greek tourism sector has seen a sharp increase in start-ups developing digital platforms to attract new visitors.

Stakeholder Collaboration. Tourism is inherently an interconnected system. Hotels need airlines for operations while local attractions need restaurants, and both require government policy support. Marketing initiatives that unite different stakeholders produce better results than separate promotional activities. For instance, the Greek regions of Crete and Cyclades have operated jointly in the past few years (Rossidis et al., 2019).

Community Involvement. The modern approach to tourism marketing puts local communities at the forefront of various marketing initiatives through which diverse businesses and municipalities unite to create a unified regional identity (Rossidis et al., 2019). Tourists now look for genuine experiences and local residents determine how visitors perceive destinations. The current marketing approach emphasizes on tourist attractions, local traditions and traditional food along with the people who live there (Cherkasov et al., 2017).

CHALLENGES AND DECISION-MAKING IN INTERNATIONAL TOURISM MARKETING

The vast opportunities in international tourism marketing exist alongside specific obstacles that need to be addressed.

Seasonality and Perishability. The tourism industry experiences strong seasonal patterns because Greece along with other Mediterranean nations receive their highest visitor numbers during summer months. The marketing team needs to create annual visitor attraction plans which include cultural tourism promotions during winter months and conference tourism promotions during spring and autumn seasons.

Cultural and Regulatory Differences. Tourists from different international backgrounds have distinct expectations about their travel experiences. Asian tourists tend to book group tours but Northern European visitors want to explore independently. The process of creating different marketing choices becomes more complicated because of existing regulations, which include visa requirements and adherence to specific health standards (Kyrylov et al., 2020).

Sustainability and Overtourism. Tourism development faces an increasing problem of managing sustainable growth while preventing excessive visitor numbers. The tourism industry faces a critical issue to maintain sustainable development while promoting tourism activities. The tourism industry needs to promote underdeveloped regions such as Epirus and Peloponnese while promoting environmentally friendly tourism practices (Rossidis et al., 2019).

Crisis and Risk Management. Tourism operations remain exposed to various external threats which include pandemics, economic downturns, geopolitical instability and climate-related disasters. International tourism marketing strategies need to maintain flexibility while showing resistance to market changes. The Greek tourism industry demonstrated adaptive decision-making through its fast response to COVID-19 by promoting safe outdoor activities and safety measures.



The Greek Context in International Tourism Marketing

The Greek tourism industry serves as an excellent example for international marketing research.

- **Brand Heritage.** The tourism industry of Greece has established its brand identity through the combination of “sun, sea and culture.” The marketing campaigns showcase three main attractions which include the Aegean islands, Acropolis, and Greek cuisine. The established heritage brand of Greece continues to provide a competitive market advantage to the country.
- **Modern Campaigns.** Greece as a brand underwent modernization through recent marketing initiatives. The “All You Want Is Greece” advertising campaign presented Greece as a destination which offers diverse experiences between beaches and mountains, food and cultural attractions to specific social media audiences, such as digital nomads and wellness enthusiasts.
- **Regional Strategies.** The tourism industry of Greece operates through independent marketing initiatives which focus on different regional areas. For instance, the tourism industry of Crete centers on providing excellent hospitality and showcasing local cuisine, Northern Greece promotes spiritual sites and natural landscapes, while Cyclades Islands promote genuine island experiences.
- **Integration of Products and Services.** The Greek tourism industry now presents both physical products (such as local foods and crafts) and service-based offerings (such as hospitality and guided tours) because product and service marketing have merged into a unified approach.
- **Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) Participation.** SMEs play a major role in Greece’s tourism sector. A key challenge they are faced up with is limited resources but digital marketing has empowered many SMEs to reach global audiences cost-effectively.

CONCLUSION

International tourism marketing combines multiple elements which unite theoretical knowledge with strategic planning and operational execution. The theoretical base of international tourism marketing consists of destination image analysis, market segmentation methods, branding strategies and stakeholder partnership models. The operational implementation of tourism marketing depends on digital marketing strategies, event promotion and product-service integration methods. Destination competitiveness in global markets depends on organizational processes and innovation which help manage seasonal fluctuations, tourism overload and crisis situations. International tourism marketing in Greece encompasses both the promising aspects and intricate challenges of this field. The marketing campaigns of Greece show how effective branding combined with digital outreach and stakeholder partnerships drive success. The tourism industry, however, faces ongoing sustainability issues, seasonal visitor patterns, and competition from alternative travel destinations. Ultimately, international tourism marketing success depends on achieving promotional goals through



responsible practices while maintaining stakeholder unity and developing innovative solutions for changing global visitors' needs.

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