

## Hospitality and tourism in a global digital economy – new models, services and performance

Karin Högberg  
University West  
[Karin.hogberg@hv.se](mailto:Karin.hogberg@hv.se)

Ulrike Gretzel  
University of Southern  
California  
[gretzel@usc.edu](mailto:gretzel@usc.edu)

Elin Wihlborg  
University of Linköping, University  
West  
[elin.wihlborg@liu.se](mailto:elin.wihlborg@liu.se)

### 1. Introduction

The hospitality industry has undergone a remarkable digital transformation over the last decade, which has affected how the industry delivers its services, organizes and leads work processes. Also, a few large international actors, such as TripAdvisor, have become increasingly dominant in hotel bookings while platforms like Airbnb have created new business models, which have caused disruption in the industry. As a result, information systems, business models, and business processes are continually analyzed, rethought, and changed. Furthermore, the hospitality industry is one of the industries most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, with numerous restrictions on businesses resulting in far reaching impacts, such as temporarily closed hotels, mass unemployment, and fast-changing mandates from governments that need to be implemented and managed. Put together, digital transformation and the challenges of Covid-19 are reshaping conditions for the hospitality and tourism industry. It is therefore essential for both researchers and practitioners to develop practical and conceptual knowledge in order to understand the digital transformation caused by digital disruptions in the hospitality and tourism industry.

### 2. Scope

This mini track focuses on socio-technical, organizational, managerial and individual challenges of digital disruption and digital transformation in the hospitality and tourism industry. Hence, research of this mini track is interdisciplinary and includes information system

research, design research and tourism and hospitality research. Furthermore, this mini track presents both conceptual and empirical studies. Issues and topics addressed by the mini track include:

- Digital business strategy
- Big data analysis for strategic decision making
- Platform economy
- Local and regional economic development,
- Quality management strategies and reviews
- Social media and online reviews
- Digital change management for the future of the tourism and hospitality industry
- Strategic digital innovation for the tourism and hospitality industry
- Digital communication and guest decision making
- Technology and contact in tourism and hospitality
- Crisis recovery and digitalization in tourism and hospitality

### 3. Summary of articles

The present mini track presents three papers. They are introduced briefly below.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused unprecedented disruptions in the hospitality and tourism industry due to social lockdowns and social distancing. The COVID-19 lockdown forced many firms within the hospitality industry to re-configure their dynamic capabilities through innovating operational practices and pivoting traditional business models. Tuomi et al., [1] investigated factors that facilitate innovation in high-end food service organization in Finland and the UK. In

their study, they identified three key themes facilitating innovation during COVID-19 lockdowns: 1) Combining high-tech and high-touch through new ways of producing and providing technology-driven service offerings, 2) Prosocial engagement, i.e. working together with multiple stakeholders to bring added value to all parties, not just the business, and 3) Reactivity, i.e. pushing the traditional boundaries of the sector through quick decision-making and constant iteration and refining of processes and procedures.

The hospitality and tourism industry has been widely affected by online reviews and the impact they have on the customer's decision-making process. Wan and Nakayama [2] studied consumer-generated reviews and ratings by analyzing the star rating distribution of restaurant reviews in Japan, China and the U.S. They found two distribution patterns: bimodal and unimodal. Also, the study demonstrates that online review star ratings may not be consistent with their corresponding sentiment levels. That is, the self-selection bias encourages consumers to post reviews with polarized ratings, even though varying national culture characteristics and changing socioeconomic status may push the rating in the reverse direction. Hence, Wan and Nakayama's [2] study identifies a challenge for data scientists, namely, to imply accurate quality evaluation from reviews and ratings.

The development of virtual technologies has in many ways created new ways of interactions between customers and the hospitality and tourism industry. In the third paper, 'Virtual Tourism Experiences with Immersive Technologies Post COVID-19', Long and Suomi [3] investigate the use of theme park apps and the enhancement of the customer experience. The study emphasizes that app developers need to gain a deeper understanding of how the design can optimize the impacts of theme park apps. The results indicate that delight has significant impacts on users' persistence

intention, recommendation, offering feedback, and revisit intention regarding theme parks. Furthermore, delight is determined by entertainment, aesthetic design, and achievement-related gamification. Long and Suomi's [3] study contributes to the literature on delight in the context of theme park apps and offers practical implications for both designers as well as actors within the hospitality and tourism industry.

The presentations of the three papers cover a wide variety of topics, including virtual technologies, user-generated reviews and innovations that are examined in the context of the hospitality and tourism industry. As such, they provide contemporary insights into the vast array of digital developments within the hospitality and tourism domain.

## 10. References

- [1] Tuomi, A., Ashton, M., Ellonen, H-K., & Tussyadiah, I. (2022, January) Innovation in High-End Food Service During COVID-19 Lockdowns. In *Proceedings of the 55th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences* (p. XX)
- [2] Wan, Y., & Nakayama, M., A Sentiment Analysis of Star-rating: a Cross-Cultural Perspective (2022, January). In *Proceedings of the 55th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences* (p. XX).
- [3] Long, T., & Suomi, R., Determinants and Effects of User Delight with Theme Park Apps. (2022, January). In *Proceedings of the 55th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences* (p. XX).