

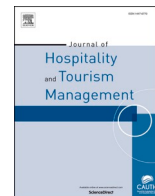


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Editorial: Special issue on CAUTHE 2022 conference

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The purpose of the Council for Australasian Tourism and Hospitality Education (CAUTHE) 2022 Special Issue is to stimulate constructive discourse designed to respond to major questions brought to the fore by the COVID-19 pandemic. The advent of the pandemic and subsequent implications for global mobility have generated substantial debate on the role of tourism, hospitality and events as effective drivers of sustainable development (Gössling & Schweiggart, 2022). These sectors are clearly experiencing a time of unprecedented transformation, shaped by globalisation, technological innovation and social change. Subsequently, there has been a demand from all stakeholders for increased understandings about the extent of the impact of COVID-19 on the sustainability and resilience of these sectors which have transformed to a “new normal” in direct response to COVID-19 (Alonso et al., 2022; Li et al., 2022).

The Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management (JHTM) is the official journal of CAUTHE, an organisation committed to providing academic leadership in the fields of hospitality, tourism and events. Accordingly, JHTM is a leading journal dedicated to expanding knowledge and enhancing theoretical debates relevant to the management of tourism, travel, leisure, recreation and events – with articles focused on innovative methodologies and ground-breaking conceptual frameworks (e.g., Chen et al., 2023; García-Carrón et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2022; Manfreda et al., 2023; Sun et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2023). Appositely, this Special Issue reflects on critical issues and subsequent discussions which emerged from the 2022 CAUTHE Conference hosted by Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia and held online in February 2022. The conference presentations offered a panoply of perspectives from researchers who reflected on the conference theme: *Shaping the New Normal in Tourism, Hospitality and Events*. The past few years have been unsettling for all industries internationally, as governments and tourism agencies negotiated the health challenges and corresponding domestic and international mobility constraints which the pandemic bestowed on the world.

Submissions to the conference of an empirical or conceptual nature were encouraged, but in particular, viewpoints which were able to draw on the benefits of interdisciplinarity to explore the opportunities and

challenges of “new normal” considerations. Presenters attending the conference were asked to share research which offered viewpoints on how best to respond to these challenges and explicitly articulate the key drivers of the “new normal” in tourism, hospitality and events. This Special Issue of *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management* subsequently sought to reimagine future special issues emerging from the CAUTHE conference by presenting an innovative format consisting of keynote reflections, research notes and full papers.

Girish Prayag, in the keynote reflection “Tourism resilience in the ‘new normal’: Beyond jingle and jangle fallacies?”, explains the place of resilience in the “new normal” as he investigates opportunities and challenges to improve outcomes for all. The paper draws from interdisciplinary sources to introduce a theoretical model which is applicable to destinations as they explore resilience. The proposed *Tourism Resilience Model* moves from individual-level resilience to organisational-level, community-level and finally destination-level resilience. Prayag explains concepts of resilience which emerge from discourses found in engineering, ecological and socio-ecological systems and presents five commonalities regarding the conceptualisation of resilience across disciplinary boundaries, as well as five characteristics of tourism systems that limit or assist in resilience building. The proposed model makes useful distinctions between resilience at the destination or system level and resilience at the individual or organisational level and suggests an integration of key ideas. Prayag’s proposed agenda for further research in tourism resilience discusses several prospects such as how resilience continues to be framed in the literature, to what extent is it possible to learn from experience, and how tourism system resilience is influenced by various actors.

Ancy Gamage, Joanne Pyke and Terry de Lacy, in “Building resilience and a new normal in tourism employment: ‘Sustainable HRM’ as the missing link?”, explore how small and medium enterprises fared in terms of sustainable human resource management and organisational resilience in response to multiple challenges such as the Australian bushfire and COVID-19. This qualitative study was informed by the *United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, and specifically investigates how small and medium tourism and hospitality enterprises

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could achieve social sustainability and organisational resilience. The review of literature which underpins this study focuses on an analysis of existing HRM conceptualisations, classifications, frameworks and typologies, leading to an identification of gaps in knowledge, especially within the context of tourism and hospitality. Gamage et al.'s study identifies and discusses three emerging themes categorised into operational, workforce and wellbeing dimensions and suggests several significant theoretical and practical implications. Key among the implications is demonstrating a nexus between sustainable human resource management and organisational resilience in the tourism sector. In addition, the study outlines a clear need for improved business owner education, specifically in developing business and resilience skills, and overall adaptiveness. The discussion also acknowledges housing affordability issues which cannot be ignored when investigating business resilience in regional areas. Concluding remarks highlight the need for government investment and collaboration between essential stakeholders.

Mark Teoh, Ying Wang and Anna Kwek, in “Deconstructing transformations: educational travellers’ cross cultural transformative experiences”, discuss transformative experiences of educational travellers in Australia and suggest that the “new normal” in tourism will increasingly value such experiences. Specifically, the study firstly defines an educational traveller as a particular kind of tourist, and then examines the triggers which allow such travellers to experience transformations within a cross-cultural milieu. Teoh et al. further offer an interpretative model which conceptualises a facilitation process for educational travellers. The model identifies four circumstantial situations which engender transformation and explains how educational travellers situate themselves somewhere between a migrant and a visitor. The analysis of qualitative data leads to several noteworthy findings which extend the literature on educational tourism and provides several practical implications which should be considered by both educational providers and purveyors of tourism experiences. Also of interest is that the findings lead to the conclusion that implications can be extended to other segments of travellers who share similar circumstances.

Zahra Rahmani, Susan Mackenzie and Anna Carr, in “How virtual wellness retreat experiences may influence psychological well-being”, propose that extant literature on the relationship between tourism and well-being does not yet fully explore the potential for virtual experiences. The conceptual paper suggests that considering the widely reported increase in mental ill-health, it is necessary to examine the features and benefits of virtual wellness retreats. While acknowledging that general tourism experiences have the potential to lead to increases in wellbeing, and specifically designed wellness experiences have been available for some time, the paper proposes that the potential of virtual wellness experiences has not been fully explored. The paper argues that the closures caused by COVID-19 were a catalyst for tourism to consider

offering more sustainable and low contact experiences such as virtual wellness retreats. Rahmani et al. further suggest consideration of virtual wellness retreats as a very viable and sustainable rejoinder to current debates about tourism sustainability. As a conclusion to the discussion, the authors present a conceptual framework which includes contextual influences, key characteristics, and psychological well-being benefits to guide further research in this area.

Fittingly, this Special Issue offers several studies which explore the possibilities of the “new normal” in shaping tourism, hospitality and events. The articles in this Special Issue consider COVID-19 as a catalyst for rethinking and reshaping the tourism, hospitality, and events industries’ crisis readiness to cope with future uncertainties. The studies discuss interdisciplinary-informed topics in a variety of contexts which are interrelated and consistent in their attempt to describe and analyse the theoretical and practical possibilities of the future in response to COVID-19 and other challenges. Critically this Special Issue articulates how resilience can position destinations, businesses, communities and individuals to mitigate the negative impacts of external threats and create opportunities to thrive in the “new normal”.

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