

## Strategy Research and Education in the Critical Sector of Tourism - Comparative Assessment at International and Greek Level

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### Abstract

The scope of this paper is to analyse and record the theoretical background of strategic management in the tourism industry and businesses, from the standpoint of education. The objective of this study is to present research on strategic management in the critical sector of tourism and hospitality businesses in particular. Through a review of the surveys carried out so far, we seek to analyse the research concern about education in tourism, as well as the contribution of strategic management. In the context of this work, we present tourism education and its development at international level, with special emphasis on the Greek education system. The same comparative assessment, both at international and Greek level, is made separately for the discipline of strategy as distinct aspect of business administration. Lastly, for the purposes of the research, a field study was carried out among Greek hotel businesses, reflecting the emphasis placed by business executives on education and their insights into strategic management theories. The development of tourism education worldwide began in the 1960s and 1970s and included, mainly, programmes of vocational training and tourism employee's skills' development. It was in the 1980s and 1990s that education developed and reached university level. Even then, education programmers placed emphasis primarily on the development of business analysis, assessment and administration skills. According to Stuart the people responsible for curriculum design focused mainly on broader theoretical issues rather than on the needs of the tourism industry. Tourism-related research and education knowledge is provided by programmers combining European and internationalist knowledge, always targeting the possibility of finding a job in an enlarged global economy. Up until mid-1980s, tourism education was limited to the level of secondary education. The only exception was the School of Tourism Professions (ASTER) in Rhodes Island. Here is a wide range of trainings fragmented across 3 different Ministries and 15 different training bodies. 1983 marks the creation of seven Technological Educational Institutes, of similarly theoretical nature and detached from the market demands. When it comes to public University education, 3 postgraduate studies programmes (Master's) were created in late 1990s and continue until today. The same finding came up from the Greek review of literature and research. Strategy in general and, in many cases, strategic management, is part of a larger cognitive field related to marketing and not a distinct component of Business Administration. Important works in Greece include "Strategic Management" by Professor Georgopoulos as well as the work of Papadakis entitled "Business Strategies".