PROJECT TITLE: Navigating through crisis: Strategies, Dynamics and Resilience of Tourism and Hospitality Businesses Adopting Digital Technologies

FIELD OF RESEARCH CODE: 1506

PROJECT SYNOPSIS:

This research project aims to understand the experience of tourism and hospitality businesses that have innovatively adopted digital technologies in times of crisis, such as economic downturns, natural disasters and the recent COVID-19 outbreak. More specifically, this research aims to identify the barriers tourism and hospitality businesses have faced, the strategies they have used to overcome these barriers, the dynamics of their tourism business enterprises and their resilience in adopting digital technologies. These businesses fall into the broad conceptualisation of digital entrepreneurship describing entrepreneurs who create new ventures or transform existing businesses through fostering and/or usage of digital technologies in a novel manner (Zhao & Collier, 2016; European Commission, 2015). These digital technologies include but are not limited to mobile apps, big data analytics and cloud solutions technologies.
The recent outbreak of COVID-19 has made many existing tourism and hospitality models no longer viable. Challenged by the disruptive situations, many tourism and hospitality businesses have turned quickly to digital technologies to adjust or innovate their current practices to remain resilient. Indeed, new digital technologies can create a range of new opportunities to increase business values and resilience by developing new means of leveraging resources, and product/service design (Markus and Loebecke, 2013; Zhao & Collier, 2016). A good example is livestreaming of tourism destinations by offering virtual tours. However, while there is increasing recognition of the importance of tourism and hospitality businesses using digital technologies to foster economic growth and innovation as well as remain resilient in time of crisis, research in this area is limited.

Zhao and Collier (2016, p. 2173) argue that “a nation’s digital entrepreneurial capacity depends largely on digital entrepreneurial behaviour, culture, and strategies as well as a supportive innovation ecosystem in which governments, industry, business, educational institutions and NGOs (non-government organizations) work together”. This research will develop new knowledge of tourism and hospitality practice in the digital era and offer implementable strategies to assist these tourism and hospitality businesses in time of crisis. More importantly, this research is timely to provide empirical evidence for businesses and policy guidance to create a supportive innovative system to foster digital innovation for tourism and hospitality businesses to grow and sustain.

FEASIBILITY AND RESOURCING – DESCRIPTION OF THE SUPPORT THIS PROJECT WILL RECEIVE:

1: The student will be hosted at the Tourism Research Cluster, supported by a team of world-renowned experts in digital economy and sustainability in tourism and hospitality, visiting fellows from other countries and the opportunity to get involved in industry projects and attend regular research seminars.

2: The student will also benefit from the supervisory team’s international network including potential opportunities to visit other universities and assistance in collecting data in other countries.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROJECT/ PROGRAM FOR THE ENROLLING SCHOOL OR INSTITUTION:

1: The project will further strengthen the core theme - digital future of the Tourism Research Cluster, School of Marketing, and the University. It closely aligns with the faculty research strength - the sustainable development of tourism in Australia and around the world.

2: The project will also further contribute to the reputation of the tourism research cluster to deliver industry relevant research that tackles world-wide issues critical to the sustainability of tourism business.

Students must express interest in this scholarship opportunity by emailing the Project Lead listed below. Please provide a copy of your current curriculum vitae and detail your suitability to be involved in this strategic project.
PROJECT LEAD CONTACT

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