Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism

Biannually
Volume VIII
Issue 6(22)
Fall 2017
ISSN 2068 – 7729
Journal DOI
http://dx.doi.org/10.14505/jemt
Contents:

1. Analysis of Tourism in the Slovak Republic in the Period after Accession to the European Monetary Union
   Jana FILARSKÁ, Ivana KRAVČÁKOVÁ VOZÁROVÁ, Rastislav KOTULIČ
   1157

2. The Effect of International Tourism on the Development of Global Social-Economic Processes
   Igor Lvovich CHERKASOV, Maria Igorevna SEREDINA, Olga Ivanovna MISHUROV, Tatiana Alekseevna ADASHOVA, Olga Yevgenievna LEBEDEVA
   1166

3. Distinction of Jordan as a Destination for Religious Tourism
   Omar A.A. JAWABREH
   1171

4. Educational Tourism: Adoption of Art Management Technologies in the Activity of Universities
   Elena F. KOMANDYSHKO, Elena A. SEMENOVA
   1183

5. The Influence of Creativity, Price Determination to Publicity and Their Impact to the Purchasing Power of Customers
   Adjeng Mariana FEBRIANTI
   1189

6. Methodological Approaches to the Assessment of Historical and Cultural Resources in Tourist Destinations
   Aleksandr Alekseevich FEDULIN, Lyudmila Vladimirovna ZGONNIK, Olga Yevgenievna LEBEDEVA, Liliya Leonidovna DUKHOVNAYA, Sergey Viktorovich ILKEVICH
   1198

7. Advantages and Disadvantages of the Participation of SMEs in Tourism Clusters
   Katarina HAVIERNIKOVÁ, Anna LEMAŇSKA-MAJDZIK, Ladislav MURA
   1205

8. Cultural Tourism
   Sorina BOTIȘ
   1216

   Sakkarin NONTHAPOT, Porowes SRICHAIYO
   1222

10. A Model for Mangrove Forest Management Based on Community Empowerment in Bantul Regency
    Tiwuk Kusuma HASTUTI, Umi YULIATI
    1232

11. Investigating the Reason why Tourists Revisit Thailand
    Kanokwan CHANCHAOENCHAI, Wuthiya SARATHONG
    1238
E-learning System Acceptance Factors for Training: A study of Employees Perception in Tourism Industry
Leila MORADI, Yazrina YAHYA, Ibrahim MOHAMED, Komeil RAISIAN

Strengths Weakness Opportunities and Threats Analysis of Aquatic Tourism in Nigeria
Ademuyiwa Hafiz OLADELE, Oghenetejiri DIGUN-AWETO

Booking Curves as an Instrument of Increasing of Independent Hotel Enterprise Efficiency. Case of Russia
Leonid A. POPOV, Anton V. ROMANYUK, Ekaterina A. BLINOVA, Roman R. GAREEV

The Role of Folk Culture in the Promoting Tourism. A Case of Folklore of Otanaha Fort in Gorontalo Province
Moh. Karmin BARUADI, Sunarty ERAKU, Syahrizal Koem

To Identify the Importance of a Mobile Application for Indonesia’s Hidden Beauty
Jude Joseph Lamung MARTINEZ, Roozbeh Babolian HENDIJANI

Comparative Analysis of International and Legal Documents on Tourism and Counteraction to the Threat of International Terrorism
Boris N. ALEYNIKOV, Railya R. SHAPIROVA, Marsel A. KADYROV, Andrey A. PONOMAREV

Criteria and Provisions for Efficient Implementation of Macro-Projects of International Sport Event Tourism
Inha O. TEMNYK
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Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism is indexed in SCOPUS, RePEC, CEEOL, ProQuest, EBSCO and Cabell Directory databases.

All the papers will be first considered by the Editors for general relevance, originality and significance. If accepted for review, papers will then be subject to double blind peer review.

Deadline for submission: 25th January 2017
Expected publication date: February 2017
Website: http://journals.aserspublishing.eu/jemt
E-mail: jemt@aserspublishing.eu

To prepare your paper for submission, please see full author guidelines in the following file: JEMT_Full_Paper_Template.docx, then send it via email at jemt@aserspublishing.eu.
The Role of Folk Culture in the Promoting Tourism.  
A Case of Folklore of Otanaha Fort in Gorontalo Province

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Suggested Citation:  

Article’s History:  
Received September 2017; Revised October 2017; Accepted October 2017.  
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Abstract:  
Gorontalo City embodies highly valuable tourism potentials to reveal. The city offers not only physical attractions for the tourists to please their eyes but also values of the objects that live along with the highlighted events within the historical timeline. Among the historical objects is Otanaha Fort, a tourist spot in Gorontalo, named after the place’s feature of historical legend. Many believe that stories and legends behind the naming of a place or an object are highly related to the socio-cultural life of the ancient society. With that in mind, a study is essential to carry out and to reveal the historical events that lie behind tourism objects with the aims of enriching insights of local people. Such an effort is undertaken as a support of local contents acquisition to be capable of extending the information of a tourism object for the locals. The study aims to carry out the historical overview of Otanaha Fort as a supporting element of cultural tourism in Gorontalo. The researchers employed field survey and interview to obtain the data and folklore analysis to approach the research object. The result shows that the folklore of Otanaha Fort is a manifestation of features of social events of Gorontalo in the ancient times that depict the record of past events. The historical facts are further packaged in the form of imaginative fable for people to enjoy as an act of historical preservation. The evidence of the historical facts is observable by data tracking within the naming process of the objects, site or tombstone of influential figures of the story, preservation of address of traditional titles related to the figures, and distinct building techniques observable in the fort architecture.

Keywords: culture; folklore; Otanaha; tourism; promoting

JEL Classification: Z32; Z33; Z11

Introduction

Tourism sector contributes 14.13% on the province’s Gross Regional Domestic Product in 2011 (Regional Mid-term Development Plan of Gorontalo Province 2012-2017 2011). Gorontalo City is full of hidden tourism gems to be brought to the surface. The potencies of tourism income in Gorontalo can be classified into natural tourism, historical tourism, marine tourism, cultural tourism, and religious tourism; all integrate into a form of tourism area, if managed properly, it acts as a support in terms of empowering local people as key actors in the tourism business. The idea of expanding tourism potential is supported by Gorontalo government, one of which is by participating in domestic and international tourism promotion events. However, the result is far from optimal, due to lack of...
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