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Mind the gap.

13.02.2020

What happens on a travel trip stays on a travel trip. When traveling or being on vacation rules feel loose, consequences far away and a conscious resource use doesn't feel as important anymore. In relation to tourism Dolnicar and Leisch (2008) highlight in their study that customers feel more morally obliged in their home environment to act environmental friendly than when being on vacation.

Research Summary

Belk, Devinney and Eckhardt (2005) explain that a gap between stated intentions and actual behaviour is common to exist throughout industries. A so called green gap is visualised by a study conducted by Bennet and Williams (2011) in the United States of America. Results show that 82% of the interviewed individuals have "good green intentions", only 16%, however, dedicate their actions to fulfil them. Tourism actors need to mind the gap.

Which practical reasons can be identified for this gap?

1. Green purchasing options may require a behaviour which is too costly in a financial, social and practical manner (Mahoney, 2011; Gleim & Lawson, 2014; Barbarossa & Pastore, 2015).
2. The supply side does not enable customers to continue their environmentally friendly behaviour during their stay in a tourist destination (Dolnicar & Leisch, 2008).
3. A poor perception of the green options' quality may hinder a purchase (Gleim & Lawson, 2014).
4. Greenwashing actions harm the consumers' trust and increase fear of mistakenly purchasing not green options (Kangun, Carlson & Grove, 1991; Gleim & Lawson, 2014). As a result customers will not buy green options at all, as they trust the known "normal product".
5. The low availability of green products and services limit the customers' possibilities to choose green options (Barbarossa & Pastore, 2015).

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6. Consumers' lack of knowledge in regard to consumer effectiveness, while choosing green options, enhances the gap further as consumers wonder what difference they are able to make on their own (Gleim & Lawson, 2014).

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