

Determining Employees' Attitude and Organizational Behaviour in the Tourism and Hospitality Industry: A Case Study of Pulau Pinang in Malaysia

SHADI ALI AL HROUT* and BADARUDDIN MOHAMED**

*Shadi Ali AL HROUT, School of Housing, Building and Planning, University Sains Malaysia

**Badaruddin Mohame Ph.D., School of HBP USM 11800 Penang, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

Tourism is an established industry to promote trade and economic of a country in recent years. It is an organization, which is assigned the task to provide facilities and services to the visitors and tourists at entertaining and recreational destinations. This paper aims to investigate the chief factors in wider context to investigate the attitude and organizational behaviour of the employees working in the tourism and hospitality industry in Pulau Pinang, Malaysia. Drawing upon the basic philosophy of tourism and hospitality industry, the attitude and behaviour of the employees have been explored. Through documentary analysis, the attitude and behaviour has been examined to set criteria for the selection of employees in tourism and hospitality industry. Some recommendations have been made that would help new researchers and academic institutions to broader their research panorama and administration and management of the tourism and hospitality industry in resolving the employees' problems.

Keywords: *Tourism industry, Attitude, Organizational Behaviour*

Introduction

According to Etymological Dictionary, the word tour was derived in 1640s from Old French word '*tourn*', which literally means to take a turn, shift on duty, trick, round, circuit, or circumference. The term of tourism, generally, is sensed as a travelling around from place to place or have a long journey especially with an organized group led by a guide to visit a number of places in a consecutive sequence (Harper, 2013a). Actually, the word 'tourism' has been originated from The Bible, in the Book of Numbers (13:17) in a sense of viewing, discovering and exploring the world created by Allaha. Therefore, tourism is a socio-economic phenomenon that assists to promote social, economic and environmental change (Smallman, & Moore, 2010).

Some major concepts such as leisure, entertainment, recreation, and hospitality are associated with the term of tourism (Tribe, 2009). Different stakeholders such as tour operators, travel agents, food and beverage firms, transport companies, souvenir shop keepers in tourism industry assist to promote the various strings of cultural and life-style of multi-ethnic, and multi-racial community (Musa, 2000).

Generally, tourism is known as an organization, which is assigned the tasks to provide facilities and services to the visitors and tourists at entertaining and recreational destinations (Kusluvan, 2003).

Tourism consists of the activities of people to travel to and stay in the destinations outside their permanent environment for not more than one consecutive year. Tourism is generally related to leisure and recreational activities without any type of remuneration purpose from within the place visited (World Tourism Organization, 2013).

Some definitions of tourism included the concept of earning through tourism activities. Such type of tourism will be called business tourism, as the people are involved in providing infrastructures, goods and services tourists and visitors. However, the word tourism is associated particularly with the concept of leisure and entertainment (Wahab, Al-Momani, & Noor, 2010). According to Medlik (2003), tourism is regarded as an industry that is a major factor in promoting trade and economic of a country in recent years. It assists to generate capital to make the community prosperous. It also strengthens social, environmental, political and cultural values. An annual report of World Tourism Organization (2013) also stated that tourism is known as provider of employment, a tool for development, and a driver of economic growth. As regards the study regarding tourism, in a broader sense and scenario, different aspects of tourism such as characteristics, major concepts, important factors and determinants for establishing relationships between the tourists, tour operators, governments and local communities are dealt in this respect.

With reference to the tourism in Malaysia, it is full of charming and fascinating visiting sites. There are thousands visiting destinations in Eastern and Western parts of Malaysia that attract the visitors from all over the world. The Malaysian tourism industry is growing rapidly for the last three decades that is a mega source to increase the infrastructure and foreign exchange (Allen, Long, Perdue, & Kieselbach, 1988; Kasim, 2007; Látková, & Vogt, 2012; Tang, & Tan, 2013). Malaysia, it is one of the most attractive and favourable destinations in the South Asian region due to its peaceful environment, political stability and charming sites in spite of multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-lingual, and multi-racial community. Hospitality and cooperative attitude and behaviour of Malaysian people are other factors that attract the foreigners to visit Malaysia (Samah, Ahmadian, Gill, & Hendijani, 2013).

Tourism is lucrative business globally being fastest growing economic sectors in the world that involves different elements such as tour operators, travel agents who provide goods and services as well to the tourists. Each stakeholder consists of thousands of employees to run the system. These employees deal with the tourists in terms of facilitating and providing services. The rationale of the present study is

to ascertain the attitude and behaviour of the employees associated with tourism industry and hospitality organizations in order to determine the positive attitude and behaviour for all stakeholders affiliated with the tourism industry. It will also assist to understand the organizational behaviour of employees working in tourism and hospitality industry.

Literature Review

Tourism is an industry that involves different concepts. First of all, the basic concepts in conjunction with the tourism implied in the present study are described below that are helpful to make sense.

Attitude

Attitude is a psychological term that means an evaluative reaction to any object event or any person. It includes negative and positive feelings about any object. It guides one's experiences and effects on behaviours (Schneider, Ashworth, Higgs & Carr, 1996). Hogg and Vaughan (2009) defined attitude as a relatively persistent collection of feelings, behavioural tendencies and beliefs towards any significant general feeling, evaluation (negative/positive), event, symbol, person, object or issue or group. Generally, attitude is related to any important social issue. As regards the attitude with reference to the present study, it is the positive or negative responses and feelings of the employees working in the tourism and hospitality industry.

Behaviour

Behaviour represents the feelings of any leader, supervisor or manager that expresses his/her interest regarding any organization, or organization's goals, tasks, resources, and effectiveness and/or the motivation, or job contentment (Einarsen, Aasland, & Skogstad, 2007). As regards the concept of behaviour regarding the present study, behaviour is the approaches or expressions of the employees working in tourism and hospitality industry regarding the nature of their work. Basically, it is feeling of the employees to gauge the job contentment level of the employees working in tourism and hospitality industry.

Determinant

A determinant is a cause or factor that leads directly to make a decision about something. In other words, determinant is an influencing element or individual characteristic of a worker that expresses his or her feelings to establish a belief (Liu, & Wall, 2006). The determinant represents the relationship between the occupational condition and level of contentment (Miller, 1980). With reference to the present study, the determinants are those factors which will help to decide about the negative or positive belief of the employees working in tourism and hospitality industry reading their work experience.

Employee

According to Etymological Dictionary, an employee is a person working for another person or a business firm for pay (Harper, 2013b).

Hospitality Industry

Hospitality industry is the field that provides services to its customers or clients. The hospitality industry makes sure whether the customers are being treated well to enjoy their leisure time greatly (Slattery, 2002). This industry includes different fields such as hotels, lodging, restaurants, event planning, flight attendants, transportations as well as tour guiding. Regarding the nature of job in the hospitality industry, it is a social phenomenon that deals in catering to others needs. It ranges from hotel work, casinos, restaurants and providing services as well.

Organizational behaviour

Organizational behaviour is a field of study, which helps to investigate, understand, explain and improve the attitude and behaviour of the groups and individuals in an organization (Nadiri, & Tanova, 2010). With reference to the present study, organization behaviour refers to the attitude and behaviour of the employees working in the tourism and hospitality industry.

Organizational commitment

Organizational commitment refers to the level of sincerity, diligent, seriousness, hardworking and the ownership of the employees working in the tourism and hospitality industry.

Tourism Industry

In its broader sense, tourism is regarded as an industry responsible to handle the matters related to tourists. Tourism businesses involve restaurants, hotels, airlines, and the people employed in tourism industry. Typically, from the broader perspectives of tourism industry, it also involves developing, promoting, and understanding the tourism, travel and tourists including tourists' activities (Getz, 2008). With reference to the present study, the tourism industry refers to an official body, which deals the matters related to tourists.

World Tourism Organization (2010) concluded that tourism is one of the world's leading job creator industries. In other words, tourism means trade, jobs, development and economic growth. Tourism industry is a broad scientific study in conjunctions with tourists' activities in Malaysia. No systematic tourists' activities were found in Malaysia until the late 1960s. However, in the mid of 1980s, the Malaysian Government took initiative after realizing its rich potentials in tourism industry (Mohamed, Mustafa, & Rahim, 2005) and encouraged NGOs and private enterprises to get involved, develop and promote tourism industry. Therefore, the private sector developed and organized system of tourism with the cooperation of

both the federal and state government in the provision of funding, facilities and infrastructures (Bagul, 2005).

After the 1990s, Malaysia is receiving a considerable strength of tourists from all over the world every year due to its beautiful, attractive and marvelous visiting destinations. Malaysia consists of thousands of visiting locations to attract foreigners (Government of Malaysia, 2013). Presently, tourism is the 7th mega source of revenue after oil and gas, palm oil, and manufacturing that is strengthening the Malaysian economy rapidly. The tourism industry piled up more than RM 47 billion in the fiscal year of 2012. Therefore, it is contributing to boost up the economy of Malaysia (Aruna, 2013) being ranked 9th most visited country of the world according to United Nations World Tourism Organization 2011 (Rosenberg, 2012). Different factors such as social media, behaviour and attitude of employees, stability in economic, and political stability are considered effective marketing tools to promote tourists' flows and tourism industry. According to a report published by the World Tourism Organization (2011), Malaysia is one of the states that supported 'Global Leaders for Tourism Campaign' to enhance tourists' activities in order to prioritize the tourism sector in national policies to maximize its potentials.

Based on the diverse circumstances, the attitude and behaviour may vary from low to high assumptions. These variations depend upon the working atmosphere, experiences of the employees and the management of the tourism industry. As strong collaboration and connection will be found after analyzing the situations, understanding the issues of employees, their problems and working conditions.

Many studies (Liu, 2006; Musa, 2000; Sivalingam, 2011; Wells, 1982) have been done in the Malaysia perspectives by focusing different aspects of tourism whereas a few of the studies could be found to determine the behaviour and attitude of the employees working in tourism industry in Pulau Pinang, Malaysia. Therefore, the present research is driven by the motive to find out the determinants to set the attitude and behaviour of employees working in tourism industry in Pulau Pinang Malaysia. Furthermore, it will assist to explore the overall organizational behaviour of the individuals and groups existing in the tourism and hospitality industry.

Work is considered as a significant factor of idiosyncratic security for any person (Harter, Schmidt and Keyes 2002). Idiosyncratic security represents a particular characteristic regarding the suitable feeling over a particular period of time. Therefore, idiosyncratic security can be considered for job fulfillment level (Diener, Kesebir and Lucas 2008; Seligman 2008). Job contentment exists if the specific capabilities, skills, and understanding are applied appropriately in a particular atmosphere (Christen, Iyer and Soberman 2006; Heywood, Siebert and Wie 2002). Job contentment level is also associated with less pressure, low nervousness, and high efficacy (Myers, Sweeney, & Witmer, 2000).

As regards the tourism industry, working environment assists to generate innovative philosophy and modernization and develop affiliation with co-workers, managers and the rest of the management (Wong et al., 2008) and the contentment level of the employees or staff helps to utilize the resources to a great extent (Fitzgerald et. al., 1994). With reference to the determinants of attitude and behaviour of the employees and staff working in tourism industry, the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) is a positive force in determining the attitude and behaviour of employees working in tourism industry. The key factor in TPB is the individual's *intention* to perform a given behaviour. TPB serves as a dynamic reinforcement in determining behaviours of the employees that can be carried out, understood and implemented as well. According to Herzberg, Mausner, Peterson and Capwell (1957), the theoretical foundations of employees' attitude and behaviour can be established in line with TPB philosophy of job contentment. Therefore, both the intrinsic and extrinsic constituents as well are associated to work contentment determinants (Hirschfeld 2000; Spector 1997). An acknowledgment of achievement and labour itself are significant factors of positive behaviour contentment (Faubion, Palmer & Andrew 2001). Opportunities for success, liberty, self-respect, diverse activities, and true utilization of capability in putting efforts professionally are some other determinants for optimistic attitude (Kacel, Millar & Norris 2005).

In conjunction with The TPB job contentment aspects, working atmosphere, reimbursement policy, dealing with workmates (Faubion et al. 2001), payment for uncertain situations (Randolph 2005), incentives, research opportunities, financial gains, payment for additional effort (Kacel et al. 2005) are considerable factors determining the positive attitude and behaviour of the employees in tourism industry. Different rewards such as income, job safety, and reputation play their role setting the behaviour of the workers. The employees who are satisfied with job would participate in constructive activities effortlessly in the tourism or hotel industries to boost up their motivational potentialities (Bjornebekk, 2008). The age of the employee is one of the factors that determine the attitude and behaviour (Clark, Oswald and Warr, 1996). The developed experience is another key concept to reflect the attitude and behaviour the workers (Clark, 1996). A self-explanatory research framework for the present study is demonstrated in Figure 1.1.

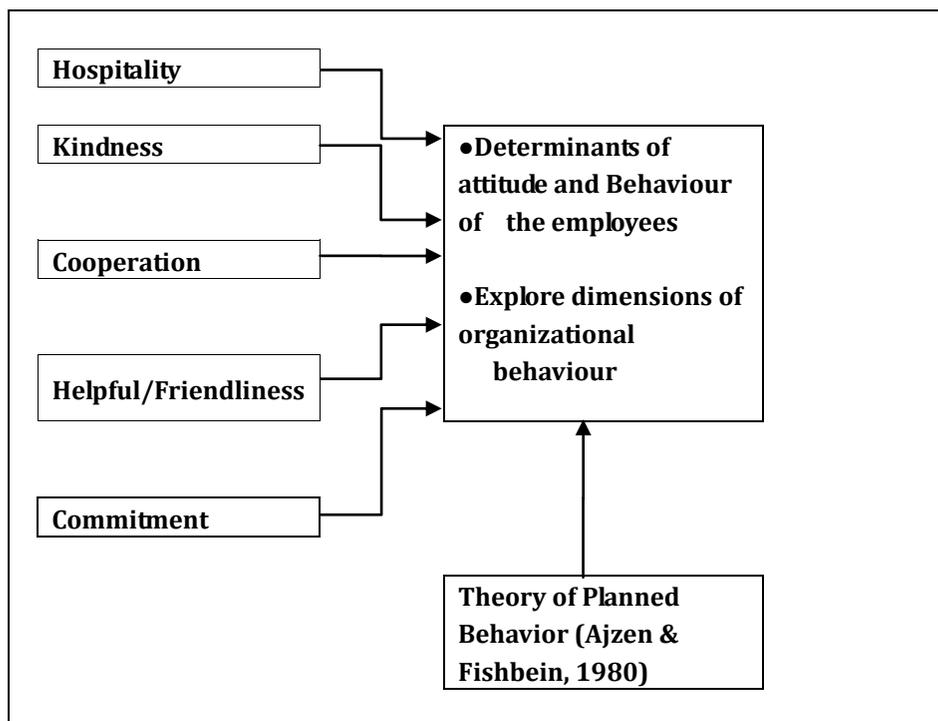


Figure 1 : Research Framework

Objectives of the Study

The present study aimed to ascertain the chief factors in wider context that would determine the attitude and behaviour and help understand the organizational behaviour of the employees working in the tourism industry in Pulau Pinang. This could be achieved with supplementary literature reviews and effective theoretical framework. These issues will be supported through comprehensive literature review. The key factors that determine the employees' attitudes and behaviour regarding tourism and hospitality industry are focused mainly. Organizational behaviour is also focused as well. Therefore, the researcher will pay full attention to find out the direct and indirect factors related to attitude and behaviour as well as the organizational behaviour of the employees in tourism and hospitality industry in Pulau Pinang Malaysia. The various studies already done in this respect assisted the researchers to focus on the determined issues. As regards the present study, the objectives were set as follows:

1. To find out the major factors that determines the behaviours and attitudes of the employees working in tourism and hospitality industry.
2. To explore dimensions of organizational behaviour in tourism and hospitality industry.

Primarily, the research framework for the present study is based on the idea to find out the factors that determine the behaviours and attitudes of employees working in tourism industry. The attitude and behaviour of the employees would be helpful to set standards for the selection of employees for tourism and hospitality industry in future. Therefore, the present study represents the main aspects of the study such as attitude and behaviours of the employees working in the tourism and hospitality industry.

Significance of the Study

The present study will contribute a greater knowledge about factors that will determine the attitudes and behaviour of the employees working in tourism and hospitality industry in Pulau Pinang Malaysia. Moreover, the determinants of positive attitude and behaviour of the employees working in tourism and hospitality industry will be helpful for tourism and hospitality industry through different dimensions of the organizational behaviour explored in this study.

The present study carried out in conjunction with the TPB and considerable literature understanding for the specific objectives is a significant contribution. The results of the present research would be supportive to the researchers, the administration and management of the tourism and hospitality industry, academics institutions and consultants of academic knowledge and employees working directly or indirectly in tourism and hospitality industry.

References

- Ajzen, I., & Fishbein, M. (1980). *Understanding attitudes and predicting social behavior*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Allen, L. R., Long, P. T., Perdue, R. R., & Kieselbach, S. (1988). The impact of tourism development on residents' perceptions of community life. *Journal of Travel Research*, 27(1), 16-21.
- Aruna, A. (2013). *Giving the tourism sector a boost*. Retrieved from <http://www.thestar.com.my/News/Nation/2013/08/15/Giving-the-tourism-sector-a-boost.aspx>
- Bagul, A. H. B. P. (2005). Community-based ecotourism development and local community participation. *In forum proceedings*, .p. 6-16.
- Bjornebekk, G. (2008). Positive affect and negative affect as modulators of cognition and motivation: The rediscovery of affect in achievement goal theory, *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 52: 153-170.
- Christen, M., Iyer, G. & Soberman, D. (2006). Job satisfaction, job performance, and effort: A re-examination using agency theory, *Journal of Marketing*, 70: 137-150.

- Clark, A., Oswald, A., & Warr, P. (1996). Is job satisfaction U-shaped in age? *Journal of occupational and organizational psychology*, 69(1), 57-81.
- Clark, A.E. (1996). Job satisfaction in Britain. *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 34(2), 189-217.
- Diener, E., Kesebir, P., & Lucas, R. (2008). Benefits of Accounts of Well-Being: For Societies and for Psychological Science. *Applied Psychology*, 57(s1), 37-53.
- Einarsen, S., Aasland, M. S., & Skogstad, A. (2007). Destructive leadership behaviour: A definition and conceptual model. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 18(3), 207-216.
- Faubion, C.W., Palmer, C.D., & Andrew, J.D. (2001). Rural/urban differences in counsellor satisfaction and extrinsic job factors. *Journal of Rehabilitation*, 67(4), 4-12.
- Getz, D. (2008). Event tourism: Definition, evolution, and research. *Tourism management*, 29(3), 403-428.
- Government of Malaysia, Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Malaysia. (2013, January-March). Bulletin 1 MOTAC. Retrieved from <http://www.motac.gov.my/en/download/view/category/65-isu-jan-mac-2013.html>
- Harper, D. (2013a). *Online Etymological Dictionary*. Retrieved from http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=tour&allowed_in_frame=0
- Harper, D. (2013b). *Online Etymological Dictionary*. Retrieved from [http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed_in_frame=0&search=employee & search mode=none](http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed_in_frame=0&search=employee&search_mode=none)
- Harter, J.K., Schmidt, F.L. & Keyes, C.L. (2002). Well-being in the workplace and its relationship to business outcomes: A review of the Gallup studies, In C. L. Keyes, & J. Haidt, (Eds), *Flourishing: The Positive Person and the Good Life*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Herzberg, F., Mausnes, B., Peterson, R.O., & Capwell, D.F. (1957). *Job attitudes; review of research and opinion*. Oxford, England: Psychological Services of Pittsburgh.
- Heywood, J.S., Siebert, W.S., & Wei, X. (2001). Worker Sorting and Job Satisfaction: The Case of Union and Government Jobs. *Industrial and Labour Relations Review*, 55: 595-609.
- Hirschfeld, R.R. (2000). Does revising the intrinsic and extrinsic subscales of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire short form make a difference? *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 60(2), 255-270.
- Hogg, M. A., & Vaughan, G. M. (2009). *Essentials of social psychology*. Pearson.
- Kacel, B., Millar, M. & Norris, D. 2005. Measurement of nurse practitioners' job satisfaction in a Midwestern state, *Journal of American Academy of Nurse Practitioners*, 17(1): 27-32
- Kasim, A. (2007). Corporate environmentalism in the hotel sector: evidence of drivers and barriers in Penang, Malaysia. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 15(6), 680-699.

- Kusluvan, S. (2003). *Managing employee attitudes and behaviours in the tourism and hospitality industry*. Nova Publishers.
- Látková, P., & Vogt, C. A. (2012). Residents' attitudes toward existing and future tourism development in rural communities. *Journal of Travel Research, 51*(1), 50-67.
- Liu, A., & Wall, G. (2006). Planning tourism employment: a developing country perspective. *Tourism Management, 27*(1), 159-170.
- Medlik, S. (2003). *Dictionary of travel, tourism, and hospitality*. Routledge.
- Miller, J. (1980). Individual and Occupational Determinants of Job Satisfaction A Focus On Gender Differences. *Work and Occupations, 7*(3), 337-366.
- Mohamed, B., Mustafa, R. A., & Rahim, A. (2005, October). Heritage Tourism in a Multicultural Society: The Case of Malaysia. *In forum proceedings*. p.141-147.
- Musa, G. (2000). Tourism in Malaysia. *Tourism in South and Southeast Asia, 144-156*.
- Myers, J. E., Sweeney, T. J., & Witmer, J. M. (2000). The wheel of wellness counselling for wellness: A holistic model for treatment planning. *Journal of Counselling & Development, 78*(3), 251-266.
- Nadiri, H., & Tanova, C. (2010). An investigation of the role of justice in turnover intentions, job satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behaviour in hospitality industry. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 29*(1), 33-41.
- Randolph, D.S. (2005). Predicting the effect of extrinsic and intrinsic job satisfaction factors on recruitment and retention of rehabilitation professionals. *Journal of healthcare management, 50*(1), 49-60.
- Rosenberg, M. (2012). 20 Most Popular Countries as Tourist Destinations. Retrieved from <http://geography.about.com/od/economic-geography/a/20-Most-Popular-Countries-As-Tourist-Destinations.htm> on November 19, 2013.
- Samah, A. A., Ahmadian, M., Gill, S. S., & Hendijani, R. B. (2013). Residents' Attitude towards Educational Tourism in Malaysia. *Asian Social Science, 9*(13), 14-18.
- Schneider, B., Ashworth, S. D., Higgs, A. C., & Carr, L. (1996). Design, validity, and use of strategically focused employee attitude surveys. *Personnel Psychology, 49*(3), 695-705.
- Sivalingam, G. (2011). Beach based recreation and tourism in Malaysia. Retrieved August 19th.
- Slattery, P. (2002). Finding the hospitality industry. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education, 1*(1), 19-28.
- Smallman, C., & Moore, K. (2010). Process studies of tourists' decision-making. *Annals of Tourism Research, 37*(2), 397-422.
- Spector, P.E., (1997). *Job Satisfaction: Application, Assessment, Causes and Consequences* (Vol. 3). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

- Tang, C. F., & Tan, E. C. (2013). How stable is the tourism-led growth hypothesis in Malaysia? Evidence from disaggregated tourism markets. *Tourism Management, 37*, 52-57.
- The Bible, Book of Numbers (13:17)
- Tribe, J. (2009). *Philosophical issues in tourism*. Channel View Publications.
- Wahab, S., Al-Momani, K., & Noor, N. A. M. (2010). The relationship between e-service quality and ease of use on customer relationship management (CRM) performance: an empirical investigation in Jordan mobile phone services. *Journal of Internet Banking and Commerce, 15*(1), 1-15.
- Wells, R. J. G. (1982). Tourism planning in a presently developing country: the case of Malaysia. *Tourism Management, 3*(2), 98-107.
- Wong, C.S., Hui, C., & Law, K.S. (1998). A longitudinal study of the job perception–job satisfaction relationship: A test of the three alternative specifications. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 71*(2), 127-146.
- World Tourism Organization (2010). UNWTO Annual report 2010. Madrid: World Tourism Organization
- World Tourism Organization (2011). UNWTO Annual report 2010. Madrid: World Tourism Organization
- World Tourism Organization (2013). UNWTO Annual report 2012. Madrid: World Tourism Organization