

BOOK REVIEW

Turismo de Eventos e Incentivos [Event and incentive Travel]

Ramirez Millares. (eds) 2020. La Habana, Editorial Felix Varela.
ISBN 978-959072188-5

Reviewed by:  Maite Echarri Chavez
University of La Habana, Cuba

JEL Classification: G14,L8

Biographical note: Maite Echarri Chavez (maite_echarri@ftur.uh.cu) is Adjunct Professor of Tourism Faculty, University of la Habana, Cuba. She holds a Ph Doctorate in Geography.

1 BOOK REVIEW

Event and incentive travel industry, a new segment of the tourism industry known as MICE [meeting, incentives, congresses and exhibitions], seems to be a new niche widely desired by stakeholders not only because of the multiplication effects generating further profits but also making longer stays at the destination. Having said this, the recently-given interest in this new segment leads academic publishers to coordinate efforts to release further guidebooks revolving around Event and incentive travel worldwide. In the 90s decade, Cuba successfully situated as a leading tourist destination in the Americas, but unfortunately, after a combination of countless and complex factors, all devoted efforts that put Cuba in this idealized position are jettisoned. In the mid of this grim context, the present book, which was elegantly written by Professor Secundino Eulogio Ramirez Millares, explores in eight chapters the ebbs and flows of MICE (or Event and incentive travel industry) as well as its main global tendencies without mentioning its next potentialities and challenges for Cuba. The goals of this academic book are twofold. On one hand, it serves our pre and post-graduate students at the Tourism department (in la Habana University, Cuba). On another, it gives to policy-makers and tour operators fresh material to understand -if not the applications- the dynamics of MICE.

The introductory chapter lays the foundations to the topic, which will be discussed in the eight chapters that form this book, which includes professional working conditions, and performance, leader markets, current economic situation, regional integration process, challenges and limitations of MICE (only to name a few). The successive chapters focuses on the contribution of MICE to enhance local development as well as expands the current understanding for policy-makers to conduct their future course of actions. As Ramirez Millares puts it, tourist satisfaction plays a crucial role in the successful articulation of Event and incentive travel

destinations. What is more than important, incoming tourism organizations take direct intervention in creating high-quality products. Unlike other classic tours, those employees who are benefited from incentive tourism are not involved in their travel planning. Their goals, needs, and expectations are met by the company which -offering the trip- rewards the employee for its performance. In this vein, the tour operator tailors a specific tour-package for meeting the employers' needs. In so doing, creativity, innovation and empathy are vital to better the labor relationships. Following this reasoning, the author holds the thesis that MICE is based on specific forms of negotiations to engage with the offering and the demands. In this way, MICE not only distinguishes itself from other classic tours but also adopts its international corporations, which legally draw the rules of operation globally. Otherwise, MICE would never prosper to the levels and dimensions the segment shows today. It is not otiose to say that the success of MICE does not rest in the marketing campaign or promotion, but in the possibility to design tailored tours for a great variety of segments. Besides, the turning point of the text leads readers to imagine the opportunities for Cuba to develop this type of tourism taking advantage of the human capital. Centered on the tourism industry, the Cuban economic model is a fertile ground for MICE. The lack of competitiveness of Cuba -at least in comparison with other islands- has nowadays reversed the achieved advances of the past. One of the troubling aspects of the tourism decline associates with what experts dubbed as the massification of tourism in Cuba offering sun and beach as the only product. Hence, Professor Ramirez Millares reminds us that MICE, which delves into the experiential features of visitors, should take part in a sustainable agenda for 2030. MICE not only opens the doors for the creation and sharing of unique experiences but also transforms the local values while reaching personal and group maturation. The book gives a snapshot of good practices revolving around the applications of MICE in a different context. Of course, these

applications cannot be homogenized or extrapolated to other universes, but very well they represent an interesting description of the benefits of MICE and island destinations. Once again, this must-read book illustrates the potentialities, strengths as well as opportunities to apply for this type of tourism to recycling the current Cuban infrastructure. As he eloquently observes, it is time to adopt a new ethic code for tourism to create a fluid dialogue with the potential customers. The return to events and conferences allow a flow of information for the market trends to be updated. Last but not least, in his epilogue, Ramirez Millares refers to the tourism professional staff or the future tourism bachelors to find in MICE new modalities to improve the current (stagnated) situation of tourism in Cuba. This book is for this reviewer a more than interesting text highly recommendable to students, professionals, scholars and policymakers interested in MICE and tourism development.

Translated to English by Professor Maximiliano E. Korstanje

SUBMITTED: AUG 2021

PUBLISHED ONLINE: 18 OCT 2021