

Innovation in Community-based Urban Hospitality

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Innovation in tourism and hospitality management has become a complex task due to the competition at tourism destinations in general and especially in urban tourism destinations. Hospitality organizations aspire to meet growing tourist expectations for a specialized experience by emphasizing the characteristics of the local culture and urban community. The theoretical framework of this research is based on the important relationship linking urban hospitality, the tourist experience, and the management of innovation and creativity in tourism. In an era of competition and specialization, urban tourism faces new challenges. At the same time, the tourist experience is becoming a central component in the creation of a sustainable community-based tourism product of social significance. This study focuses on an urban hospitality organization that aspires to translate its vision and set of values into a management strategy that successfully creates and implements a unique tourism experience.

This study examines the role of innovation and creativity in devising a new urban hostel concept inspired by local culture, history and tradition, and offering guests an opportunity to feel connected to the local community. The main aim of the paper is to examine how the management of an urban hospitality organization in Israel (the Abraham Hostels chain) implements its community-based and social values in each one of its three hostels and how they adapt the tourist experience to the culture and atmosphere in each city (Nazareth, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv).

The research methodology includes participatory observations of the management and operations in each of the hostels, in-depth interviews with the managers and a detailed analysis of literature providing background information. The researcher visited the guesthouses (3-5 visits to each of the 3 hostels) on separate occasions between January 2016 and December 2016. During these visits the researcher conducted extensive participant observations which included observations of managers, staff activities and meetings, interactions with the Abraham Hostels management, staff and volunteers, as well as interactions with guests. The participant observations focused on how the management of an urban hospitality organization (the Abraham Hostels chain) implements their community-based and social values in each of the three hostels, and how they adapt the tourist experience to the culture and atmosphere in each city. The findings present a unique new model of creative innovation in urban hospitality management and its connection to implementing a social, community-based tourist experience.

Keywords: Hospitality innovation, hostel management, urban tourism, local culture, vision and values, community-based tourism, Israel