

PERCEPTION IN TOURISM & HOSPITALITY: A META ANALYSIS

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Abstract: Perception in the title of 45 studies in the hospitality and tourism literature over the past 36 years lead readers to believe that perception was to be measured. In fact, 33 studies measured attitude, belief, impact, opinion or preference. Another 12 developed perceptions from composite measures, none of which employed common components for perception. This research contributes to the tourism literature by identifying that perception was always used in the vernacular, not academic sense. Tourism and hospitality researchers are invited to be careful in their use of perception to maintain academic integrity.

Key words: attitude, belief, impact, opinion, perception, preference.

Introduction

This sample of 45 studies of the tourism and hospitality literature included the word *perception* or perceived in their title.

I have italicized the word *perception* throughout this work and I hope that will be helpful, rather than a hindrance.

This research shows that the word *perception* has three broad categories of meaning, firstly the vernacular, secondly an academic, thirdly the tourism and hospitality industry meaning.

From the vernacular The Concise Oxford English Dictionary 11th edition, edited by Stevenson and Waite, (2012), says of *perception*:

“The ability to see, hear, or become aware of something through the senses. The state of being or process of becoming aware of something in such

a way; A way of regarding or understanding or interpreting something; Intuitive understanding and insight.” (Stevenson and Waite, (2012)

The academic or second category of meaning perception is: the academic & scientific meaning of the word. “The neurophysiological processes including memory, by which an organism becomes aware of and interprets external stimuli.” (Stevenson and Waite, (2012)

The literal difference between the vernacular and the academic meaning of *perception* according to Stevenson and Waite (2012) is that the vernacular involves the steps of sensation, understanding and then interpreting “something” through the senses.

The academic use of *perception* is that all senses are implied, not just the visual.

One could argue, that “interpreting” may also involve memory, in that “something new or different, “is compared either with “something

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