

TOURIST PROFILES ON THE BASIS OF MOTIVATION FOR TRAVELING

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1. INTRODUCTION

Tourist behavior depends on many factors that determine where they prefer to travel, the reasons that motivate them to travel, how they organize it, how they seek information, how many times they travel per year, the duration of trips, etc. In addition, these behaviors lead the way to segment the tourism market and draw tourist profiles that share characteristics that differentiate them from other segments. Precisely in order to obtain these profiles or segments, marketers use segmentation criteria that can be very diverse (demographic, socioeconomic, motivational, psychographic, etc.). Regarding tourism, significant efforts have been made through research to segment the various submarkets in the sector, being especially useful for marketing both academic and business aspects. Among these criteria “motivations” can be found, and they explain why humans behave in a certain way. These are the set of conscious or unconscious, biological, psychological or social stimuli that drive individuals to act and, in the case of this research, to “travel”.

The main issue that is faced when studying motivations is their complexity because individuals can travel to relax, to get to know other cultures, to attend a sports event, among many others. However, they are often unaware of the motivation that led them to choose or reject a destination. Most of these motivations are presented jointly, i.e. traveling to relax but at the same time visiting monuments, attending a sports event or in the case of a business trip doing other culinary, cultural activities as well. However, the study of motivations allows for a better understanding of the expectations, needs and objectives of tourists and it is a key element in order to design marketing strategies and help positioning and competitiveness of the agents involved in tourism.

Therefore, the main objective of this research is to obtain clusters or tourist profiles depending on tourist motivations, following Crompton’s theoretical model (1979), which many other authors use today as a basis for both theoretical and empirical research.

In the tourism field, motivations are the socio-psychological forces that influence individuals to choose and engage in tourist activities, and literature about this issue considers them to

be fundamental elements in the models of choice of a tourist destination and the creation of the image of destination. In addition, motivation is a dynamic factor that changes depending on experience, status and age. Therefore, motivations are usually conceived as the central concepts to understand tourist behavior. Tourist motivation is conceived, at first, as an aspect that is related to cognitive abilities of individuals that is manifested, according to Dann (1977), through the need to escape and search. The need to escape depends on stress, everyday life and routine, and the need to search prompts the tourist to visit historic places, museums, etc.

Applying that premise, almost all research that analyzes in depth the importance of motivation in tourism cite Crompton (1979) as the forerunner of tourist motivations studies. Thus, this author distinguishes two types of motivations: socio-psychological and cultural. The former are not related to the destination itself but with the need to escape the daily routine, stress, alienation, etc. (Push factors), while the latter are related to the destination, and can be very diverse: climate, nature, monuments and museums, etc. (Pull factors), i.e., the push factors are those that induce someone to make the decision to go on a trip, while the pull factors are responsible for the choice of a destination.

For the development of this research the Crompton's model (1979) has been chosen for two reasons: first, for being the most referenced and named in the literature on the subject and, secondly, it can be considered to be a hybrid as far as the type of research is concerned, as it poses a twofold objective; on the one hand, the identification of the motivations of tourists and how they influence the choice of tourist destination, and secondly, the development of a conceptual framework regarding these motivations. According to this model and, in general terms, tourists travel because they are driven either by motives or internal variables or because they are attracted by external forces of the destination. Push factors are related to internal and emotional aspects, such as the desire to escape, to relax, adventures or social interaction. Pull factors are connected with external, cognitive and situational aspects, such as the attractions of the area, recreational facilities or cultural and natural settings.

2. METHODOLOGY

For the empirical development of this research a personal survey has been conducted to residents in the southeast of Spain (Murcia, Almeria and Alicante) using an ad hoc questionnaire reviewed by experts and submitted to a pilot test. We collected valid data of 796 people, including 371 men and 425 women, aged between 16 and 65 years old.

Questions have been measured using a Likert scale of 11 points and contains among others, the classification data of the sample. In addition, respondents have been asked about the nine motivations suggested by Crompton, with scales based on the literature review.

3. RESULTS

The results are consistent with the nine motivations proposed. It has verified the convergent validity of the measurement model and the reliability (Cronbach's alpha, Composite Reliability and AVE) and discriminant validity (Confidence Interval Test and AVE) of the nine motivations scales for traveling.

In addition, there has been a cluster analysis getting four groups of tourists based on their motivations for traveling. These clusters have been validated by ANOVA test and a discriminant analysis. The results obtained indicate that the groups are well made and they correctly classify 97.4% of individuals.

4. CONCLUSIONS

As argued in the theoretical review, our results indicate that motivations are a good criterion for segmenting the tourist market. Specifically, the validated model allows for differentiated tourist profiles; in our case, we have obtained four groups of tourists, the rational, the anthropological, the emotional and the hedonistic. Each one of them has features and preferences that make them adopt a similar behavior when traveling and different from the rest of the identified groups.

1. *Rational*. They are guided more by “their knowledge on the destination and their beliefs than their emotions; they are traveling, especially to “relax or escape from routine” and spend time with family and friends “and they are not attracted by the culture, adventure, sports or nature”.
2. *Anthropological*. Their main motivations for traveling are “culture” and “exploration and evaluation of self.” When picking a tourist destination they consider “the emotions aroused” to be more important than “prior knowledge and beliefs” that they may have about it.
3. *Emotional*. They are highly motivated to travel, especially by the “exploration and evaluation of self” and “culture”. Regarding the tourist destination, they consider, “the emotions aroused” to be much more important than “prior knowledge and beliefs “.
4. *Hedonists*. When traveling, the main factor that motivates them is “relax” and “escape from the daily routine”, but they value other motivations such as “nostalgia” and “prestige” more than other groups. In addition, they are influenced by the emotions generated by the tourist destination against the opinions of family and friends.

The motivations proposed by Crompton may still be used in current research, in fact, so do a large number of authors, and they are consistent with the status of the tourism market and the tastes and preferences of the tourist consumer. In addition, in the tourism sector the knowledge of motivations that drive tourists to travel can be the key in order to attract them by the different actors in the sector, whether they are tour operators, travel agencies, hotels or tourist destinations.

However, the classification of the motivations used herein is not the only one possible; albeit it has allowed us to achieve the objectives in this research. The interest of the scientific literature in the study of tourists motivations to better understand the behavior of people when traveling is undeniable, this being the *raison d'être* for the tourism system.

