

TRAVEL MOTIVATIONS AND BEHAVIOUR OF TOURISTS TO A SOUTH AFRICAN RESORT

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ABSTRACT

Travel behaviour refers to the way in which tourists behave according to their attitudes before, during and after travelling. Knowledge regarding travel behaviour can assist in marketing and product planning and development which can increase the number of visitors to tourism products such as resorts. However it was found that very little research has been conducted regarding the travel behaviour of tourists visiting South African resorts. The purpose of this study was to determine the travel behaviour and more specifically the travel motivations of tourists visiting resorts. Research was conducted by means of the distribution of questionnaires. The results indicated that the main travel motivations are resting and relaxation, enriching and learning experiences, participation in recreational activities, personal values and social experiences. These results indicated similarities with the findings of previous research studies.

KEYWORDS

Travel Behaviour, Travel Motivation, Motives, Marketing, Resorts.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

The tourism industry is considered one of the largest and fastest growing industries in the world (Ninemeier & Perdue, 2005; Cooper & Hall, 2008). As a worldwide occurrence it forms a very important part of the service sector strongly influencing the economy (Ninemeier & Perdue, 2008; Kay, 2003; Koc, 2004). For the tourism industry to maintain or improve its current status it is dependent on tourists' travel decisions which are reflected in travel behaviour. Papatheodorou (2006) stated that destination choice has always been an important aspect in tourism literature and there are various factors influencing travel decisions. These factors constitute of culture, travel motivations, finances and previous experiences, to name a few (Ankomah, Crompton & Baker, 1996). Cooper and Hall (2008) state that tourism is subject to a collection of influences and factors that determine its relative distribution. Travel motivations forms an integral part of travel behaviour and has been widely researched and applied in tourism marketing strategies. The need to see the unseen and know the unknown drives people to travel to new places and motivates them to visit new destinations (Venkatesh, 2006).

It is therefore important for tourism products such as resorts to understand the travel behaviour and more specific the travel motivations of tourists, as it may assist in product development, improved marketing strategies, enhanced service delivery approaches and the creation of a competitive

advantage. Therefore, travel behaviour plays an important role in tourism as concept, industry and economy, and demands investigation.

Tourists are subject to certain behaviour before, during and after travelling. This is conceptualised as travel behaviour. This behaviour is the direct result of interaction between certain personal and environmental variables on a continuous basis. Notice is given to the influence of people and situations on both sides and the reaction according to this influence. Travel behaviour can therefore be defined as the way tourists behave according to their attitudes towards a certain product and their response by making use of the product (March & Woodside, 2005; George, 2004).

March and Woodside (2005:116) state that specific decisions embraces one or more of the behavioural intentions based on the need to behave in a certain way according to highly defined situations. In order to predict travel behaviour it is important to understand how individual characteristics of a person interact with the characteristics of the situation, therefore understanding the positive and negative evaluative factors influencing destination choices of the tourists (March & Woodside, 2006; Laws, 1995; Holloway, 2004).

Various researchers have identified factors influencing travel behaviour of tourists such as variables motivating the tourist to travel, attitude of the tourist, various situational factors and environmental factors which influence the personal significance of the tourist (Venkatesh, 2006; Laws, 1995). According to Gartner (as cited by Pike, 2008) motivation initiate the decision-making process. This occurs when a certain need or want cannot be met at home. Motivations surface when a tourist wants to satisfy a need or want and this can be seen as a very important variable in relation to their travel decisions and the outcome of satisfaction (Chang, 2007; Correia, Oom do Valle & Moço, 2006).

According to George (2004) as well as March and Woodside (2005) travel motivations can be considered as one of the most important psychological influences of tourist behaviour. Motivations are the inner state of a person, or certain needs and wants of a person, which forces them to act or behave in a specific way and thus sustaining human behaviour and energy levels of the human body (Decrop, 2006; George, 2004). Maslow's theory is one of the most frequent used to explain the premise of motivation. Maslow uses five sets of goals which are also referred to as basic needs: physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, self-esteem and self-actualisation (Tikkanen, 2007). Tourists may need to escape, relax, to gain relief of physical- and mental tension and for typical sunlust reasons. Crompton (as cited by Saayman, 2006) identified seven socio-psychological factors which motivate a tourist to travel: escape from an everyday environment, discovery and evaluation of oneself, relaxing or participation in recreational activities, gaining a certain level of prestige, for the purpose of regression, strengthening family ties and facilitating their level of social interaction.

It is important to understand and have adequate knowledge about the motivations influencing the travel behaviour of tourists, for they have a direct impact on the decisions tourists make (George, 2004). Various researchers have analysed travel motivations in order to conclude a better understanding of travel behaviour (Crompton, 1977; Huang & Xiao, 2000; Lee, Lee & Wicks, 2004; Law, Cheung & Lo, 2004; Correia, Oom do Valle & Moco, 2007; Saayman, Slabbert & van der Merwe, 2009).

Travel behaviour and travel motivation are therefore considered as important fields in tourism research literature (Huang & Xiao, 2000; Lam & Hsu, 2006). The prediction of travel behaviour and knowledge of travel motivation play an important role in tourism marketing, in order to create demand and assist tourists in decision-making (March & Woodside, 2006; Decrop, 2006; Mazanec et al., 2001; Holloway, 2004). Thus by having adequate knowledge and understanding of tourist behaviour, strategies and policies can be developed and implemented to increase the demand for tourism (March & Woodside,

2005; Law et al., 2004:361; Papatheodorou, 2006). It was clear that research has been conducted on travel motives; however it clearly discovered that very little research, if any, has been done on travel motives of tourists to resorts. Two similar studies were found which was conducted on travel motivations, but neither of them was conducted in South Africa.

The two studies found, were Correia, Oom do Valle and Moço (2007) who conducted research on the travel motivations of tourists to exotic places and Chang (2007) who did an analysis of travel motivations of package tour travellers. Chang (2007) indicated that the motives for package tour travellers are: relaxation and pleasure, social relationships, socio-economic factors and socio-psychological needs. On the other hand, Correia et al. (2007) identified the travel motivations to exotic destinations: knowledge, leisure, socialisation, facilities, core attractions and landscape features. These two studies do not exhibit much correlation except for socialisation and leisure factors. A reason for this could be that different types of tourists who travel to different destinations have different travel motivations which emphasises the importance of this research study. The objective of this study is to explore the travel behaviour of visitors to a South African resort by analysing travel motivations and comparing it with other similar studies.

2. METHODOLOGY

An empirical survey was conducted at a South African Resort. A questionnaire was developed by analysing similar previous research studies and the questions asked were descriptive of nature. Two surveys were conducted for the purpose of this research study. The first survey took place at the resort, situated in KwaZulu-Natal. It was conducted during the last weekend of the winter school holidays, from 17th to the 19th of July 2009. A total of 150 questionnaires were distributed by fieldworkers of which 102 was completed and useful for data analysis. Sampling of this survey was based on the willingness and availability of tourists to complete the questionnaire and only one questionnaire per family was distributed.

The second survey took place in December when questionnaires were distributed by means of email. Tourists were identified by making use of the database, selecting tourists who visited the resort during the December school holidays. Again, only one questionnaire per family was distributed. Based on availability sampling and the willingness to complete the questionnaire, 150 questionnaires were distributed of which 99 were suitable for analysis. Therefore, the results of this research study are based on the statistical analysis of a total of 201 questionnaires. The statistical analysis included descriptive analysis, more specifically factor analyses.

3. DISCUSSION

The results for this study will constitute of four sections: The demographic profile of the visitors to the resort, a factor analysis of the travel motivations, a factor analysis of reasons for travel and correlation analysis between travel motivations and reasons for travel.

3.1. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF TOURISTS

A descriptive analysis of the statistical data indicates that the gender percentage of the respondents visiting the resort appear to be almost equivalent with 49% being female and 51% male. In terms of

age distribution, the resort appears to attract relatively middle-aged tourists with 36% of the visitors between the ages of 41 and 50 and 33% of the visitors between the ages of 31 and 40. The average age of tourists to the resort is 44. Tourists visiting this resort seem to be well-educated with 38% passing matric and 36% educated with a degree or diploma. A total percentage of 68% tourists to the resort are married with children compared to the 21% tourists who are married without children. 36% of respondents taking part in this study indicated that their children are older than 16.

34% of tourists to this resort travel 3-4 weekends a year and 25% travels 5-6 weekends a year. When analysing the total number of vacations a year, other than travelling on weekends, it was indicated that 54% of respondents travel only once a year and 40% of respondents are travelling 2-3 times a year. The length of stay at the resort indicated that 33% of respondents stay 5-7 nights, whereas 26% stay an average of 8-10 nights. On average the respondents stay for 11.52 nights when on holiday.

3.2. TRAVEL MOTIVATIONS

The main focus of the motives section is to explore the fundamental patterns of the travel motivations indicated by means of a factor analysis. For the purpose of this study, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy and the Barlett test of sphericity were examined and used in order to determine the suitability of principal components analysis. This basically refers to a data reduction procedure to determine a correlation matrix for the motivational data of this study. By making use of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy, one can explore and determine whether a relationship exists between certain variables and if this relationship is relevant enough to proceed with a factor analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure for the study was .844. In this case the measure is acceptable. The Barlett test ($p < .00001$) was also found to be significant and therefore the reduction of data by means of the principal component would be justifiable. 24 motivational factors exist for the resort, on which a factor analysis with varimax rotation was performed. This method (varimax rotation method) was used due to little correlations existing between factors for this resort (See Table 1).

Table 1: Component correlation matrix for motivations

Component	1	2	3	4	5
1	1.000	-.314	.104	.150	.235
2	-.314	1.000	.030	-.100	-.210
3	.104	.030	1.000	.311	.149
4	.150	-.100	.311	1.000	.307
5	.235	-.210	.149	.307	1.000

In order to determine the primary dimension of the respondents’ motivation to visit the AKTV-Natalia resort, a factor analysis was performed. Loadings of .50 were used for item inclusion and an eigenvalue of 6.438 was used for factor extraction criterion. This resulted in five factors. The factors represent 59.850% of the total variance. The factors were determined according to similar features.

The factors for the resort were labelled as Recreational Activities (Factor 1), Resting and Relaxation (Factor 2), Personal Values (Factor 3), Social Experiences (Factor 4) and Enriching and Learning Experiences (Factor 5). The eigenvalues for these factors ranged from 1.178 to 6.438. Cronbach’s

coefficients were also examined for each factor. This was done in order to determine the reliability of the analysed data and to serve as a measure of internal consistency among the identified items. Mean values were calculated for each factor based on the Likert-scale used in the questionnaire in order to determine the level of importance of each factor (See Table 2).

Table 2: Factor analysis of motives for visiting the resort

Factor label	Factor 1: Recreational activities	Factor 2: Resting and relaxation	Factor 3: Personal Values	Factor 4: Social experiences	Factor 5: Enriching and Learning experiences
Entertainment	.789				
To have fun	.698				
To spend time with my family	.421				
To be part of recreational activities	.414				
To do something out of the ordinary	.285				
To break away from routine of everyday life		-.818			
To break away from everyday pressure		-.815			
To break away from everyday surroundings		-.790			
To rest		-.698			
To relax		-.611			
Influence of family			.912		
Influence of children			.829		
Influence of friends			.778		
Security			.537		
Status and prestige			.537		
To spend more time with friends				.801	
To meet new people with the same interests as mine				.642	
To learn more about my country				.571	

To satisfy my need for social interaction				.488	
Natural surroundings of the resort					.851
To see new places					.757
To visit cultural attractions					.593
To increase my quality of life					.474
Cronbach's Alpha	.715	.818	.710	.679	.751
Mean Values	2.96	3.63	1.78	2.02	2.89

With regard to factor 1, 5 items were categorised due to similar characteristics, as indicated by the statistics of the analysed data. These items included entertainment, fun, family time, recreational activities and to do something out of the ordinary. These items were categorised as Recreational Activities (Factor 1). It is important for tourists to experience a variety of recreation activities. They want to participate and have fun. Resorts should keep track of the needs of tourists in terms of recreation activities.

The second factor which was identified, also consist of five items. They include breaking away from routine and pressure in the everyday environment, to escape from their surrounding environment, to rest and to relax. These five items were labelled as Resting and Relaxation (Factor 2). Tourists experience the inherent need to relax when on holiday. They want to escape from the everyday environment and rest when on holiday. Thus, resorts should ensure a tranquil and relaxing environment where tourists can forget about the pressures of their everyday lives.

In the case of this study spending time with family, children and friends, to travel due to the level of security it offers and travelling with regard to a certain extend of status were representative of Personal Values and forms the 3rd factor for the study. The resort should enable tourists to partake in activities were they can interact and spend quality time with their families.

The 4th factor was labelled as Social Experiences. It consists of 4 items and includes making new friends, meeting new people, to gain more knowledge about the country and travelling for social interaction. Tourists experience the need to meet new people and to gain more knowledge concerning their country. Activities the resort offer should indirectly ensure that tourists can interact with each other and offer them learning experiences.

The last factor which was identified was categorised as Enriching and Learning Experiences (Factor 5). This constitutes of five items which include natural surroundings of the resort, discovering new places, cultural activities, improvement of quality of life and excitement. Tourists can learn about their environment and country when on holiday, without feeling like it is a learning experience rather than a relaxing holiday. The main motive for travelling is resting and relaxation, but resorts should also keep in mind that tourists seek learning experiences.

According to Table 2, Factor 2 (Resting and Relaxation) delivered the highest mean-value: 3.63. This implies that resting and relaxation are the two single most important motivators for tourists travelling to resorts, whereas Factor 3 delivered the lowest mean-value, indicating that personal values, such as

spending time with family and friends and travelling for security reasons are the motivators which have the least impact on tourists' decisions to travel. This can play a significant role in the development of marketing strategies and product development of the resort.

4. MAIN CONTRIBUTIONS

Similarities between the results of this study and the results of previous studies could clearly be identified. Factor 1 (Recreational activities) indicated similarities in terms of Crompton (1977), Venkatesh (2006) and Swanson and Horridge (2006), who also identified it as 'recreational activities'; Loker and Perdue (1992) who refers to these activities as 'adrenalin excitement seeking'; Law, Cheung and Lo (2004) who labelled these activities as 'outdoor activities and sport'; Meng and Uysal (2008) referring to 'adventure'; and Saayman, Slabbert and Van Der Merwe (2009) who identified recreational activities as 'leisure activities'. The second highest motivator delivered a mean-value of 2.96. This mean-value was for Factor 1. This indicated that tourists visit the resort for recreational activities. Entertainment, fun, spending time with family and doing something out of the ordinary, are all factors motivating tourists to travel to the resort. Thus, resorts should ensure that they improve holiday programmes which attract the attention of tourists in terms of their entertainment needs. The resort is also situated in an environment which offers endless opportunities for various recreational activities, such as wind-surfing, quad-biking and deep-sea fishing. Management should explore all these opportunities and determine feasibility of these types of activities in order to offer the tourist an ultimate recreational experience.

Crompton (1977) referred to rest and relaxation as 'escaping from everyday environment'; Loker and Perdue (1992), Schneider and Backman (1996) only referred to it as 'escape'; Chang (2007) labelled these items as 'relaxation and pleasure'; and Saayman, Slabbert and Van Der Merwe (2009), Backman, Backman, Uysal and Sunshine (1995), Venkatesh (2006), Swanson and Horridge (2006) and Correia, Oom do Valle and Moço (2007) all identified items acknowledged as motives in terms of 'rest and relaxation' (Factor 2). Factor 2 delivered the highest mean-value for this study. Therefore it indicates the most important factor motivating tourists to travel, is to rest and relax. It is deemed necessary that this should be a key aspect in the development of an effective and successful marketing plan. Resorts should focus on the aspects of the resort, which indicates ultimate resting and relaxation for tourists visiting the resort, when developing marketing strategies.

Personal values (Factor 3) also played a role as motivator in previous studies conducted by Crompton (1977) – 'strengthening family ties'; Loker and Perdue (1992) – 'family and friends-orientated'; Backman, Backman, Uysal and Sunshine (1995) and Meng and Uysal (2008) – 'family'; Schneider and Backman (1996) and Lee, Lee and Wicks (2004) – 'family togetherness'; Venkatesh (2006) – 'family situation'; and Saayman, Slabbert and Van Der Merwe (2009) refers to personal values as 'personal attachment'. Factor 3, Enriching and Learning Experiences, follows Factor 1, delivering a mean-value of 2.892. This indicates that tourists travel due to the impelling need to learn more about the natural environment, discover new places, to improve their quality of life, to participate in cultural activities and to partake in exciting events. The resort is situated in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, which ensures exotic surroundings. This can be used in marketing and the natural surrounding most definitely offer new learning experiences everyday. Tourists' quality of life can be improved through a basic aspect such as quality service at the resort, seeing that the main motivator is resting and relaxation.

The 4th Factor, Social Experiences, indicated similarities in terms of items, with Crompton (1977) – 'facilitating of social interaction'; Backman, Backman, Uysal and Sunshine (1995), Correia, Oom do Valle and Moço (2007), Lee, Lee and Wicks (2004) and Schneider and Backman (1996) – 'socialising';

Swanson and Horridge (2006) – ‘social interaction’; Chang (2007) – ‘social relationships’; and Saayman, Slabbert and Van Der Merwe (2009) – ‘socialisation’.

The last factor, Factor 5, proved similarities with most of the articles on previous research studies. Items categorised as enriching and learning experiences were also identified as a travel motivator in articles completed by Backman, Backman, Uysal and Sunshine (1995) – ‘external factors’; Oh, Uysal and Weaver (1995) – ‘culture and history seekers’; Baloglu and Uysal (1996) – ‘culture’ and ‘learning’; Huang and Xiao (2000) – ‘learning and investigation’; Lee, Lee and Wicks (2004) – ‘cultural exploration’; Swanson and Horridge (2006) – ‘cultural attractions’; Correia, Oom do Valle and Moço (2007) – ‘knowledge and intellectual motivators’; Meng and Uysal (2008) – ‘culture’; and Saayman, Slabbert and Van Der Merwe (2009) – ‘novelty’.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this research study was to determine the travel behaviour with specific reference to travel motives of tourists to a South African resort. The results revealed that the motives of tourists travelling to the resort were to rest and relax, to participate in exciting activities, to partake in enriching and learning experiences, social interaction and certain personal values. These results confirmed motives identified by previous research studies. These research results indicated that it is clear that tourism marketers are required to do research on a continuous basis in order to determine tourists’ travel behaviour to resorts. The results can be used as a focusing point of the marketing strategies. These strategies could then be implemented to develop products for the specific travelling needs of the tourists. Factors that seem to be popular motivators, such as recreational activities and enriching and learning experiences, should also be focussed on during the marketing process. It was however clear that there are various similarities with studies done in other countries and indicates the existence of universal travel motivations. For resorts to be preferred they need to find unique aspects that can attract visitors to the resort as tourists are always looking for something different.

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